

Beyond Brick and Mortar

**Hand Book on Approaches to
Permanent Shelters in Humanitarian Response**

India Tsunami Response Experience



Acknowledgements

We thank all the participating communities who shared their experiences, thoughts and opinions about the permanent shelter program. Recounting the hardships they faced and their experiences through the reconstruction phase was not an easy experience, but they did it in the hope that their experiences would provide insights to improve future responses.

The implementing agencies, the partners of Oxfam, were largely responsible for the achievements which were possible in the shelter program. Each of them were unique in their styles and responses and have all contributed to the learning that have been recorded in this handbook and evaluation report. This handbook also refers to some of the challenges faced in the program and possible oversight in different areas. However, it must be acknowledged that the program was conducted under tight schedules and the priority at that point in time was to complete the project so that the participating households could be resettled. As is usual, the benefit of hindsight also provides many a lesson for the future and insights which were probably not available at the time of the intervention.

The different Oxfam affiliates brought their diverse strengths and competencies into the program which enriched the implementation of the permanent shelter program. We thank Asuntha Charles, Clive Surman, Hari Krishna, John Chilver, Lyn Wan, Maria Jose Marinez Borso, Nathan Knoll, Orla Murphy, Petra Hans, Philip Horgan, and Roy Probert from Oxfam for their valuable inputs and participation in developing this handbook.

Oxfam International led an evaluation exercise of the permanent shelter program implemented by the various Oxfam affiliates and their partner organisations in South India. This has contributed to a generation of cross-learning and compilation of experiences, innovations and insights from the program.

This handbook is a result of the above exercise. It is hoped that this would inform and influence the practice of permanent shelter programs in future humanitarian responses by Oxfam.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

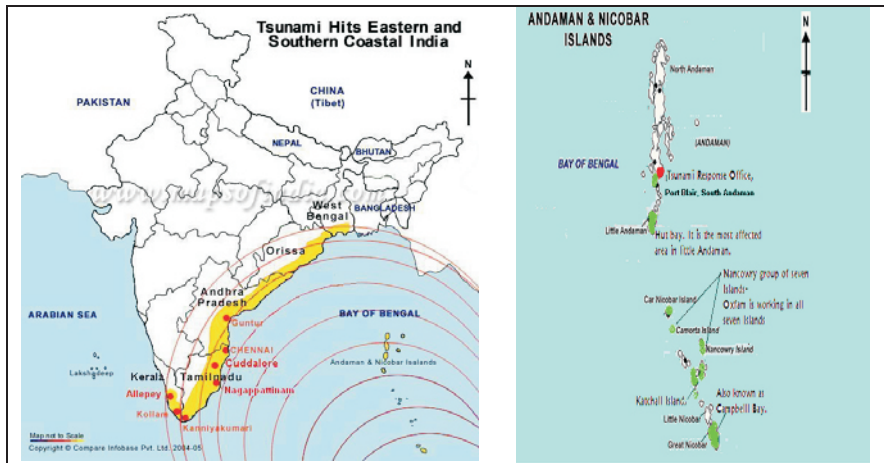
SECTION	TOPIC	PAGE NO.
1	Ol tsunami response background information	1
2	Why did Oxfam decide to intervene in permanent shelters?	5
3	Brief overview of Oxfam's permanent shelter program	7
4	What did Oxfam partners want to focus on and why?	8
5	Good practices and lessons for the future	11
6	Checklist of training needs for implementing teams	29
7	Ensuring community participation	31
8	Ensuring that the program meets the required standards	37
9	Mainstreaming gender	41
10	Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS	45
11	Integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) and Disaster Preparedness (DP)	50
12	Making ourselves more accountable	53
13	Ensuring sustainability of our initiatives	59
14	Establishing systems for effective monitoring of the program	61
15	Working with others	66
16	What documents to maintain in a permanent shelter program	71
17	Conclusion	75
18	Annexures	77
19	Oxfam contacts	107
20	About this hand book	110

FRONT COVER: A program participant in front of her housing site at Pillai Colony, Nagapattinam District in Tamil Nadu. "My house is being constructed by Oxfam. I will allow my son to live here with his family while I share the common space outside the house", she said. Oxfam feels that it is important to address access issues especially for vulnerable groups like elderly women in humanitarian programmes. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

SECTION 1 – OI TSUNAMI RESPONSE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Tsunami which was triggered by a massive earthquake off the Indonesian coast of Sumatra on 26 December 2004 affected many countries including India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Somalia, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, causing major casualties and damage.

In India, Government reports¹ indicated that more than eighteen thousand people died or were listed as missing (GOI, 2005). Around 647,599 people were displaced from their domicile and about 150,000 houses were estimated to be damaged or destroyed. The damage spread along 2260 km of the coastal areas of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Pondicherry and in thirteen of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.



The most severe damage was in the Nagapattinam, Cuddalore and Kanyakumari districts of Tamil Nadu, Karaikal in Pondicherry; and Kollam and Allepey districts in Kerala (Oxfam, 2005).² UN reports³ indicated that 72,000 houses have been built or were in the process of being built, by

¹ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs Report, May 2005 in Oxfam Tsunami Response – India Annual Report 2005.

² Oxfam Tsunami Response – India Annual Report 2005.

³ Source: Local Level Coordination: Good Practices and Tools from the Tsunami Response and Recovery Experience in Tamil Nadu, India, January 2008, United Nations (UN)

different agencies and the Government, as part of the tsunami recovery program in India (UN, 2008), of which Oxfam played a part.

The Tsunami Response Program is the largest humanitarian response that Oxfam has been involved in. Oxfam responded in India, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Somalia and Maldives.

Oxfam International engaged in relief and subsequent rehabilitation efforts providing water, sanitation and public health facilities, livelihood restoration initiatives as well as construction of infrastructure like permanent shelters for tsunami affected communities. Oxfam and its partners assisted more than two million tsunami-affected people in seven countries. The interventions supported by the tsunami fund will be completed by the end of 2008.

Much of the work in South India has been on restoration and development of livelihoods. The focus has shifted over the last three and a half years from providing immediate relief through cash grants and cash for work to restoration of livelihood assets and developing skills and capacities for increased coping mechanisms through self sustaining community based organizations.



Women Self help groups in Kollam, Kerala whose livelihoods had been affected by the tsunami were supported with livelihood assets to resume activities (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Oxfam's work in the livelihood sector was mainly in agriculture, fisheries and allied coastal resource dependent livelihood sectors. Adequate focus was also on livelihoods that were indirectly affected by the tsunami and that went unrecognized especially during the initial stages of the rehabilitation efforts extended by the aid community. Market based interventions and strengthening collectives of marginalized tsunami-affected people to reduce vulnerabilities and enhance coping mechanisms was the prime focus of the work.

Given the huge need for ensuring public health in the disaster affected areas and given the organisational capacity to respond to this need, Oxfam has given much attention on public health promotion in the response. Oxfam's intervention in public health promotion was initially to cater to the immediate needs of water, sanitation, health and shelter of the disaster affected communities. The main objective of the program was to ensure dignified living conditions for displaced communities in the temporary settlements. The overall focus of the program had been to prevent the outbreak and spread of life threatening water and sanitation borne disease and epidemics in the aftermath of the tsunami, in which it had been largely successful in doing⁴.

The lessons learnt from the tsunami have a good potential to provide pointers for future humanitarian programs. The tsunami response learning's are being documented to provide examples that assist understanding of the effectiveness of approaches and strategies used in rehabilitation efforts and how we could strengthen the same in future responses. The scope for contributing to organisational humanitarian learning is immense.

This hand book is one such effort to draw lessons from the success stories and learn from the challenges faced in Oxfam's shelter rehabilitation program in South India. The primary objective of this effort is to contribute to Oxfam's organisational learning and explore possibilities for taking this to the wider humanitarian community.

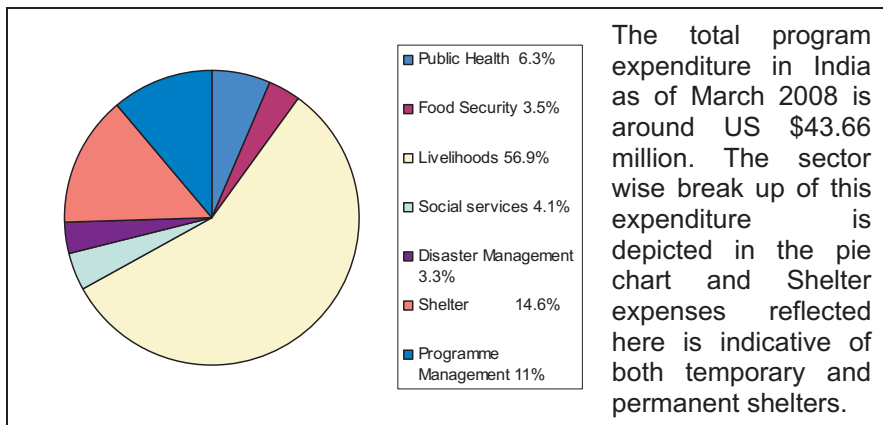
Financial Overview

In January 2005, Oxfam established the Oxfam International Charitable Fund (later to change its name to the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund) as an independent company and registered charity in the UK. Its Board of Trustees was composed of the Executive Directors of the 12 Oxfam affiliates, and management of the Fund was carried out by the Tsunami Fund Management Team (TFMT). Its primary functions were to allocate the Fund's

⁴Community led evaluation study on the Public Health Program implemented by Oxfam in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, September 2007

resources, and to ensure that its work was managed, reported, and communicated in an effective, accountable, and transparent manner.

The funds managed by the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund are expected to total some \$287 million. The great majority of the funds (91.4%) came from public appeals, either individually from Oxfam affiliates or jointly with other NGOs. Corporate supporters donated \$ 16.2m (5.8% of the total). The remaining 2.8% came from government donors.



About affiliates

The program work of the Tsunami Fund is carried out by Oxfam with the support of local partner organisations. In order to avoid duplication it was agreed that some affiliates would operate country programs while others would provide funding and support. Each operating affiliate submitted program proposals to the TFMT through the Humanitarian Country Team, which then allocated funding as appropriate.

In South India and Andamans, the following affiliates worked for the tsunami response program: Oxfam GB, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam America, Oxfam Hong Kong, Oxfam Novib, Oxfam Solidarity (Belgium), Intermon Oxfam, Oxfam Quebec and Oxfam India.

Until 2006, Oxfam GB was the lead affiliate for the response program after which Oxfam Novib took over. The tsunami response program will continue until the end of December 2008.

SECTION 2 – WHY DID OXFAM DECIDE TO INTERVENE IN PERMANENT SHELTERS?

In the initial relief stages, Oxfam assisted more than 125,000 families across South India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands with food, hygiene or household kits and through cash for work schemes. During 2005, Oxfam and partners built a total of 1,662 temporary shelters in India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.⁵

Some of the reasons which influenced Oxfam's involvement in the permanent shelter in the South India tsunami program were:

- There was a huge need for involvement in construction of permanent shelters, given the scale of the disaster itself and the resultant displacement of thousands of people. As quoted in Oxfam's Briefing Note on temporary shelters, 'Living with Hope' March, 2008⁶, *"Transitional shelters provided by the government and nongovernmental organizations are still in use and often fail to meet basic humanitarian standards, bringing further misery to the lives of impoverished tsunami survivors. As of December 2007, the Tamil Nadu State government, as well as non-government organizations, have constructed permanent homes for 35,213 of the 53,291 identified families⁷ and 28039 have been handed over already. The government has stated that the remaining permanent houses will be completed and handed over to the identified beneficiaries only by September 2008."*
- It was seen as a continuum of Oxfam's interventions in temporary shelters.
- Was seen as an opportunity to influence minimum standards and program quality with other stakeholders.
- To facilitate partners who had a strong focus on advocacy to see how good practices could be demonstrated and shared with others.

⁵ Oxfam Tsunami Response – India Annual Report 2005

⁶ Oxfam Briefing note 'Living with Hope' reviews the design and management of tsunami temporary shelters in Tamil Nadu and makes recommendations for basic humanitarian standards in shelter design and provision for use by government and non-governmental actors in future disasters. The paper can be accessed at https://dashboard.oxfam.org/regions/sasia/teams/sinda_hct/advocacy/

⁷ Update on the Tsunami related activities in Tamil Nadu as on 31st Feb 2008. <http://www.tn.gov.in/tsunami/tsunami-relief.htm>

- To utilise optimally, the previous experience and learning in permanent shelter interventions in the tsunami response program.

The total expenditure (from December 2004 to April 2008) in the temporary and permanent shelter interventions by Oxfam affiliates in India is reflected below:

Affiliate	Expenditure \$ (in 000's)
Oxfam Novib	2,349
Intermon Oxfam	1,373
Oxfam GB	1,749
Sub Total	5,471
Oxfam GB (Andaman & Nicobar islands) ⁸	914
Total	6,385

Please note that these are not the final expenditure figures in the program.



Oxfam provided temporary shelters and worked on issues related to Public Health Promotion with people living in these temporary settlements.(Photo: Rajendra Shaw)

⁸ There were no permanent shelters built in Andaman and Nicobar Islands by Oxfam in the tsunami response Program.

Conclusion

As seen above, the purpose of Oxfam's involvement in post disaster housing sought to go beyond mere provision of shelter for the affected families. The impact of Oxfam's involvement in the shelter program could be progressively diluted if the purpose is not articulated well in program/project plans. There is a danger of the rationale for Oxfam's involvement in the shelter program being lost in organizational processes such as changes in staff and new partnerships over a period of time. It is thus important that the rationale is strongly reflected in the policies, programs and monitored constantly.

SECTION 3 – BRIEF OVERVIEW OF OXFAM'S PERMANENT SHELTER PROGRAM

In order to maximize the scope of the positive impact in the lives of the disaster affected people, Oxfam adopted the approach to mainly work through local partners, to the extent possible. This approach has largely proven very successful, though there are things that could have been done better, which are outlined in subsequent sections.

Oxfam worked with 5 partners in South India and undertook the construction of 455 permanent houses. On the whole, about 115 million Indian Rupees (INR)⁹ or about 2.7 million US Dollars (USD)¹⁰ was invested by Oxfam in the South India Tsunami Response permanent shelter program reaching out to 455 beneficiary families in Tamil Nadu, and Kerala States.

Oxfam did not build permanent shelters in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. However, attempts were made to influence the quality of shelter interventions in the humanitarian response. "Oxfam along with other NGOs had raised the issue of providing appropriate permanent shelter for the island communities, especially for the Tribal population who have their own traditional practices of house construction which is appropriate for local context, climate and uses locally available material. Based on this the Administration requested the leading NGOs to build a suggested prototype for the permanent shelter in each island taking in to consideration the local traditional designs and using appropriate material. Oxfam was allocated to take up the prototype in Central Nicobar."¹¹

⁹ All the figures used in this report are as provided by Oxfam and its affiliates to the evaluation team.

¹⁰ Using an exchange rate of 1 USD = 42.86 INR

¹¹ Report on the Evaluation of Oxfam GB's Tsunami Response Program in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Catalyst Management Services Pvt. Ltd., July 2006



Program participants in their new homes in Kollam, Kerala at the time of inauguration. Priority was given to women headed households and those who had disabled family members. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

SECTION 4 – WHAT DID OXFAM PARTNERS WANT TO FOCUS ON AND WHY?

As articulated in some of the Oxfam affiliates project plans in the tsunami response shelter program, Oxfam was concerned about the disaster affected people not having choices and options to exercise their rights in the shelter rehabilitation programs. Oxfam was a small participant in terms of number of houses supported. However, it saw this as an opportunity to lobby with other players and Government on the importance of empowering target population with key information on the shelter rehabilitation process and helping them analyse information and make well informed choices about shelter rehabilitation.

Some of the aspects that Oxfam and its partners wanted to focus on through their involvement in the shelter program are: Improve access of the disaster affected community to a dignified life in their permanent homes built in line with appropriate structural and civil engineering standards and Red Cross Code principles, basic standards established by Government; minimum disaster preparedness standards; complete civil engineering and structural engineering standards; Sphere indicators on space, participation, privacy and safety.

- Facilitate people, especially women and disabled people, targeted in this project to be able to make informed decisions on the appropriateness of site and housing design and their role in the project.
- Contribute to organisational learning through efforts which would be focused on empowering the community with information and facilitating their informed choices to assure their ownership, central to achieving sustainable impact;
- Facilitate the Government and other players to learn from some best practices with regard to community's role and making informed choices;
- Facilitate the Community, with increased sense of responsibility and control to be able to actively engage themselves in the project management;
- Enhance improved access to resources for vulnerable persons affected by the disaster.
- Facilitate reduction in public health and water borne related diseases due to the improved understanding and practices of the people on public health and water and sanitation.
- Initiate efforts for safeguarding land rights for landless and dalit¹² communities
- Empower the most disadvantaged dalit communities with enhanced level of assets and opportunities to be in the mainstream development process through common habitation approach promoted in this project.
- Explore through learning, adaptation, demonstration and advocacy strategies employed in this project, how communities (including other families for whom the permanent houses are built by various other organizations) would receive the indirect benefit from this project.

¹² A marginalised community

The indirect benefit is envisaged in terms of opportunities for making informed choices (on appropriateness of their housing site, and housing design, women friendly housing design features, access to basic social services, water and electricity, communication facilities etc.)

The level of actual achievement in the above mentioned aspects were varied. Some examples of positive interventions and challenges faced in the program are cited in the subsequent sections of this handbook.



Oxfam engaged in public health promotion at temporary shelter areas in Tamil Nadu and Kerala besides providing water and sanitation facilities. (Photo: Rajendra Shaw)

SECTION 5 – GOOD PRACTICES AND LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE

Though the shelter program was met with a lot of challenges, Oxfam had been able to achieve a fair amount of success in its interventions. Each of the shelter projects of Oxfam, implemented in partnership with different NGOs had unique contributions and success stories. The contribution of lessons learnt could help widen the scope of work in shelter rehabilitation efforts engaged by Oxfam in the future.

“Oxfam has learned two principal lessons from the tsunami: we need to work harder with communities on disaster risk reduction; and we need to step up our work with partners and local government to be prepared for disaster response. Lessons learnt from the tsunami response will be vital as the world faces more frequent and bigger disasters as a result of climate change”, Barbara Stocking, Chair of the Oxfam International Tsunami Fund Board.

Key lessons: An overview of positive interventions and challenges faced

Assessment stage: Many models were followed by organisations in the assessment stage. Some of them used the official list provided by the Government and offered to build houses depending on their financial outlay. Some of them used the list provided by the traditional *panchayats* and got it approved by the Government. It is noteworthy that in the Oxfam projects, organisations made special efforts to conduct their own assessment, while also referring to existing assessments and ensure that households who were directly affected by the tsunami got priority in the shelter program.

This meant that efforts had to be made at community level action, to elicit their involvement and participation. In some cases it also meant prolonged discussions with the community and sustained engagement with the Government to ensure that the most vulnerable households were not excluded from the program.

Examples of positive interventions:

- 1) In addition to conducting household survey, an organisation also collected relevant documents (related to land ownership and ration card¹³) and maintained proper records of their selection process, which later helped in verifying the data.
- 2) The criteria for identification of participating households were discussed with the community by a partner. The communities agreed to prioritise selection of most vulnerable among those affected. Priority was given to families who suffered human loss at the time of tsunami, had disabled members in the family, women headed households and economically most vulnerable.
- 3) An organisation initiated discussion with the local administration early on in the project and obtained approval for the finalised list of participating households before a commitment was made for the housing program. The organisation maintained good working relationships with the district administration so as to work in a collaborative manner. This led to an increased acceptance by the district administration for integrating sphere standards in shelter interventions.
- 4) Assessments were sensitive to the condition of vulnerable households living close to one of the relocation sites. Despite the fact that these families were not directly affected by the tsunami, an organisation was aware of the discontent that would be caused in the community, if the plight of the vulnerable families was ignored and they built new houses and created facilities only for the tsunami affected households. The partner sought funds from another source and built houses for them.
- 5) The main focus of the tsunami relief and rehabilitation was predominantly on the fishing community. Many other communities who had lost their dwellings and livelihoods were being overlooked in the various estimates of damages. Being away from the limelight of most relief efforts, these families who were mostly from the dalit community were also left without food and water. An Oxfam partner which worked in that area recognised this fact and started their own relief camps and provided food and water in the camps. Later a thorough assessment was done, and a shelter intervention was designed for these households with the support of the Oxfam.

¹³ Entitlement card issued by the State government to families which also serves as proof of identity.



The remains of buildings struck by the tsunami in the Tamil Nadu region of India (Photo: Lili Mohiddin/Oxfam)

Example of challenges in assessment:

An Oxfam partner initiated processes to involve people in the initial assessments. However, due to a lack of sustained follow up in enlisting people's participation in subsequent processes, the assessments done were not revisited.

This resulted in the need for Oxfam to redo some of the assessments and initiate processes to complete the project in a satisfactory manner, at a much later stage in the project. The learning which emerged from this process indicated the need for revisiting assessments periodically and for Oxfam to be flexible in the nature of engagement required so as to suit changing contexts.

Guideline checklist for things to do while planning a shelter assessment:¹⁴

- House hold survey: Assess the level of damage to the house, the type of house pre-disaster, land ownership, income, earnings/livelihoods, family size, sanitation preferences etc.
- Conduct a baseline survey
- Conduct stakeholder analysis. At the very minimum, list various stakeholders and their respective priorities.
- Analysis of local building practices
- Analysis of availability of local building materials, its advantages, disadvantages and improvisation needs.
- Analysis of availability of locally available skills for construction
- Livelihoods analysis
- Capacity and Vulnerability Assessment (CVA) of the community
- Gender analysis
- Conduct hierarchy of assessments.
- Market survey to ascertain range of materials and services, their quality etc.
- Map seasonal variation (during the planning phase) on availability of labour, materials etc.
- Map constraints on scheduling of construction during various seasons and festivals

The assessment period is a significant one and is used to shape the entire response. Oxfam technical and program staff could either get involved in or provide sufficient guidelines on the overall principles and standards that govern humanitarian response during this stage itself to implementing partners.

Planning: The planning stage of the shelter intervention needs to be optimally used for ensuring that the shelter interventions are conceptualised in a holistic manner. Adequate emphasis needs to be given on integrating this with other sectoral work and mainstreaming of program quality aspects that Oxfam is committed to.

¹⁴ Ref: Checklist developed by RedR on Performance approximation for implementation of post-disaster housing program



Women at the temporary shelter locations were engaged in community level consultations related to the living conditions in temporary shelters. (Photo: Rajendra Shaw)

Some of the things that were done well:

1. Involving communities in arriving at solutions when suitable land for relocating households could not be found.(see box)
2. Supporting the community to advocate for alternate site allocation when unsuitable land was provided by the Government for shelter construction.
3. The construction of common spaces like net shelters and common open space for children to play in, which is being utilized and maintained (planted with flowers and ornamental plants) by the community, since it had been planned along with them.
4. Some strategies that worked in participatory planning were introducing different social activities like formation and support to women's Self Help Groups (SHGs), training of participating households on HIV/ AIDS, hygiene and other issues, and formation of Resident's Welfare Associations.
5. Facilitating the community to make informed choices about relocation by ascertaining and informing them about availability of transportation facilities as well as other facilities like school, primary health centre, ration shop and access roads in the new habitation localities

Examples of positive interventions:

A resettlement site was allotted by the Government for rebuilding houses, but the heavy rainfall in late 2005 alerted the organisation to the water logging possibilities and flooding caused by water rushing in from the backwater canal. This site was to resettle the 30 households whose houses were completely washed off during the tsunami. Oxfam's partner along with participating households and community leaders advocated with the Government to obtain alternate land which would not get water logged in the rains. However alternate land to accommodate 30 households was not to be found, especially because Government had fixed the procurement prices of land below the market price for land.

After repeated meetings with the participating households, a solution was found. Eight participating households revealed that they had land available, four others offered land which they got by division of the family property (post-tsunami), while two others purchased land using a part of the financial assistance of Rs.30, 000 they received as compensation for loss of boats and nets. The available land was divided among the remaining 16 families with each household being allocated 1320 sq. ft. of land. The solution which was acceptable to all the participating households was possible because they were part of the solution finding exercise.

Example of challenges:

An organisation invested a lot of time and effort in getting a Memorandum of Association agreed with the government in order to clarify the role that the NGO would be playing in the reconstruction program. However, the lack of sustained follow up in the actual implementation of the program diluted the possible value that could have been added to the shelter intervention.

Guideline checklist of things to do in shelter planning¹⁵

- Agree criteria for beneficiary selection with various stakeholders
- Analyse policy framework
- Conduct analysis of environmental impact of reconstruction program, particularly of use of construction materials
- Carry out a comparative analysis of material options quality vs. costing and its impact
- Identify opportunities to make a strategic gender response.
- Participate in setting of standards and technical norms
- Prepare shelter response strategy. A framework for Immediate/early/reconstruction/and exit
- Prepare beneficiary list. It is expected to evolve through several rounds of discussion with various stakeholders.
- Get beneficiary list verified by various Government structures, community, etc.
- Agree on the terms for reference for the project implementation committee
- Facilitate maintenance of minutes of meetings with beneficiary committee
- Share all relevant analysis (funding per house, technology selected for risk reduction, sanitation technology, etc) with community, Government etc.
- Facilitate appropriate site selection
- Facilitate safe land identification and feasibility study (in case of resettlements)
- Facilitate comprehensive participatory site Planning
- Plan out estimated human resource and competencies required for project management
- Prepare an estimate cost of human resource inputs
- Prepare program budget
- Facilitate agreement with partners and participating communities (tripartite agreement) clearly outlining Oxfam's accountability mechanisms. The agreement could have a checklist of information to be shared with different stakeholders during different stages of the project with a proper tracking mechanism
- Prepare agreement between participating households and the partner.
- Get an agreement with the Government for reconstruction

¹⁵ Ref: Checklist developed by RedR on Performance approximation for implementation of post-disaster housing program

Design: The design aspect in shelter is one of the most crucial factors which would determine the level of acceptance and ownership to be demonstrated by participating communities. Setting mechanisms for ensuring that Oxfam, partners and communities jointly agree on feasible and appropriate design, even if it involves additional work and lobbying needs to be engaged in.

Some of the things that were done well:

- The list of participating households was agreed and land allocated early on, which facilitated the participating households to visit the site selected for construction, understand the design and have complete awareness about the location of their new house. It significantly helped in getting their participation in monitoring of the construction activity and subsequent inputs for improvement of the environs of the house.
- Designing according to the specific needs and local practices of the community included provision of ample ventilation, open space around the house, boundary wall for each house, common community area and elevated toilet floor when compared to the bathroom floor. Ramps were reportedly provided in two homes in one of the projects to enable easy access for differently-abled persons.
- At the settlement level, land has been allocated for social infrastructure like play grounds, *anganwadi* (childcare centre located within the village) as well as physical infrastructure like roads and overhead water-tanks to be built by the Government. The agreed role of the partner was to lobby with the government for these facilities to be provided.
- Other features appreciated in the design include solid parapet and solid railings, entry to the toilet as per local requirement, which is from outside the house, etc.
- Outdoor and indoor spaces connect well, which is important for the prevailing climatic conditions and lifestyle in South India.

Examples of positive interventions:

- a. Aesthetically designed houses with adequate weather protection in the form of 'chajja' (Reinforced Cement Concrete slab at lintel level); adequate storage space in the house as shelves and lofts; and the design addressing needs for privacy, security and wellbeing was well appreciated by the participating households. Similarly, verandah (sit out in front of the house) constructed as a semi-open space was found to be useful. This feature is often seen in traditional houses in southern parts of India. Verandah and the 'chajja' (small RCC slab above the widows) provide adequate protection to doors and windows from sun and rain. The open space provided in front of the house was useful for parking of vehicles, storage of nets etc.
- b. Significantly positive changes made in design on request from men and women in one of the housing projects, include an extra window in the bedroom for cross ventilation (which is very important to take care of prevalent high humidity), provision of washing platform, and low boundary wall/fence, enhanced the sense of ownership. Families have been able to quickly get into horticulture activity within the defined plots. This has helped to restore normalcy for the displaced families and has brought-about the sense of belongingness.



Oxfam provided additional storage space in kitchen and bedroom areas as requested by the program participants. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Example of challenges:

An organisation conducted community meetings in the initial stages of the project for planning the shelter interventions. A design for the house was finalised by the organisation and later 'shown' to select members from the community in their office. Though consensus was taken on paper, there was a lack of acceptance of the design. Some aspects of the design had to ultimately be redone through direct intervention by Oxfam. For instance, staircase leading to the terrace was placed from inside the house- this led to water seepage into the house. People had suggested constructing an external staircase. Ultimately this had to be demolished and redone. This experience reflected the need for more intensive engagement with participating communities on a sustained basis. Decisions on design needed to have been arrived at after intensive consultations with the community and design experts. This instance showed the challenges involved in arriving at a collectively agreed design where sufficient information was given to communities so as to enable them to make informed choices.

Guideline checklist of things to do in shelter/habitation design¹⁶

- Preparation of site layout/plotting/zoning
- Preparation of various plans for services like water, sanitation etc.
- Preparation of working drawings of a house
- Preparation of detailed drawings of various building elements like doors, windows, parapet, kitchen, toilet etc.
- Preparation of structural drawings
- Getting approval of design from statutory organisation/Government
- Planning for provision of various services (water, sanitation, access to other safety net programs) at settlement level
- Coordination with various stakeholders to exchange knowledge and good practice
- Briefing Project Implementation Committee (PIC) and others of beneficiary selection criteria
- Having regular consultations and sharing of information with various opinion makers (could be part of the advocacy agenda)

¹⁶ Ref: Checklist developed by RedR on Performance approximation for implementation of post-disaster housing program

Construction: The actual process of construction should be seen in relation with other aspects elaborated in different sections of this handbook. The construction management systems agreed jointly with Oxfam, partner and communities should give adequate scope for checks and balances in all processes, so as to meet the desired standards in quality.

Some of the things that were done well:

- Participating households took responsibility for providing water for construction and curing processes, took charge of building materials stock meant for their own house construction
- Availability of documentation including beneficiary list, drawings of various kinds, soil testing report, house to house construction monitoring sheets, various structural test results at different stages of the construction, concrete cube test reports, completion report helped in keeping track of the quality of construction.
- Many of the members of the participating households (both men and women) were employed as labourers in the shelter program.
- Contribution of 10 days free labour (*shramdaan*) per family during the project period was encouraged.
- Utilising alternate building materials and educating the community to get an informed consent for its use. Use of different strategies like adoption of simple tests and demonstrations which the community could relate to, to facilitate making informed choices about building materials. The training of local construction workers and households in fly-ash block making along with on-the-job training of masons, bar benders, carpenters, painters and electricians by the technical team was a contribution to the local skill pool and trained human resources.
- Repairs and retrofitting of two houses with disaster resistant techniques, instead of demolishing and reconstructing them resulted in larger living spaces, lesser cost of construction as well as helping in retaining the traditional architecture of the houses.
- Training the local community on monitoring the construction process, thereby ensuring quality and also increasing their knowledge about the same.
- Honouring beliefs based on the principles of *vaastu-shastra* (*traditional beliefs regarding housing design aspects*). For instance, making sure that the kitchen design facilitated cooking, while facing towards the east.



Men transporting building materials across the backwaters in Kodiyampalayam village, Nagapattinam district, Tamil Nadu. The housing site was located in an island and it was a challenge to procure materials and transport them to the site. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Example of positive interventions:

Post tsunami housing reconstruction witnessed a high demand for bricks and other construction material. Timely procurement of bricks was challenging in some of the areas to facilitate smooth progress of the construction work. One of Oxfam's partners adopted construction of disaster resistant structures with the use of alternate construction materials and techniques such as fly-ash blocks, filler-slab roofing. This was a successful way of addressing the high demand for bricks, for ensuring that this was a locally acceptable solution.

Example of challenges:

An organisation did not have a local presence in the tsunami affected areas. Previous engagement with this partner by Oxfam in the past was apparently faced with challenges, which were not considered sufficiently in finalising partnership in this program. The lack of effective construction management systems and practices employed in the project led to lesser accountability to communities and Oxfam. Though Oxfam through its engagement in the project was able to identify gaps during the project itself, strained relationships with the partners and the lack of control mechanisms to implement mutually agreed standards in construction led to a challenging situation for Oxfam to ensure quality in all stages of the construction.

The lesson learnt from this experience was the need for standards and quality parameters being agreed as a non negotiable before commencing the project. Though the nature of support needed could be on a case to case basis, construction projects in the tsunami experience required a high level of engagement by implementing partners and Oxfam, given the complexities of the scale of the disaster and level of experience in post disaster housing itself of various actors.

Guideline checklist of things to do during the phase of construction:¹⁷

- Follow-up on initial assessment/planning and subsequent meetings with participating committees
- Facilitate locally acceptable and viable technology selection for construction of house
- Facilitate technology/system selection for sanitation (excreta disposal, drainage, solid waste, grey water disposal)
- Engage in analysis of social, technical, financial and human resource inputs provided by Oxfam/partners
- Create a team for the program/project management and construction management.
- Facilitate monitoring of construction activity
- Set in place mechanisms for participatory monitoring

¹⁷ Ref: Checklist developed by RedR on Performance approximation for implementation of post-disaster housing program

- Provide need based skill training for community, construction workers
- Prepare bill of quantities with specifications
- Prepare detailed estimate of one house
- Prepare estimate for site preparation
- Issue call for tender for procurement of construction materials, labour contracts, etc.
- Prepare tender documents
- Prepare comparative statement based on tenders received
- Negotiate with prospective contractors/suppliers
- Agree with contractor and award contract
- Issue work order
- Identify supplier for procurement of quality materials on a sustained basis
- Engage in rate analysis for various components of construction
- Measure construction work done on site, preparation of measurement sheets
- Check/ certify bills
- Facilitate release order for payments
- Prepare agreement with community if the program is being implemented through community contract (even otherwise, establish role clarity of Oxfam, partner and community)
- Set-up building yard
- Construct demo houses
- Prepare scaled models of prototypes
- Conduct soil testing
- Conduct testing of various materials like cube test, slump test for concrete, testing of water for construction etc.
- Setting up of systems for record keeping and documentation
- Establish clear Construction management systems
- Prepare frameworks for data collection and setting up systems for validation of data.
- Facilitate analysis of data
- Facilitate use of data for action planning
- Set control systems for monitoring the usage of materials and quality of construction
- Set community based control systems for monitoring the usage of materials and quality of construction
- Organise real time evaluation and feedback

- Set safety procedures in the construction site
- Prepare design brief
- Maintain muster role
- Set performance standards
- Include Non Food Item provision for converting house into a home with community contribution where possible
- Provide tools as Non Food Items for maintenance of houses with community contribution where possible
- Set Green Procurement priorities in selection of materials, products and services that minimize environmental impacts.
- Conduct environmental impact assessment (with specific relation to use of resources for reconstruction)
- Apply Ecological Land Planning principles to settlement planning
- Promote and organise insurance for house
- Complete the legal requirement for registration of house and land with local authorities
- Facilitate community meetings at various stages of the project to engage them in all the above processes, wherever feasible.

Meeting the specific needs of communities

Taking that extra step to accommodate specific community needs is what makes a shelter intervention most successful. While it may not be possible to incorporate all suggestions, the way to go would be set in place participatory mechanisms for decision making. This would then enable ownership of all decisions taken in the project and have enough scope for participating communities to be part of the solution finding exercise.

Some of the things that were done well:

- The formation of Project Management Committees (PMC) with representatives of each household which also served as a complaints redressal and accountability mechanism was set in place by Oxfam.
- The suggestions made by the members of the Project Management Committees (PMC) which had representatives of each participating household were recorded in the meeting proceedings, along with follow-up actions taken.

Example of positive interventions:

One partner conducted sensitisation campaigns with people living around the relocated sites, as they often addressed the relocated people as 'tsunami'. Meetings were held with the surrounding communities to sensitise them to the needs and feelings of the tsunami relocated people.

The community said that they don't face any problem from the surrounding communities now, and that they were treated well and were also occasionally invited to attend their social gatherings.

Examples of challenges:

- a) An organisation initiated processes for ensuring that the opinions from the participating communities were voiced at all stages of the project. One of the suggestions which emerged in the project management committee¹⁸ meetings was for the bathroom/toilet to be constructed outside the house or having an entry from outside the house. The organisation accordingly changed the proposed design for the house. However, the approval for this modified design met with resistance from the district administration. This resistance could be attributed in part to probably discourage too many organisations from coming up with proposals for modifications which would have involved additional work load for the district authorities in charge of sanctioning design approvals. The organisation could not take a stronger position on the issue and lobby for the changes in design, though it had undertaken a sizeable number of houses to be constructed in the district. Though a seemingly small issue, this had led to lesser usage of the toilets especially by women, since the entrance to the toilet is from the living room, where guests are usually entertained.

¹⁸ The project management committee consisted of self selected members from participating households of the shelter rehabilitation project and were constituted with specific roles and responsibilities in order to facilitate ownership of the project.

Examples of challenges (Contd.):

- b) Post tsunami there have been instances of families getting their daughters and sons married in a hurry thinking that this would increase their chances of being allotted additional houses. There have also been cases of joint families living in separate huts before the tsunami who were allotted one house, which meant a lot of adjustment by families. An organisation incorporated a bedroom in the design of the house, placed in a manner which allowed for some amount of privacy, since it faced away from the living room. The project documented this feature as meeting the privacy needs of the family members. However, the project witnessed lack of sufficient involvement of participating communities in the planning as well as subsequent processes due to the beneficiary lists not being finalised during construction of the houses. The bedroom was not provided with a door and other such lapses noted which could be due to the hurried finishing of the construction. After the project was completed by the partner, Oxfam identified such gaps and is working on ways in which such issues could be addressed satisfactorily in discussion with the participating households.



The permanent house design incorporated provision of additional windows in the bedroom to provide cross ventilation.

This was a specific need expressed by the participating households which was considered by Oxfam. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Guidelines for meeting the specific needs of communities¹⁹

- Get beneficiary list ratified by the Project Implementation Committee (PIC) comprising of affected men and women
- Identify and respond to practical gender needs.
- Facilitate formation of committee comprising of affected men and women (IDPs/Refugees)- Project Implementation Committee (PIC)
- Conduct assessment of promotion needs and behavioral change needs for effective usage, Operation & Maintenance of assets provided by Oxfam and partners like toilets, roof water harvesting structures, septic tank, etc
- Providing the required capacity building inputs required for behaviour change
- Establish a community feedback mechanism with a well planned and agreed redressal mechanism.
- Contribute to the formation of people centered policies for post disaster reconstruction/shelter/housing

Note: Additional guidelines on Shelter and Settlement planning can be found in the chapter on Shelter, Settlement and Non-Food Items in the Sphere handbook

Conclusion:

While many of the successes and challenges mentioned here were in the context of the tsunami response, they may find resonance in other disaster responses too. The guideline checklists which have been distilled from this response and experiences from other shelter programs are more general in nature and could be adapted to suit different contexts.

The case studies provide illustration of how these guidelines were used in different aspects of the tsunami shelter response by Oxfam partners. They also illumine the kind of pitfalls that can occur if sufficient attention is not given to community processes while following these guidelines.

¹⁹ Ref: Checklist developed by RedR on Performance approximation for implementation of post-disaster housing program

SECTION 6- CHECKLIST OF TRAINING NEEDS FOR IMPLEMENTING TEAMS²⁰

The teams involved in a shelter rehabilitation program bring with them their diverse and distinct strengths and areas of expertise. Oxfam staff, implementing partners, contractors, community members, other service providers could be involved in the program. It would be important to ensure that to the extent feasible, a common vision and purpose is shared and understood by all the team members. In order to ensure that the program meets the standards and quality parameters that Oxfam is committed to, a checklist of capacity building needs could be included in the planning process, in consultation with the implementing partner.

The checklist provided below is intended to facilitate this discussion:

- Orientation on Sphere standards (It would be important to have a thorough orientation to avoid a piece meal approach of looking at only the shelter related chapters or referring only to quantitative standards)
- Red Cross Code of Conduct (practical ways of reflecting on how these can be operationalised in the program)
- Accountability principles (Oxfam's accountability framework, Humanitarian Accountability Principles and how these can be practically implemented suited to the local context)
- Lessons learnt from Oxfam's experience with shelter in other humanitarian programs (Through access to program reports, briefing notes, interacting with learning and development teams at OI and in affiliate offices to access information and contacts of shelter experts in the organisation)
- Common understanding on processes to be involved in project design, development and management. (Some approaches and modes for shelter response and shelter delivery mechanism can also be referred to in the Oxfam Briefing Note "Living in Hope, March 2008)
- Common understanding on monitoring frameworks and reporting requirements so as to be able to track impact
- Common understanding on Gender and HIV/AIDS mainstreaming in practical terms.
- Guidelines for Integration of DRR in shelter interventions.

²⁰ Implementing teams could refer to Oxfam staff as well as partner staff, as is applicable.

- Approaches for developing synergy in technical and social aspects of the housing program
- Other need based training as required on cost effective construction methodologies, training modules for setting up community monitoring mechanisms



Oxfam partner encouraged the local production of alternative building materials like fly ash bricks for construction purposes as a demonstration of cost effective construction practices. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Conclusion

“Oxfam International (OI) is a signatory organisation of several humanitarian codes and standards (e.g. Red Cross Code of Conduct. HAP-I, Sphere, People in Aid and Code Against Sexual Exploitation).

OI will not compromise the fulfilment of these codes, either when it works with partners or directly. OI aspires to deliver humanitarian aid in compliance with the Sphere Minimum Standards; and expects OI partners to as well, despite the debates and difficulties in worldwide implementation. It requests that all OI partners working on Humanitarian responses be trained in Sphere Standards.”²¹

²¹ Humanitarian Partnerships, A review of Oxfam Lessons for practise, Oxfam International, March 2008

SECTION 7 – ENSURING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

It is frequently seen that community participation is often reduced to a deliverable component of the shelter program. Understanding participation as an ongoing and empowering process to facilitate ownership of the program by participating communities, in its true form needs to be attempted and implemented.

Examples of positive interventions:

- a) To ensure community participation, a partner organisation formed Project Management Committees (PMC) with representatives of each household in all the sites where they worked. The PMC meetings were seen as a forum where issues could be discussed and concerns raised with the representatives of the organisation and with the representatives of Oxfam whenever they visited the site. Hence, the level of participation and motivation to attend the meetings were seen to be high. This was also one of the complaints redressal and accountability mechanisms set in place by Oxfam, which was effective during the construction of the program. Discussions with the community revealed that they “found satisfaction” in their participation through the PMCs and that it added to their “self-esteem and dignity”, while also contributing to the “quality of construction”.
- b) An Oxfam partner recognised the opportunity of increasing community participation in the program by helping to create assets within the community. This not only helped the participating communities economically but also paved the way for their active participation in the program. They provided cash advances to the workers for purchase of capital goods, and then deducted small amounts from their wages over a period of time. This resulted in creating assets with the local community, while also serving the interests of the construction project. It was reported that an advance was given to a community member to buy a boat for transporting goods across the backwaters. The amount was recovered from the wages that were paid for transportation. Similarly, cash advances were paid to construction workers for buying cycles so that they could travel conveniently to the work sites, while also having an asset which remained even after the project ended.

Examples of positive interventions (Contd.):

- c) After early experiences of non-participation by the community in the construction process and non-availability of labour (even paid labour) from the island for transportation of materials or guarding of materials, one organisation tried to make the participating households take more responsibility by making them provide water for construction and curing processes, putting each participating household in-charge of building materials stock meant for their own house construction
- d) An Oxfam partner employed a large number of people from the participating communities as labourers in the shelter program. This helped in ensuring that the communities found a suitable livelihood option, while being able to participate in the construction of their own houses. Buoyed by this livelihood opportunity, the communities in one of the sites contributed 10 days of free labour per family during the project period.

Example of challenges:

Many challenges were faced in ensuring community participation in the program. In one particular island village, each household had some family member working abroad as workers in fishing boats or were engaged in other construction related occupations such as painting. However, the community members refused to take up any responsibility or work (even paid work) in their own village or in rebuilding their own houses.

Despite the established benchmarks²² for the participation of disaster-affected people in decision-making throughout the project cycle, the actual implementation of these may often be challenging unless this is consciously kept track of.

²² Common standard 1 (Sphere): participation- The disaster-affected population actively participates in the assessment, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the assistance program.

Guideline checklist for facilitating community participation in shelter programs:

- Facilitate formation of community reconstruction/ shelter/ settlement committee with adequate representation of men, women, ethnicity etc
- Evolve participating households selection criteria with the community
- Create adequate opportunity for communities to learn about various aspects of the new risks (like earthquake) they face, the new disaster policy frame work and its implications for them.
- Create opportunity for participating communities to learn construction/building skills to mitigate the new risks they face through training and subsequent involvement/employment.
- Provide adequate information to individual households about various shelter options (such as repair, reconstruction, in-situ housing, resettlement) and facilitate the process for making an informed choice
- Provide information to individual families about their entitlement and scope of the project. For example, location and size of their house, content of shelter Non Food Item (NFI) kit, and so on.
- Establish a functional & efficient grievance redressal mechanism in consultation with participating communities, partner and Oxfam.
- Facilitate involvement of the community in the design of the settlement, house, etc, with affected men, women and children getting separate opportunities to give their inputs.
- Provide appropriate orientation to participating communities on various building material and technology options, with information on the advantages and drawbacks of each of them, so that they can make informed decisions about the technology to be used for construction of safe houses.

- Create opportunity for individual men and women to learn about the technology being used in construction of their house (through awareness programs).
- Set in place systems to ensure that women are supported in their reproductive work, for example childcare components in the community or at work sites, or facilitating linkages with existing structures to enable women's participation.
- Facilitate processes for house owners to exercise their right to customize the design as per their cultural beliefs and requirements without compromising on the structural stability. Ensure that they are aware of their right to request integration of new elements (storage, electrical fixtures, etc.) into the design if they pick up the cost.
- Provide financial information to house owners about the project costs including the cost of individual house.
- Ensure that individual house owners have clear understanding of the quantity and quality of critical materials being used. Provide all the drawings, estimates and specifications to the community in a form that is easily comprehensible.
- Facilitate formation of purchase committee with the participating households for purchasing all construction related material.
- Involve purchase committees in purchasing and sharing a sample of doors, windows and other hardware to be used in the construction with the houses owners before ordering purchase of the same.
- Share minutes of all relevant community meetings and purchase committee meetings with the participants in the local language.
- Ensure that the participating households understand their right & responsibility to monitor the progress of construction, its quality and implementation processes. Facilitate periodic meetings with Oxfam & implementing partners as part of monitoring process & follow-up.
- Create opportunity for men, women and children to understand operation and maintenance of the new assets and raise their awareness on the same, if needed.
- Facilitate community involvement in management of delivery of settlement services like water supply, solid waste collection and disposal, etc.

Note: The Minimum Standards Common to All Sectors in the Sphere handbook gives a broad overview of eight core 'process and people' standards that are relevant to each of the technical sectors. The standards are: 1) participation 2) initial assessment 3) response 4) targeting 5)

monitoring 6) evaluation 7) aid worker competencies and responsibilities and 8) supervision, management and support of personnel.²³

The guidance notes for participation in the Sphere handbook elaborates on *Representation of all groups, Communication and transparency, local capacity and long term sustainability* which can serve as a useful reference.

“One of the learning’s of the tsunami shelter program had been that allotment of houses to participating households must be done before the construction to ensure their participation.” – quoted by a partner chief functionary.



The shelter design layout being demonstrated by a partner organisation to participating households. (Photo: Centre for Environment Education)

²³ The Sphere handbook is designed for use in disaster response, and may also be useful in disaster preparedness and humanitarian advocacy. It offers a set of Minimum Standards and key indicators that inform different aspects of humanitarian action, from initial assessment through to coordination and advocacy. Ref: <http://www.sphereproject.org>

Conclusion:

Post disaster housing programs have specific requirements in terms of community based practices and processes. Depending on the context and the overall approach of housing delivery, the process and practices can be operationalised as required to ensure that affected men, women and children have adequate participation in decision making.

Some practitioners feel that one of the good practices in ensuring a high degree of participation could be to opt for houses being constructed by individual beneficiary families through a 'self-help-built' approach. Here, they would presumably have full control of construction management with the required support and resources provided as necessary by Oxfam/partner. This is only one of the possible approaches. As has been the learning in other cash grant programs, there needs to be adequate caution adopted in this approach and access issues need to be understood and addressed. It needs to be ensured that this does not lead to increased violence against women, for instance (due to increase in alcoholism because of cash made available).

The point being made here is to look for an approach that would aim towards the housing program being totally owned by the community. The implementing organisation would then have the role of participating in the different stages of the intervention where it could add additional value, as mutually agreed to with the communities.



Participants being consulted by a partner organization during the assessment stages of the shelter programme. It was felt that involving participants in all stages was very essential for the success of the programme. (Photo: Centre for Environment Education)

SECTION 8 – ENSURING THAT THE PROGRAM MEETS THE REQUIRED STANDARDS

In a mass construction scenario, such as post disaster housing many factors such as availability of good quality materials, skilled workers and trained supervisory staff with adequate technical and social skills may be lacking. This is compounded by the fact that at times agencies with little or no experience in shelter planning, construction management and adequate knowledge of humanitarian principles and standards may get involved due to the large scale of reconstruction needs. Oxfam tried to overcome this by working with partners who had previous experience in shelter interventions and humanitarian response. Oxfam worked towards influencing technical and social teams in working together by adhering to the construction related standards while maintaining the humanitarian response principles such as Sphere, Red Cross Code of Conduct , HAP I , etc.

Examples of positive interventions:

a) The need for constant monitoring by technically qualified teams to ensure acceptable standards is well demonstrated in a project area of one partner. The use of fly ash blocks was introduced in the project as an alternative to the regular bricks as a more viable and technically sound alternative. The work at the field level was managed by a project manager along with his team of two senior Engineers, each having one supervisor to monitor the quality of fly ash blocks being manufactured on site. Apart from this, the project had one more supervisor dedicated for material transportation and handling. The organisation also made significant efforts to procure corrosion resistant steel though not available locally as this was essential to maintain the quality of construction material suited for the high level of humidity, given the location of the housing site on an island. The project was reasonably successful in achieving technical quality due to systematic inputs and planning.

Examples of positive interventions (Contd.):

b) An Oxfam partner did commendable work to set up appropriate sanitation facilities in the housing sites. Given the prevailing problem of high water table in the area, shallow infiltration trench was introduced to take care of the over flow from the septic tank. Septic tanks were built virtually at ground level and the toilet and bathing block were placed above it, which helped to raise the toilets. This method could be propagated as a robust and appropriate system for coastal Tamil Nadu region.

Examples of challenges:

a) Monitoring reports of one partner organisation indicated that poor quality of bricks and sand were being used. The regular testing of materials helped to back-up the observations. However the organisation stopped testing of materials and concrete cubes mid-way through the project. This affected the regular quality monitoring of the project, which further affected the organisation's ability to take immediate corrective steps.

b) Oxfam places an emphasis on meeting safety standards and ensuring personal safety of workers. However, the project reports of the partner organisations or monitoring reports did not have any reference to safety devices used in construction or measures taken to enhance the personal safety of the workers on-site in the construction project.

c) Though there was an emphasis on humanitarian principles and standards, the monitoring mainly tracked the quality of the program with focus on construction related standards. This was an area where Oxfam could have played a more influential role.

Guidelines

- 1) Regular supervision of the work to supervise the various activities is essential to maintain technical and humanitarian principles and standards. The involvement of a lead person (like project manager) with good construction management skills from the partner/ Oxfam is another crucial requirement.
- 2) Training and capacity building of the workers, along with regular feedback and supportive supervision helps in maintaining technical and humanitarian principles and standards while also contributing to the skills-base available in the region.
- 3) The technical and humanitarian principles and standards used in the program must be shared with the participating communities and others involved in the program. The participating communities must be trained to monitor the implementation of these standards.
- 4) Monitoring of standards must be based on the technical aspects of construction and humanitarian principles and standards which are mutually agreed by Oxfam and partners. This must include monitoring of safety standards and measures taken to enhance the personal safety of the workers on-site.
- 5) Communication of standards, feedback by the monitoring team and recommendations for improvement must be shared with the field staff and project implementation team, to ensure that these translate into field based action and changes.
- 6) Construction materials with proven quality standards (such as ISI mark - a Product Certification Scheme under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986) or tested products must be used, wherever possible. Appropriate material types which are suited to the climatic conditions of the region must be used.
- 7) Lack of availability of adequate number of personnel with requisite social and technical skills is a problem area, especially in mass construction scenarios in post-disaster reconstruction. Efforts must be made to ensure that skilled personnel are deployed in the program.
- 8) Designing of the shelter must be done so as to ensure adequate habitable space with attention to details such as utility space, storage space, need for privacy of household members and so on.
- 9) Payments must be ensured to aid in timely delivery of materials with the required quality.

- 10) Quality checks on site must be ensured through different means such as supervision and reporting, community involvement through monitoring committees and lab testing of materials at different stages of construction.
- 11) Finishing and detailing is as important as maintaining the structural strength and supervision and work quality must be sustained through these processes also. This is sometimes a weak point in permanent shelter programs due to many reasons such as waning supervision, time constraints, budget over-runs or loss of interest on the part of the implementing agency due to the length of the program.
- 12) Often, unique responses and innovative solutions which are appropriate to a particular region would be devised by various implementing agencies and supporting institutions. Efforts to set up coordination mechanisms to share experiences across agencies including maintaining of technical standards would help in cross learning and propagating appropriate practices.



Photo: A girl sieves the sand at the house construction site in Kodyampalam village, Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu. Fly ash bricks were produced at the site and local labour was mobilized. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Conclusion:

The role of standards in the permanent shelter program should be seen within the overall context of the rehabilitation of the participating community. Very often the participating households may move from relief camps to transitional shelters, before they reach the permanent shelters. The permanent shelter program should be linked to the situation of the participating community and not be seen as a stand-alone program. Efforts must be made to integrate the provision for contextual and differential needs of the participating community as a means of fulfilling their rights. This would contribute to maintaining the standards of living of the participating community and in monitoring the response of implementing agencies in line with the standards, principles and code of conduct in humanitarian response. The aim of standards in permanent shelters should be to ensure dignity and quality of life of participating communities.

SECTION 9 – MAINSTREAMING GENDER

Oxfam is committed to mainstreaming gender in all its work. As articulated by Oxfam, “ ***Discrimination and injustice are major causes of poverty worldwide. Ensuring women and men benefit equally from our work is a vital part of what we do.***”

Examples of positive interventions:

- a) An Oxfam partner organisation worked with the local communities as a part of tsunami response and influenced the community leaders to give preference to women-headed households for inclusion in the permanent shelter program as they were previously not given priority for allocation of houses
- b) An Oxfam partner organisation gave opportunity for women interested in learning a new skill to work as masons in the permanent shelter program, by providing them training and placing them under the guidance of the field supervisor. This helped the women find an alternative livelihood option and be confident in their job. This also challenged gender stereotypes prevalent in the area of women being employed only as construction labourers.

Examples of challenges:

a) Though all the partner organisations were conscious of the need to ensure equal pay for women and men, it did not always happen in the shelter program. Whenever the women were directly employed by the partner, they were paid equal wages, but in most cases the labour component of the program was given out on contract, where unequal wages were paid to men and women. It was a learning in the program that organisations must set conditions when giving out contracts and enough opportunities must be provided for women to participate in the program.

b) Domestic violence against women was found to be an issue that women voiced in most project areas where the shelter intervention was implemented. This was not addressed in the shelter program.

c) More efforts to ensure women's participation by different means including providing support for women's work like child care, provision of water near the shelter, etc. would have helped in better addressing the gender aspects in the program.

Guidelines

- 1) Compilation of gender disaggregated data like person days of work generated and number of women involved in the program in various capacities helps to track the differential gender involvement in the program.
- 2) Similarly, information on gender related violence, especially in the aftermath of the disaster is a key requirement to ensure gender mainstreaming in the program. The availability of this information will help in taking up efforts to address the issue in the context of the transitional and permanent shelters.
- 3) Monitoring indicators and reporting formats which specifically seek gender-disaggregated impact information or analysis are required to ensure gender mainstreaming in the program.
- 4) Wage differentials between men and women exist, as very often the construction workers are not employed directly by the project. The contactors who engage the labourers follow wage disparity. Efforts must

be made to ensure that equal wages are paid for both men and women and this should be a pre-condition for finalising the contract.

- 5) Women are employed as unskilled labourers or helpers in most cases which is another reason for lesser wages being paid to them. Efforts to train women workers in different construction related activities, especially where there is a viable livelihood option for the future, would help in reducing wage disparity.
- 6) Women being supported in their reproductive and productive work, for example childcare components in the community or at work sites, or linkages with existing structures for provision of these services encourages greater women's participation in the program.
- 7) Involving men and women in housing design (addressing the differential needs of men and women in the program). Often special efforts need to be made to specifically elicit the views of women on house design and their mere presence in the community meetings/ committees would not ensure that their opinions are heard.
- 8) Creating opportunities for women to involve in monitoring and other program related activities by providing them with information and seeking their participation would help in strengthening women's leadership roles.
- 9) Working with men and involving them in necessitating action against discrimination is a useful tool for gender mainstreaming. This component must be seen as part of the shelter program and not as a stand-alone component.
- 10) Efforts in gender mainstreaming will be successful when staff who implement the program (including the field staff and technical staff) and the managers who take decisions are sensitised on gender issues and their capacities are built in identifying and addressing issues within the organisation and the community. Capacitating teams with practical ways of identifying and responding to gender mainstreaming needs in the project would benefit from Oxfam's rich expertise in the area. Strategies for utilising this optimally need to be well planned.

Guidelines for mainstreaming gender:

The IASC handbook on Different Needs – Equal Opportunities (Shelter) December 2006²⁴ provides information on:

- Gender considerations in site selection, design, construction shelter allocation.
- Actions to ensure gender equality programming in site selection, design, construction and/or shelter allocation
- Checklist to assess gender equality programming in site selection, design, construction and/or shelter allocation
- Checklist for Analysis of gender differences for shelter interventions

Note: A number of guidelines have been developed for mainstreaming gender in shelter interventions. A list of resources has been compiled by IASC²⁵ which is included in Annexure 3.

Conclusion:

Gender mainstreaming was an integral part of all relief and rehabilitation interventions in the tsunami response program. It has been a learning that efforts towards mainstreaming of gender in shelter rehabilitation need to look beyond a few 'activities' to be completed. There is a need to strengthen the planning processes so as to work out practical ways of integration, in a manner that builds onto the quality of each and every aspect of the program.

It may often be the case that the planning for mainstreaming gender may be quite strong at the program level, but could get diluted at the individual project levels. This would need specific attention for support to be given by Oxfam in future responses.

²⁴ These guidelines incorporate references from ADB, Red Cross, Oxfam GB, Sphere project, UN Habitat and UNHCR guidelines.

²⁵ The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) is the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance. It is a unique forum involving the key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners.



Oxfam advocated for joint ownership of permanent homes for both men and women. Insurance was part of the shelter program plan to enhance the coping mechanism of men and women. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

SECTION 10 – MAINSTREAMING HIV/AIDS

Oxfam attempted to incorporate HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention work into all the different sectoral interventions in the entire tsunami response program. As reiterated in the Oxfam International Tsunami fund second year report, “From the outset a decision was made to ‘mainstream’ HIV/AIDS – that is, to incorporate it as an element of all programs.”

Examples of positive interventions:

- a) An Oxfam partner involved the traditional *panchayat* in spreading awareness on HIV/ AIDS and created flex banner hoardings with the awareness messages posted on them. A proactive household in the village was trained as a “master-family” to spread awareness in the village even after the project ended. Linkages with the Nagapattinam District Program Manager (HIV/ AIDS) and the local Primary Health Centre (PHC) were made to utilise existing Government programs to create awareness.

Examples of positive interventions (Contd.):

- b) As part of the Public Health Promotion Program, an Oxfam partner had trained child ambassadors to perform street plays on health and hygiene as well as on HIV/AIDS related issues. Women were encouraged to send their children and also participate in the awareness programs. Posters on HIV/AIDS were displayed in the community hall and children performed the play, thus generating a lot of interest.

Example of challenges:

Efforts to conduct awareness programs on HIV/ AIDS was opposed by the traditional *panchayat* members of a particular village saying “we don’t want this training, because we are not ‘like that’”. (indicating the stigma attached to HIV AIDS) The organisation had to then work with the individual members of the *panchayat* and share about the different modes of transmission, its prevalence in the region, the need to provide awareness and so on, before the traditional *panchayat* members agreed to the organisation conducting awareness campaigns in the village.



Children performing a street play as part of the HIV/AIDS awareness programs conducted in a village at Nagapattinam District, Tamil Nadu. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Some of the guidelines for consideration by teams for HIV mainstreaming in the shelter rehabilitation program could be:

- ***Information to look for while planning HIV mainstreaming in shelter interventions:*** While the use of region-specific statistics about HIV/ AIDS (before and after the disaster) may be useful in giving a broad picture of the HIV/ AIDS scenario in the region, other studies and information such as loss of livelihoods, migration, and breakdown of social norms and systems are useful indicators as they are also shown to have effects on rates of HIV infection.
- ***Appropriate location and habitation design that meets safety and protection needs, especially of women and children:***

Given the often encountered challenges in a post disaster context, of land availability, pressure to meet timelines, it is necessary to invest the required time and resources to ensure that the location and habitation design do not compound vulnerabilities of the disaster affected persons to HIV and AIDS. Addressing safety and privacy needs of different groups (like men, women, children etc.) in permanent shelter sites should be given utmost priority in site selection and habitat designing processes. Planning of shelter habitation needs to ensure community cohesion and social fabric.

In the South India Tsunami response program, Swasti with Oxfam America conducted an explorative research focusing on developing an understanding of the vulnerability of coastal communities towards HIV & AIDS in tsunami hit areas of India. The study had come out with the finding that, of the factors that emerged post-Tsunami, the physical proximity (created through intermediate shelters and proximity between habitations and intermediate shelters) of displaced populations (social groups, localities, gender, marital status) was found to be the primary factor that contributed to a chain of events that led to increased vulnerability to HIV and AIDS. As far as is practical, the designs of intermediate shelters and allocation of shelters need to incorporate issues related to privacy and restoring the original social order (which was in the original location). This finding also gives adequate pointers for the permanent shelter planning.

- ***Timeliness of shelter response:*** As has been a learning across humanitarian programs, the transition from intermediate shelter to permanent shelter often takes much time. As cited in the Swasti

report, “Cash availability, more free time, greater access to alcohol, coping with grief, crumbling of social norms and values can be exacerbated during this period (time gap between relief and rehabilitation). Therefore this period should be treated as the most crucial period in which sexual health related services and products along with knowledge building should be a priority. Attempts, of course, need to be made to keep this period shortest”

It would be imperative to include HIV mainstreaming in a systematic and sustained manner from the initial relief interventions in intermediate shelters, with a commitment to carry this work forward in permanent shelters. In the tsunami response program, many of the organisations had limited capacities to be able to do this themselves in a sustained manner. The selection of appropriate strategies like establishing linkages with organisations having the required expertise, building capacities of implementing teams to be able to provide referral services to the appropriate service providers need to be well articulated in mainstreaming plans.

- **Appropriateness of shelter intervention strategy so as to not increase vulnerability to HIV and AIDS:** If a community self help approach is adopted in shelter reconstruction, involving cash disbursements of huge amounts, this needs to be done with adequate precautionary measures. As cited in the Oxfam HIV vulnerability study²⁶, Cash relief is important; however this study and several others have shown that sudden and large infusions of cash in a society tends to increase alcohol consumption and access to sex work. This is also aided by large amounts of time in hand.

Hence cash relief needs to be carefully planned, preferably staggered and caution exercised in large releases (relatively, in resource poor setting for a household). Other safeguards could also be built wherein the monies released are largely applied to productive use and for use by the entire family.

- **Use of the right approach and methods in awareness campaigns:**
 - Awareness campaigns on an issue like HIV/ AIDS where the awareness is low and the stigma attached to it is high, needs a

²⁶ Study commissioned by Oxfam, Understanding the Effect of the Tsunami and its aftermath on Vulnerability to HIV in Coastal India, March 2007, Swasti Health Resource Centre, Bangalore.

sustained effort with regular follow-up. Getting teams to plan for the long term and then narrowing down to related project specific deliverables could be useful.

- The involvement of local community leaders in spreading the message adds legitimacy to the voice of the campaign and is useful in getting the community interested.
- Awareness campaigns and initiatives in community mobilization and institutional building need to ensure social protection.
- The practise of information dissemination by means which are popular in the community helps in spreading the message faster. Innovative ideas like puppet shows, street plays by children, etc may help in reducing the stigma attached to acknowledgement of dissemination initiatives.
- Awareness creation on HIV/ AIDS must be supplemented by efforts to increase access to sexual health counselling and services, training of traditional health care providers, increasing availability of condoms, and using life-skills approach to HIV/AIDS especially for adolescents and youth in the community.

Conclusion

While HIV mainstreaming may be looked at as a non negotiable by Oxfam, it would be essential to have discussions with implementing teams of what level of mainstreaming work may actually be possible to achieve in the program. It has been a learning that mere orientation and awareness building is not adequate for effective mainstreaming. The tight schedules and workloads of humanitarian teams or the lack of specialist knowledge could often lead to ineffective implementation of mainstreaming plans. A realistic assessment of this could be engaged in and appropriate strategies could be adopted like hiring specialists on a consultancy basis to work with implementing teams over a sustained period, capacitating implementing teams to be able to provide referral services to service providers, etc.

SECTION 11 – INTEGRATING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS (DP)

The value of a permanent shelter program in hazard prone areas can be enhanced by having a component on disaster preparedness and risk reduction built into it. The program must move beyond just providing disaster resistant structures. Others strategies which could be adopted for improving disaster risk reduction and preparedness include increasing coping mechanisms through enhancing access to assets, strengthening of livelihoods and livelihoods promotion, facilitating community involvement in contingency planning, initiatives to involve *Panchayati Raj* institutions²⁷ (PRIs) in DRR strategy and so on.

Guidelines for DRR mainstreaming in shelter rehabilitation program:

It is important to develop a checklist of disaster risk related issues to consider in shelter rehabilitation and incorporate these in program plans. The broad areas for consideration could include:

Assessments:

- Map the history of hazards in a given area – particularly the frequency, magnitude and severity, location, resulting impact and vulnerabilities
- Review local practices in construction and their efficiency in addressing risks to hazards in the past

Planning & Design:

Clearly map out the essential considerations necessary for a habitation planning from a DRR perspective.

- Seek specialist advice on aspects like considerations for design and construction standards necessary to deal with specific hazard risks
- Assess the suitability of the habitation site and detail a plan for site preparation work required
- Coordinate with other stakeholders involved in shelter rehabilitation to exchange knowledge and good practice
- Ensure that the implementing team needs to have appropriate levels of knowledge and expertise in DRR integration in shelter work.
 - Map out the essential design considerations necessary to deal with specific hazard risks

²⁷ Village level governance

- A review of the existing codes of practice for hazard resistance could be undertaken to decide if they are adequate for use or whether they need to be adapted further for the given context. The challenges and good practices documented from other disaster shelter responses, referring to use of these codes could also provide good pointers

Material & Construction:

- Review prescribed/ existing guidelines for what is the kind of materials to be used to reduce the risk of different types of disasters.
- Any new construction techniques or features used for addressing hazard risks should be properly researched and tested
- Develop a construction management system which is able to provide technical inputs and supervision required for addressing local hazard conditions, monitor construction material quality and build on local capacities
- Due consideration needs to be given to possible environmental impact of construction technologies used
- Resources necessary for operations and maintenance needs to be provided for, to ensure that the construction addresses hazard risks on a sustained basis.

Social Aspects

- Detail out a plan for organizing habitation dwellers to develop community contingency plan, understand multiple hazard threats and rescue plans.
- Factor in integration of DRR aspects into other sectoral interventions to develop a one program approach

Some additional references can be found in ‘Transitional settlement displaced populations’²⁸ and the Sphere Standards²⁹, Tools for mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction: Guidance Notes for Development Organisations, Charlotte Benson and John Twigg with Tiziana Rossetto (International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies / the ProVention Consortium.)

²⁸ Transitional settlement displaced populations. Corsellis, T. and Vitale, A. Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge Shelter Project and Oxfam, 2005.

²⁹ Sphere Project. Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response. Geneva: Sphere Project, 2004. Available at: <http://www.sphereproject.org/content/view/27/84/lang,English/>

Example of positive interventions:

An Oxfam partner collected information about the hazard potential of the area and surveyed the land allotted for reconstruction over a period of time to assess the flooding and water logging patterns in the area. They made efforts to address this by building a peripheral retaining wall.

Example of challenges:

An Oxfam partner involved in DRR and DP related work in the region failed to integrate these aspects in the shelter rehabilitation work as they were seen as two different projects. Similarly a lack of an integrated and mutually complimentary effort was lacking in other sectors such as public health and livelihoods. If these initiatives had been integrated well, they could have contributed to reduction in risk and vulnerability.

Conclusion

Planning for adequate investment of resources on vulnerability and risk reduction as a continuum of long term development is crucial to ensure sustainability. Shelter interventions geared towards building local capacities and disaster preparedness would have long term benefits in building onto the inherent resilience of communities to cope with disasters. Pre disaster advocacy also has a major role to play in building a culture of risk reduction in the development process. Humanitarian agencies need to focus their energies in this area also.

SECTION 12 – MAKING OURSELVES MORE ACCOUNTABLE

Oxfam International's position on humanitarian accountability ³⁰

Oxfam International believes that our key stakeholders are those affected by humanitarian crises. We believe that:

- By being more accountable to beneficiaries, humanitarian response programs can have substantially greater impact, can help affected communities recover more quickly, and can lay stronger foundations for sustainable development;
- All humanitarian programs should primarily be accountable to beneficiary community members in disaster-affected locations and should be able to prove this independently.

Examples of positive interventions:

- a) In one of the shelter projects, the formation of Project Management Committees (PMC) with representatives of each household seemed to be one of the factors instrumental in operationalizing people's participation in the shelter program. The PMC meetings were seen as a forum where issues could be discussed and concerns raised with the representatives of the organisation and with the representatives of Oxfam whenever they visited the site. This was one of the complaints redressal and accountability mechanisms set in place by Oxfam, which was quite effective.
- b) A woman from a participant household from one of the shelter projects remarked, "It is commonly acknowledged in these parts that our houses are among the best that have been built as a part of the tsunami rehabilitation." She said that during the construction process, they had to miss many family get-togethers too, which they did very willingly because they wanted to ensure that they were present for the PMC meetings.

³⁰ Ref: OI Policy Compendium Note on Humanitarian Accountability

Examples of positive interventions (Contd.):

c) In one project area, the partner provided personal accident insurance along with the house insurance to the participating households, since they were involved in risky occupations like fishing. Within the first year of providing the insurance, one of the men from the participating households lost his life while he was out in the sea. The insurance claim amount helped his family to have some money to continue their lives. This also helped in greater importance being given by the community for insurance of assets.

Example of challenges:

Most partners felt that sharing financial information with participating communities would create complications like unreasonable demands which would be difficult to handle. Oxfam was not very successful in negotiating for this to be done adequately in the shelter program.

Guidelines:

- 1) Reporting systems need to communicate the details about the program to the community including standards used, amount spent, and the source of funds.
- 2) Devising mechanisms for complaint sharing and redress, and sharing it with the community can help in improving the accountability of the project.
- 3) Social audit is a useful tool for enhancing accountability.
- 4) The field staff and supervisors must be oriented towards systematising efforts to enhance accountability. By being the visible face of the organisation for the communities, their attitude and behaviours matter a lot in promoting accountability to the community.
- 5) Accountability must be seen in terms of accountability to the participating households and participating communities, donors, Government and all other stakeholders of the program (like staff, workers, suppliers, contractors and so on).
- 6) Regular and periodic efforts to elicit perceptions of accountability of the program from various stakeholders, as a part of the monitoring process, not only provides valuable information regarding

accountability, but also acts as a valuable process to increase accountability of the program.

- 7) Regular flow of information and communication between and among different stakeholders helps to increase accountability. This aspect can be built into the program as a non-negotiable indicator for monitoring the program and evaluating its successes.



Oxfam has placed a display board with name and photos of beneficiaries at the permanent shelter site in Kollam, Kerala. Beneficiary identification was done involving the community as well as the District Administration. (Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

Some guidelines drafted by Oxfam International for implementing enhanced accountability in the program³¹:

Targeting and Reach:

- Ensure that the minimum standards of accountability that are agreed with the partner and the mechanisms that are in place for operationalising the accountability systems have a strong component of gender mainstreaming integrated into it. There needs to be an emphasis on ensuring that the most vulnerable sections of the community including women, marginalized communities, people living with HIV/AIDS and children have adequate scope for participating in all the mechanisms established for the purpose. This need to be closely monitored against SMART indicators which are integrated into the program design and plan.

Enhance capacity of the partners in the following areas:

- A focused reorientation on minimum standards of accountability that Oxfam believes in needs to be given to partner staff at all levels, from the management to field level staff. The reference documents for Oxfam's accountability systems needs to be made available to partners after a systematic orientation on these are provided to them:
 - International Confederation of Red Cross Red Crescent (ICRC)
 - Sphere Charter
 - Humanitarian Accountability Partnership-International (HAP-I)
 - People in Aid
 - Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance for Humanitarian Action (ALNAP)
- Shared understanding of accountability needs to be ensured with Oxfam and its partners regarding the various parameters against which accountability is measured, namely *Participation, Transparency, Staff capacities, Learning and Decision Making, Complaint and Response Mechanisms*.
- Developing and implementing accountability systems - Oxfam might need to provide specialist ongoing support to partners for being able to do this. There also needs to be an emphasis on Oxfam to be working with partners in helping them document the accountability systems that already exist, and are being improved upon, in an ongoing manner.

³¹ Deriving from the recommendations from the Evaluation Report on Downward Accountability of Oxfam & their NGHO (Non Governmental Humanitarian Organisations) Partners to Beneficiaries in the Tsunami Response Program in South India , Catalyst Management Services Private Limited, March 2007

- Strengthening monitoring mechanisms at the partner level- Partners need to be assisted in integrating minimum standards and accountability indicators into their program design. There needs to be a mechanism to ensure that this is tracked throughout the program, in their performance management systems, internal reporting, reporting to Oxfam, reporting to beneficiaries.
- Develop a checklist of information that needs to be made available to participating communities by the partner and track how this information is being used/ updated in an ongoing manner.

Create increased opportunities for cross learning

- *At the community level:* Especially in intervention through groups, encourage cross learning visits at least within the Oxfam partner network.
- *At the partner level:* Encourage partners to develop systematic external evaluation of their programs as part of their accountability measure. *At the Oxfam level:* Enhanced mechanisms for sharing each other's work internally for future learning.

Improve reporting/ documentation systems

- Partner and affiliate reports need to report against key accountability indicators which are treated as non negotiable standards in the program. The indicators for measurement of program result areas need to be captured in the narrative reporting. These minimum indicators need to be jointly developed and understood by Oxfam, its partners and the participating communities.
- Mechanisms for ensuring the participation of all the stakeholders need to be in place and its progress needs to be documented by Oxfam as well as by the partners.
- While there may exist feedback mechanisms, systems for ensuring participating communities involvement in various stages of program design, development and management at the community level, it goes largely unrecognized due a lack of a systematic mechanism of documenting such efforts. This needs to be given special focus by partners, through capacity building initiatives. There is a lot of scope for integrating this system especially in programs which work with community groups where there are already existing systems for operation and documentation.

Increase Visibility

- While there may be accountability systems integrated into the respective programs and projects, there needs to be specifically

designed mechanism put in place to ensure 'accountability' in its true sense, which is well documented and shared with others. For instance, every partner organization could be encouraged and supported to have an organizational accountability policy.

Accountability needs to be ensured from all stakeholders

- Participating communities need to be oriented about their rights as well as responsibilities. There needs to be an agreement established by the partner with the participating communities that:
 - while they would ensure that they are accountable to them in mutually agreed parameters that are established early on in the program
 - There needs to be some basic responsibilities and parameters through which, the communities need to be accountable to the partner organizations, with the spirit of establishing a mutually respectful relationship based on an equal footing.

Systematize accountability mechanisms at the partner organisational level

- Oxfam needs to support the partners in developing an accountability framework with certain non negotiable principles that would be adhered to in all their programs. This way, accountability systems that are initiated in Oxfam supported programs would be carried forward in a sustainable manner.
- There could also be specific guidelines that each organization could develop for a humanitarian context, and formalize the same in the form of an organisational policy document.

Complaints mechanisms:

- Written policy and guidelines on complaint/ feedback and redressal mechanisms needs to be formally incorporated at the partner level.

Conclusion

The understanding that being accountable to participants of humanitarian aid requires focussed action is well reflected in the Oxfam International Policy Compendium Note on Humanitarian Accountability. It requires the development of a number of practical mechanisms to ensure transparency and openness, and to ensure that all humanitarian responses are appropriate to those affected in terms of their content, scale, and in the way they are implemented. Oxfam recommends that all humanitarian organizations resource and prioritize practical ways to enhance their accountability to beneficiaries by ensuring:

- Participation of affected communities in all aspects of program response, from assessment to evaluation;
- Provision of information relevant to communities' needs in order that they may claim their rights under international humanitarian law, and clearly understand what humanitarian organizations can and cannot provide;
- A means for communities to voice both positive feedback and criticism to those providing humanitarian assistance, and receive appropriate redress.

SECTION 13 – ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY OF OUR INITIATIVES

The understanding of sustainability in shelter interventions goes beyond the structural performance of constructions. It encompasses many other aspects like the ownership of the program by participating households and an exit strategy which is discussed from the initial conceptual stages of the program. This would contribute to the benefits of the program being carried on after the end of the project life.

Example of positive interventions:

The setting up of resident welfare associations in one of Oxfam's partner projects was a good strategy to ensure sustainability of initiatives. These collectives were formed with specific roles and responsibilities being agreed to by participating households for the operation and maintenance of the facilities created.

Example of challenges:

Oxfam did not include in the agreements with partners engaged in shelter construction to provide support beyond the program period for evaluation and necessary follow up. This gave limited scope to track how sustainable our interventions had been. The engagement in post habitation support was more left to the choice of partners.

Guidelines:

- 1) The initiatives in the shelter program addressing long standing vulnerabilities, like positive changes in gender relations, class and caste relations and creating sustainable livelihood options need to be linked with other existing longer term development initiatives.
- 2) Proactively sharing what has been achieved in the program with other stakeholders, working with partners in planning for the longer term could be engaged in as part of the exit strategy.
- 3) Undertaking participatory reviews for assessing the reduction in disaster risk due to the shelter intervention could further empower communities in sustaining risk reduction practices.
- 4) Include a time frame for post habitation follow up and review in the shelter intervention plan for:
 - Reviewing the performance of the structures created in the defect liability period
 - Providing the required support for operations and maintenance of the structures and habitation as required
 - Facilitate communities to establish linkages with other major service providers like the government to ensure access to safety net programs
 - Follow up on the performance of the exit strategy which was discussed and agreed with the participating households, Government and others.

Conclusion

It is recognized that community participation and ownership is a continuum and varies according to the context, community involved and their relation to the program. But, in keeping with the continuing quest for greater participation and community ownership, more efforts are always desirable.

In a shelter program, it is often a delicate balance maintaining the discipline in construction management, which often calls for tough measures, and involvement in community development, which requires a different approach to the community. A team effort coupled with multi-pronged strategies in addressing vulnerabilities along with the construction activity can achieve greater sustainability of the efforts and resources put into the program.

SECTION 14 – ESTABLISHING SYSTEMS FOR EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF THE PROGRAM

The commitment towards ensuring that the program meets the shelter needs of disaster affected communities need to be reflected in operational systems for measuring progress towards deliverables. These need to be agreed with implementing partners and communities. Often new frameworks and systems for monitoring are developed on a project to project basis, to suit specific donor needs. It is recognised that this may well be a basic requirement and have its own value. However, we constantly need to monitor the program on two main aspects. Firstly, how these systems positively influence the ways in which we hold ourselves accountable. Secondly, how are we meeting commitments made to participating communities in the program.

Examples of positive interventions:

- a) Monitoring of a partner organisation's work was done along with a technical consultant engaged by Oxfam. The program also had a partnership with the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (IISc) whose guidance helped in the monitoring process. The organisation submitted various structural test results at different stages of the construction, which helped in keeping track of the quality of construction. There were number of instances where by they could make positive changes in design of various elements and repair defects within the project period itself due to internal monitoring by the organisation and by Oxfam. For instance, the change in the design of ventilator glazing and introduction of flashing in the front door were done to keep the rain water out. Similarly cracks sighted in one of the internal walls were repaired by use of expansive crack filling material.
- b) The creation and maintenance of proper documentation is a factor which helps in supportive monitoring of a process. All possible forms of documentation including beneficiary list, drawings of various kinds, soil testing report, house to house construction monitoring sheets, concrete cube test reports, completion report etc. were available with one organisation who implemented the permanent shelter program in partnership with Oxfam. They had maintained proper photo documentation of all the different stages of the project as well.

Example of challenges:

Lack of common levels of understanding by Oxfam, partner management and field teams led to monitoring of technical aspects given more importance in the shelter projects. At times, aspects other than construction were perceived to be more of Oxfam's reporting requirements.

Guidelines:

- 1) Monitoring must be carried out throughout the program by adequate trained personnel using agreed indicators and frequency.
- 2) Monitoring reports against various shelter and humanitarian response principles and standards could serve as a constant reminder of the various principles, in addition to serving as a valuable documentation of the entire program.
- 3) Monitoring data formats asking how women, children, men and other groups were differentially consulted would help in getting diverse voices into the monitoring process.
- 4) Reporting formats must have a specific section on how various monitoring feedback and recommendations were used to inform the ongoing program and make mid-course corrections.
- 5) Feedback by the monitoring team and the reports sent to the implementing agency are often not communicated to the staff, especially the field staff.
- 6) Field visit reports should be compiled and maintained in a file for future reference. These should form part of detailed hand over notes and terminal reports by program or project managers
- 7) Monitoring by different agencies using different guidelines can result in reduced clarity for implementing teams. Channels of communication must be clear and open so that feedback is seen and agreed by the monitoring group, and the response of the implementing agency is actively considered.

MONITORING TOOLS

A variety of means are available for use by program and project managers and other stakeholders for monitoring a program or project.

1. Work Plans

Following the preparation of a log frame or any other monitoring tool in a participative manner, program or project managers must seek complete work plans and within it specific and detailed weekly or monthly plans to translate the project document into operational terms. The work plans should describe in detail the delivery of inputs, the activities to be conducted (which one and how), and the expected results. They should clearly indicate schedules and the persons and/or institutions responsible for providing the inputs and producing results. The work plans should be used as the basis for monitoring the progress of program or project implementation. Work plans for housing projects can be used to forecast material and labour (skills) requirement, which is vital to find cost effective options to find adequate quantity and quality. Preparations of work plan by the implementing partners clarify needs and by itself is a useful learning and empowering process.

2. Field Visits

Program or project managers must make field visits at regular intervals and adequate budgetary resources should be allocated for this purpose. In addition to inspecting the sites, physical outputs and services of the program or project, the visits must focus on interaction with target groups to obtain their views on how the program or project is affecting them (directly or indirectly, positively or negatively) and their proposed solutions to perceived problems.

Persons undertaking the field visits must prepare their reports either at the site or immediately after the visits, focusing on relevance and performance, including early signs of potential problem or success areas. Sphere indicators could be used to comment on the relevance and performance aspects.

3. Stakeholder Meetings:

The objective of stakeholder meetings is to involve the major stakeholders in addressing issues that pertain to the programs or projects, thereby creating a

sense of ownership. It is essential that target groups that are expected to be affected by the programs or projects be involved in the discussion of issues relevant to them.

Depending on the issues and problems to be addressed, these meetings may be conducted at different levels and venues at varying frequency. Technical and operational issues may be handled at the program or project management level whereas policy issues that have significant implications for the program or project and their ultimate beneficiaries may be discussed at a higher level, with the Government involving the participating communities. Regular participation in coordination mechanisms is a good opportunity to flag-off policy issues, which can be followed-up through structured advocacy efforts.

Program or project management meetings must be conducted regularly. Reports should be prepared on all of these meetings and shared with all the partners.

4. Systematic Reporting during Implementation

At the program management level there must be systematic reporting on the relevance, performance and likelihood of success of the program or project. Project managers should seek regular progress reports and updates as part of construction management. Even simple spreadsheets (MS Excel) to monitor progress on individual houses, use of materials, site development etc. can generate adequate information to facilitate management decisions. Periodic reports should include reference to any changes made to design and the reason and process adopted to arrive at the decision. Revised drawings, revised estimates, minutes of meeting etc. should be part of the periodic reports from the implementing agency.

5. Terminal Reports

Upon completion of a program or project, the executing agency must prepare a terminal report that focuses on the relevance and performance of the program or project, the likelihood of its success, and the initial lessons learned in terms of best and worst practices. The report should also contain recommendations for follow-up actions. The terminal reporting should be utilized as an opportunity to collate all the vital documents. It would be valuable for Oxfam to prepare a completion report too, to further substantiate the overall observations and analysis of the whole program.

Conclusion

In the South India Tsunami Response Program, the various standards and principles as outlined in SPHERE, Red Cross of Conduct, HAP-I formed the basis of all monitoring and evaluation work.

A key learning for Oxfam has been that while there may be some challenges in practical integration of this in existing partner monitoring and reporting systems, which would imply additional workload, more often than not, the value that this has in improving the quality of the program was seen. The approach of Oxfam which believes in mutual respect and collaboration in partnering with local organizations is well reflected through this.

It has also been a learning in the tsunami response program that though there was a lot of commitment towards integrating program quality standards and codes of conduct, there was a gap in translating these into operational terms which could be monitored and reported against on a regular basis. This may probably be attributed in part, to the limited timeframe of the program itself. However, having a well planned out schedule which gives adequate focus on the importance of establishing systems and investing in the capacity building needs of partner organizations would be a way forward. Therefore, irrespective of the duration of the program, setting up effective monitoring systems is something that cannot be compromised.

A checklist of overarching result areas and indicators was developed in the South India Tsunami Response which could be an example point of reference to develop an appropriate program plan/ log frame. (Annexure 1). These are relevant in every stage of the program and could be adapted to be a part of program and project plans, monitoring frameworks, monitoring and reporting systems at all levels and could also form the basis of evaluation work that is done.

There are additional indicators and references especially useful for the initial relief stages in humanitarian response, which could be drawn from Sphere guidelines, Humanitarian Accountability Partnership, Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programs and other standards that Oxfam is committed towards.

SECTION 15 – WORKING WITH OTHERS

The establishment of partnerships is a useful strategy in the rehabilitation context of post disaster situations, as it has the potential to strengthen the link between relief and development. Post disaster housing naturally occupies this domain and practically links disasters and development. Partnerships between international and local NGOs have the potential to increase the efficiency of aid, as it is a strategy that makes use of local capacities and builds upon local structures. The value addition of drawing from experiences in the humanitarian sector across countries and specific technical expertise in project design, development and management complemented by a thorough understanding of the local context defines such partnerships.

Managing shelter programs is always a challenge, which is normally longer in duration and complex compared to other sectoral programs. Partnership becomes a useful approach to bring-in diverse competencies that are required for effective handling of post disaster housing programs.

However, a numbers of studies³² on partnership between international and local NGOs have concluded that ideal partnerships are virtually impossible. Typically these studies revolve around analyses based on power, discourse, interdependence, functionality etc.³³ The argument is that partnerships in the field need not be a mirror of the ideal vision of partnerships as described in theory. Therefore, a balance of various factors so as to optimise on the strengths of different people involved in the partnership arrangement needs to be arrived at.

³² The inherent inequality between NGOs is mostly related to unequal power relations (Lister, 2000). Northern NGOs mainly provide financial and technical resources, while local NGOs are providing local knowledge and links to the grassroots. The resources provided by the international NGOs to the local NGOs are recognised to be more important than the other way around. Hence, it is a one-way resource dependency; which occurs 'upwards' rather than 'downwards', creating a level of dependence and unequal power relations (Lister 2000).

³³ Analysing institutional partnerships in development: a contract between equals or a loaded process? Progress in Development Studies, Vol. 6, No. 4, 321-336 (2006), SAGE Publications

OI Humanitarian Partnership Policy – Summary of Principles³⁴

Ethical Codes

OI is a signatory organisation of several humanitarian codes and standards (e.g. Red Cross Code of Conduct, HAP-I, Sphere, People in Aid and Code Against Sexual Exploitation). OI will not compromise the fulfilment of these codes, either when it works with partners or directly. No exceptions will be made and fulfilment of the CoC is non-negotiable. OI will ensure active measures are taken to ensure principles respected and a contractual part of working with partners. This is particularly relevant to the principles of independence and impartiality, as it is common that local organisations are engaged in their local realities and have legitimate interests that may compromise their ability to operate in an impartial and independent way. *“OI will never compromise the humanitarian mandate for any other principle.”*

Quality Standards

OI aspires to deliver humanitarian aid in compliance with the Sphere Minimum Standards; and expects OI partners to as well, despite the debates and difficulties in worldwide implementation. It requests that all OI partners working on Humanitarian responses be trained in Sphere Standards.

Upward and downward Accountability

OI remains accountable to its constituencies (victims of disasters); to the people we work for, and to the donors, for all these principles and can not transfer its ethical responsibilities to third parties. OI remains fully accountable (morally and legally) to its legal bodies, to the people we work for, its donors and supporters.

Clear timeframe of engagement, capacity building and exit

Oxfam international should have a defined, documented and responsible strategy of empowering engagement (including support to the capacities of partners) and timely, pre-planned withdrawal.

Building capacity partners

Working with partners in humanitarian responses implies a deliberate act of investing and promoting the capacity of those partners that are able and willing to work within the OI humanitarian framework.

Source: summarised from OI Humanitarian Partnership Policy

³⁴ Ref: Humanitarian Partnerships, A review of Oxfam Lessons for practise, Oxfam International, March 2008

Example of positive interventions:

Oxfam invested considerable resources in developing a shelter intervention plan with partner teams and communities. A clear mapping of existing strengths as against what was sought to be achieved in the program was the basis for agreeing on roles and responsibilities of different teams. Adequate care was taken to ensure that Oxfam's engagement in the project was on mutually agreed terms which were well appreciated by partners and communities. This approach helped build a much valued and fruitful partnership in the program.

"We really appreciated Oxfam's insistence on community participation and their professional approach to handling the shelter program. Though our program with Oxfam was only for a limited number of houses, the inputs we received from Oxfam and the management practices they followed helped us in our other donor funded shelter programs as well." – Chief functionary of a partner organisation.

Example of challenges:

Strained relationships with a partner reduced the level of information shared between Oxfam, partner and communities. Though Oxfam chose to hire an external technical consultant in the project for regular monitoring of the program, little was achieved in adding value to other social aspects in shelter rehabilitation. A flexible approach to partnership defined by existing capacities of different teams so as to complement each other would have strengthened the monitoring in the program.

Guidelines:

- 1) Participatory assessment and definition of **relevance, performance and criteria of success** for the proposed program could be the starting point of any post disaster partnership for delivery of services like water, sanitation, housing, food etc.
- 2) Joint analysis of and commitment to the **‘results chain’** can help partners find the desired equilibrium and focus on the needs of the affected families.
- 3) Partnerships should be viewed as a strategy to achieve the various quality standards set out clearly and mutually agreed to in the project, rather than being an end in itself
- 4) As reflected in the overall intended Oxfam's way of working, Oxfam could aim to provide result-oriented assistance (more than funds) to the project/program (not the partner). Scale and diversity of resources flowing from Oxfam and the partners would depend on their comparative advantages³⁵. Duration and intensity of cooperation (technical, social, legal etc.) has to be tuned to respond to the varied needs of the project over time and space.
- 5) Different types of partnerships can be useful in their own contexts. Hence Oxfam and partners could explore means and ways to establish practical partnerships, which has a shared vision of providing need based response to the affected men, women and children. Inclusion of capacity building and capability enhancement activities to achieve desired results can become a preferred way of working. Idea should be to empower the implementing arm (local NGO, community, labour etc.) of the project/program, when needed.
- 6) Establish clarity with implementing partners about the performance expected from them to achieve results in the given context. This process is termed as ‘performance approximation’, which can be agreed using guidelines mentioned in section - 6. of this handbook. The next step is to assume broad roles and responsibilities based on the comparative advantage of various teams. This two step process will link expected performance with comparative advantages.

³⁵ The principle of comparative advantage applies that essential activities are undertaken only by those organizations with the capacity and experience to meet the **challenges** (required performance).

- 7) Agreeing on roles and responsibilities would be useful irrespective of existing partner capacities, in order to have a written agreement on the core project deliverables. Practical ways to jointly monitor these in an ongoing manner with the involvement of participating communities, Oxfam (where possible and seen as necessary) and partner representatives is essential for successfully tracking this. The belief is that delivering performance in-line with their comparative advantages by the partners will lead to a situation of joint accountability, which would need some degree of joint project management.
- 8) Establishment of systems for Result Oriented Monitoring of social and technical domains of the program should be done jointly with implementing organisations and the affected community. Appropriate instruments for performance measurement should be designed and deployed with various teams like:
 - a. Affected community/beneficiaries.
 - b. Implementing partner
 - c. Oxfam's program/technical teams (such as Shelter, water and sanitation, livelihoods and other sectoral teams for an integrated approach, program quality teams –including gender, HIV mainstreaming experts, monitoring and evaluation experts, etc.)
 - d. Oxfam's management and financial team.

Conclusion

As reflected in the OI document on Humanitarian Partnership: Lessons for Practice, Feb 2008, debates within the organisation around what mode of partnership is to be engaged in humanitarian response have been around alleviating suffering and saving lives, versus the longer term focus on the need to build autonomous local or regional capacity.

Among different affiliates there are different tolerances for response failure, and different thresholds to want to 'send in the cavalry' when things seem to be slipping beneath a minimum standard. The report goes on to say that in any one humanitarian response, there may be a range of partnership working and 'mixed methodologies', even with the same partner, including:

- more operational model with partner liaison only,
- more task-oriented partner contracting
- partner-led approaches and

- partner only approaches where Oxfam is not present and acts only as a remote donor

It has been recommended in the same report that scenario discussions should take place with partners on how needs, relationships and contracts might change in a crisis response. These discussions could form the basis of understanding where partners may have more or less capacity and where they would require additional support. Recommendations for Consultative Contracting include:

- Assess the partners own vision and objectives
- Consult on the plan, involve in action planning
- Communicate Oxfam's needs and standards
- Clarify the partner's needs and standards

While long-term relationships in the development context could provide greater avenues for trust-building, which is one of the main elements of a successful partnership, this might be more challenging to achieve in the short-term context of a humanitarian response.

The partnerships established in shelter reconstruction programs need to serve the overall purpose of complementing each other's capacities so as to meet the habitation and resettlement needs of the displaced communities.

SECTION 16 - WHAT DOCUMENTS TO MAINTAIN IN A PERMANENT SHELTER PROGRAM

This list indicates various processes while implementing a post disaster housing program and the corresponding minimum documentation to be maintained.

There are several other aspects which are cross-cutting themes and should be reflected in the documents wherever applicable. Some of these cross cutting themes include reporting with respect to humanitarian and technical standards and guidelines, community participation, gender issues, and contribution to reduction in vulnerability and disaster risk for participating communities.

It is important that these documents are shared between all the partners and some of them can be shared with external actors as well.

Sl. No.	Process	List of Documents/ Reports etc.
1.	All the mapping and drawings done while discussing the design and technology with the potential house owners (beneficiaries)	Pictures and flip charts used for participatory design development.
2.	Convert the above design into a set of architectural drawings	Layouts, Plans, Section s, elevations and a 3D
3	Make a scaled model and share it with beneficiaries.	-Scaled models. -Recorded agreed changes within the drawings with dates and reason for change.
4.	Make revisions in the architectural drawings if there is agreement for any design change.	Recorded agreed changes within the drawings with dates and reason for change.
5.	Make working basic drawings including structural drawings if necessary.	Foundation plan, Floor plan, roof plan At least two Section s, all elevation, and structural drawings if necessary.
6.	Detailing: Make all the detailed drawings	Toilet detail, kitchen detail, door and window drawings, electrical plan, plumbing layout, and other details as per the design.
7.	Prepare estimates with specifications. Any design revision, change in rates of labour or materials would have affect on the estimate.	Maintain all the estimates and the changes affected from time to time.
8	Subject items listed from 4 to 7 to a third party scrutiny	Get a written report.
9	Get design approval from statutory authority by submitting all the drawings	Copy of the approved drawings.
10	Any suggestions and revisions to design done during construction to be recorded within the drawings with dates and reason for change.	This is a standard practice.
11	Prepare work plan	Gantt Charts

12	Material mobilization, logistics etc. which are part of construction management	Material procurement plan/schedules, warehouse related documentation.
13	Meeting with various stakeholders	Minutes of meetings, particularly with the community
14	Monitoring reports	Reporting against mutually agreed technical and social standards and quality parameters
15	Progress reports on construction	Use simple formats and excel sheets
16	Report progress to statutory authority and upwards within the organisation.	Copies of letter/correspondence
17	Produce necessary IEC material.	Reports and awareness material.
18	HIV, Gender mainstreaming in the program	Specific plan of action, periodic progress reports, case studies and reports
19	Human resource planning	Human Resource (H.R.) plan, organogram, etc.
20	Exit plan	Planned milestones and periodic reports on progress

Example checklist list of other documentation to be maintained:

- Partner appraisal documents
- Agreement regarding the minimum deliverables in the project with a corresponding analysis of existing capacities at partner, Oxfam, community levels. Documentation of capacity building needs and a plan to address these
- PRA (social and resource maps of the community) and other process documentation as part of the needs assessment
- Beneficiary list ratified by the community, government, Oxfam and partner before commencing the project
- List of key contacts – including partner staff, *Panchayat* president /local representative, etc.
- Agreement documents with Oxfam, the partner, community, government
- Proposal explicitly stating the background, core outcomes, outputs and impact of the project, list of indicators against which the entire

program will be monitored, tracking mechanism, details about program design, development, implementation and management with clearly defined roles of Oxfam, partner, community, government and other stakeholders

- Budget with a detailed breakup
- Monitoring and reporting frameworks.
- Partner work progress reports including details on the program and finance related aspects (agree on the minimum requirements for these early on and document the support required for the partner to be able to do this with a timeline)
- Field visit reports from Oxfam, partner staff, external consultants and resource persons (preferably within a week of each visit), clearly documenting the details of the visit like place visited, observations made, details of who were involve in the discussions, analysis of the observations made, recommended follow up with division of roles and responsibilities with a timeline.
- Oxfam Finance monitoring visit reports
- Important communications between Oxfam, partners, communities, others to be documented and filed.
- Documentation of concerns regarding design and other construction management aspects with a proposed follow up plan by Oxfam, partner, communities with a timeline. Also document how these were addressed
- Accountability mechanisms (complaints redressal mechanism to be documented in written. Regularly update how this has been implemented)
- In joint responses with other Oxfam affiliates document key learning's shared by others and explore the possibility of replicating good practices.

SECTION 17 – CONCLUSION

Oxfam for many decades has been acknowledged to have a comparative advantage when it comes to technical aspects of delivering humanitarian response. Building on the post-tsunami experience of post disaster housing, Oxfam could, if it chose to allocate resources to develop its competence and expertise in this area of response as well.

There are many debates within Oxfam and other humanitarian organisations who consider their core competencies to lie outside the scope of permanent shelter interventions. For instance, Oxfam GB's shelter policy states, "Due to land access issues; project costs vs. beneficiary numbers; lengthy construction time frames; and high level of management resources required; **permanent housing is not considered as an appropriate Oxfam humanitarian intervention.** Oxfam GB will not get involved in the construction of permanent houses, but will lobby other actors (including governments, UN agencies, and other NGOs) to ensure that the permanent shelter needs of displaced families are attended to in a consultative and dignified manner."

While it may not be considered an appropriate intervention organisationally, there could be pressures to undertake more such interventions in the future, considering the scale of disasters taking place. It would then be prudent to invest resources in building organisational capacity to intervene when necessary.

Additionally, post-disaster housing occupies the unique position of being the usual link between disaster relief and development. It offers a distinctive opportunity to mainstream issues such as gender, HIV/ AIDS, Disaster Risk Reduction and other cross cutting program quality aspects in the rehabilitation process, which calls for deployment of adequate trained human resources who can bring these perspectives.

During the post-tsunami response in South India, some of the projects owe part of their success to the quality of human resource set in place in the project. Therefore, apart from providing funds, Oxfam and its partners could consider deploying adequate human resources who can bring the required perspective on various issues (public health, HIV, Gender equity and equality) to supplement the shelter program.

Oxfam has rich organisational expertise in Public health promotion and other relief and rehabilitation work with displaced communities. Engagement in permanent shelter as a continuum of its work in transitional/ temporary

settlements would provide Oxfam with additional opportunities for creating greater positive impact in the lives of disaster affected communities.

This handbook is intended for consideration by Oxfam teams in planning future interventions in permanent shelter. It would be valuable for Oxfam to consider consultations with other leading stakeholders involved in shelter rehabilitation work to identify opportunities for how it could add value to the approaches in shelter rehabilitation presently in practice.



One of the permanent homes meeting specific community needs, built by an Oxfam partner in the Tsunami Response Program in South India.
(Photo: Marie Banu Jawahar/Oxfam)

SECTION 18- ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE-1

SUGGESTIONS FOR MONITORING AND REPORTING FORMAT IN A SHELTER PROGRAM

A. Example of a PARTNER LEVEL MONITORING FRAMEWORK AND REPORTING FORMAT

This could be developed further/ altered in discussion with partners, in the initial field visits, taking information from the project plan. This would be the basis for all the monitoring work that we as well as partners do.

Overall framework

Project Structure	Objectively verifiable Indicators	Timeline	Means of Verification	Key risks or assumptions in the project and control mechanism	Frequency of monitoring	Responsibility - support needed from other staff
Goal /overall objective as articulated in the proposal						
Purpose (Intended impact of the project) as articulated in the proposal						
Outputs/ Results						

Activities						
Inputs						

Suggested Partner level Reporting format:

I. Progress against key activities

Activities scheduled for this reporting period (as in the log frame)	Progress against activities for this reporting period	Changes in the plan/ Delays if any and reasons	Changes if any in Plan of action for coming reporting period

II. Narrative report

1. Goal /overall objective

State the goal and mention any changes in the plan and reasons (Changes in beneficiaries, target villages, strategies adopted, etc which has an implication on the overall objective)

Example

Targeted families who are currently living in the temporary shelters or structurally insecure houses will have made informed choices about their relocation, and are able to lead a dignified, socially secured and normal life with access to basic essential services in their new permanent houses built by Oxfam partners

2. Process reporting

- a) ***Progress made against Results and indicators (in addition to the core project result areas could to be added here) and processes put in place to achieving the same. Exceptional reporting could be used where necessary***
- b) ***Key challenges faced in the program***

c) *Specific recommendations/ suggestions if any for improving the quality of the program*

d) Financial information: (Please attach financial report)

- a. Total budget
- b. Total amount of funds received
- c. Total amount of funds spent so far
- d. Total Balance held
- e. Reason for delays in spending/ overspending if any, what are the implications and how this will be managed

b) Case studies

Case studies could be documented to reflect issues such as:

- Reaching out to vulnerable and discriminated people who might otherwise not be consulted
- To track the changes our program has had in the lives of individual men, women, children as they themselves see it. (Example: How being part of a self help group has helped women increase their decision making power at home)
- Documentation of how our own interventions demonstrate accountability
- How the community level monitoring mechanisms helped build local capacities?
- How a community based organisation got together to resolve issues related to access to land/ access to public health services, access to livelihoods from relocated sites, etc
- Documentation of personal testimonials –people talking about the positive changes in their life like increased negotiating skills with the government, how they valued accountability mechanisms in the program, how they were involved in various stages of the program/project design, etc

Example 1: photo case study: (Doesn't take much time- so could be an easy tool to use. Partner report as well as Oxfam staff's field visit reports could have a few of these so that we also focus on impact level reporting)

Picture Caption: (Gives the overall idea of what we are trying to highlight)

<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto; padding: 10px;"> <p>PHOTOGRAPH- Individual/ Group</p> </div>	<p><i>“Quote from the person highlighting the change the intervention brought about in her/his life.”</i></p>
<p><i>Include one line about Oxfam's project-geographical reach, gender segregated information on beneficiaries reached/to be reached, budget, overall objective.</i></p>	

Name, organisation of the photographer, Date

Example 2: Narrative Case study template

- 1) **Title:** Good titles are simple, jargon-free, and have impact; they summarize the story in a nutshell; and include action verbs that bring the story to life. Your title should include as few words as possible:
- 2) **Photograph:** Your photograph will bring the story to life. The photo should be colourful, depict action, capture people's attention, and feature a main character prominently. Please attach only a .jpeg, and maintain at least 300 dpi (dots per inch). Photograph size should not exceed 1 MB.
 - Permission to use Photograph
 - Photographer's Name
 - Photographer's Organization
 - Caption

- 3) **Story Opening:** The beginning of your story should grab the readers' attention while presenting the case and setting up the need for a solution. This section introduces the character, conflict, and opportunity in 2-3 paragraphs. Two good ways to do this is to present the conflict or share a first person account. The first two paragraphs need to show the challenge which the person encountered and the context for the Oxfam program. Oxfam need **not** be within the text.
- 4) **Main body of story:** The middle section continues the story by describing how Oxfam's program took action to improve the situation. Highlight details of what Oxfam did or funded. This part of the story can be written in 2-3 paragraphs.
- 5) **Conclusion / Summary:** The final section describes the end result or benefit.
 - What changed in the person's life? What was learned?
 - What was received?
 - What was the impact?

Use concrete results and measures of improvement. How did this make a difference in the community and country overall? Use this section to tie in the story elements and end the story with a powerful close in 1-2 paragraphs.

- 6) **Quotable quote:** Provide a quote that represents and summarizes the story. This quote should capture the success of the program and will be highlighted in the piece.
- 7) **Follow up information:** Who should we contact regarding any follow up on this story? Please provide person's name / organisation / email / phone.

B. Example Checklist of overarching program quality indicators

This could be used as a guideline by implementing teams (Oxfam/ partners) for developing the program log frame/any other appropriate monitoring tool, monitoring/ reporting systems, evaluation plans. These were developed as a guideline in the South India Tsunami Response. This derives from the various standards and principles mentioned in SPHERE, Red Cross of Conduct, HAP-I. Not all indicators may be relevant to all programs and needs to be adapted.

1. Targeting is equitable and is able to reach the most vulnerable sections of the community

- Targeting mechanisms are agreed among the participating communities (including the representatives of vulnerable groups) and other appropriate actors. Targeting criteria are clearly defined and widely disseminated
- Efforts are taken by partner/ groups to address the needs of vulnerable people left out from the program
- Factors affecting participating communities in their participation in the program due to gender stereotypes/ discrimination on the basis of caste/class/gender, etc have been addressed.

2. Efforts are initiated (and documented) in the direction of the project being able to effectively integrate Gender Mainstreaming into the program

- Gender-disaggregated baseline monitoring, evaluation and impact information is collected, analysed and used to inform program development
- Men and women beneficiaries participate equally in decision-making in planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, and their voices are reflected in the way program decisions are made
- Women and men participate in decision making in private and public more equally.

- Strengthened negotiating power of women in economic decisions (e.g. use of resources, money, time) and other family decisions (e.g. number of children to bear, type of contraception, children's education) at household level
- Enhanced participation in the political processes of the community
- Women have greater access to and control over economic and natural resources, and basic social services
 - Enhanced access and control over natural and economic resources (land, household finances, equipment, other assets)
 - Enhanced access to paid work
 - Wage differentials between men and women for similar work
 - Workload is shared more equally with men and women and women have more time for themselves?
 - Women and girls have access to health services on an equal basis with men and boys, and according to their gender-specific needs (e.g. reproductive health)?
 - Girls enjoy equal access to schools with boys?
- Fewer women suffer gender related violence (Highlight -has the project been able to initiate changes in the lives of women- in their decision making power at the household/ group/community level? Any group initiatives in combating violence against women, etc)
 - Project interventions has led to a decrease in violence against women
 - Number of women suffering personal incidents or threats of violence in the community or household reduced
- Gender stereotypes against men, women, girls, boys are challenged and changed
 - Men and women better understand how unequal power relations between them discriminate against women and keep them in poverty
 - Women's unpaid and caring work is better valued
 - Changes in the traditional gender division of labour occurred with men taking on more household and caring work
 - Greater value is attached to girls' education
 - Violence against women is increasingly rejected by the community especially by men themselves
 - Men take action to challenge discrimination against women

- Women's roles in livelihood been upgraded despite stereotypes which might have prevented this
- Women are empowered to act as agents of change through increased self confidence, leadership skills and capacity to organise.
 - Women's self-esteem and self-confidence to influence social processes increased
 - Women are able to exercise their capacity for leadership
 - Women are able to strengthen their voice and influence
- Project staffs able to address gender mainstreaming efforts adequately. Capacity building needs identified/addressed.
- Gender-specific changes in policy, practice, ideas and beliefs addressed in this program has led to changes in the lives of participating communities which are reflected in Oxfam and partner's reports.

3. The project is able to effectively integrate HIV Mainstreaming into the program

- HIV mainstreaming needs are addressed through a well designed action plan
- Progress of the action plan as per schedule
- Project staffs address HIV mainstreaming efforts adequately.
- Organisation identifies Capacity building needs and addresses them

4. The project is able to address sustainability aspects

- Participating communities engage in different stages of program design/ implementation/monitoring/evaluation.
- Programming is designed to maximise the use of local skills and capacities
- Participating communities assume complete ownership of project activities.
- Participating communities engage in the chosen livelihood activity in a profitable manner
- Beneficiaries consider diversifying their livelihood options using the income they are getting from this activity, in case of low returns
- Beneficiaries engage successfully with other institutions for accessing additional resources/ funds to sustain their activity

- The long standing vulnerabilities of the communities are addressed through this project
- Exit plan drawing from discussions at the partner/Oxfam/community levels is in place.

5. The project is able to effectively integrate Disaster Preparedness into the program

- The coping mechanisms of participating communities have increased through increased sustainable livelihoods/savings/assets/ safer habitations/ improved public health and hygiene behaviours, etc
- Participating communities have access to information and participate in the contingency plans/ disaster preparedness program initiated by various organisations, government.
- Efforts are made to involve *Panchayat* Raj Institutions in disaster risk reduction strategy development and implementation.
- Efforts are made to develop organizational level rapid emergency response plans for quick and effective response in future emergencies.

6. The program has established standards of accountability mutually agreed to with partners operationalised and monitored regularly.

- Oxfam and its partners agree to a mutually acceptable framework of accountability in the program
- Oxfam and partners ensure that staff are aware of the accountability framework and its relevance and importance, and understand their responsibilities in its implementation
- Oxfam and partners periodically review their standards and performance indicators, and revise them if necessary
- Partners and communities are provided appropriate training in the use and implementation of standards
- Oxfam and partners document its humanitarian accountability framework referring to all relevant internal and external accountability and quality standards, codes, guidelines, and principles committed to by the agency
- Participating communities are actively involved in and express satisfaction of the processes employed with regard to project concept, design, implementation and management

- Systems are in place that enables a continuous flow of information between the program, participating communities, relevant local authorities, donors and other key stakeholders.
- Participating communities including receive information about the assistance program, and are given the opportunity to comment to the assistance agency during all stages of the project cycle
- Written assistance program objectives and plans reflect the needs, concerns and values of disaster-affected people, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups, and contribute to their protection
- Community accepted complaint mechanisms functional with a clear redressal system. –
 - a) Oxfam works with partners to establish and document complaints handling procedures which clearly state:
 - the right of beneficiaries and other specified stakeholders to file a complaint
 - the purpose, parameters and limitations of the procedure
 - the procedure for submitting complaints
 - the steps taken in processing complaints
 - confidentiality and non-retaliation policy for complainants
 - the process for safe referral of complaints that the agency is not equipped to handle
 - the right to receive a response
 - b) Oxfam and partners ensure that intended beneficiaries, affected communities and its staff understand the complaints-handling procedures
 - c) Oxfam and partners shall verify that all complaints received are handled according to the stated procedures
 - d) Oxfam and partners shall ensure that information is presented in languages, formats and media that are accessible and comprehensible for beneficiaries and specified stakeholders
 - e) Oxfam and partners shall inform disaster-affected communities about beneficiary selection criteria and deliverables as agreed with their representatives The agency shall include its name and contact details in all publicly available information
 - f) Oxfam and partners shall make available information about the relevant parts of its structure, including staff roles and responsibilities

7. The Advocacy efforts in the program are informed of needs on the ground and are able to improve the overall impact of the program.

- Issues identified for advocacy at the community and partner level
- Participating communities are consulted /take the lead in all advocacy efforts
- Advocacy efforts initiated result in positive changes in the lives of participating communities
- Efforts are made to use several research outputs in understanding advocacy needs and developing advocacy strategies.

8. The effectiveness of the program in responding to problems is identified and changes in the broader context are continually monitored, with a view to improving the program, or to phasing it out as required.

- The information collected for monitoring is timely and useful, it is recorded and analysed in an accurate, logical, consistent, regular and transparent manner and it informs the ongoing program.
- Systems are in place to ensure regular collection of information in each of the technical sectors and draws from the relevant Sphere guidelines.
- Women, men and children from all affected groups are regularly consulted and are involved in monitoring activities.
- Systems are in place that enables a flow of information between the program, other sectors, the affected groups of the population, the relevant local authorities, donors and other actors as needed.
- Organisations, programs and projects that either cannot address identified needs or are unable to attain the Minimum Standards make any gaps known so that others may assist.
- Oxfam and its partners monitor and evaluate the agreed means to improve the quality of the partnership with respect to the agreed program quality standards mutually agreed to in the program

9. There is a systematic and impartial examination of humanitarian action intended to draw lessons to improve practice and policy and to enhance accountability

- For all assessments/ evaluations, Information is gathered using standardised procedures and made available to allow for transparent decision-making.

- Through consultation, all assessments/ evaluations takes into account the responses of the local and national authorities and other actors and agencies.

C. AN EXAMPLE OF A MONITORING FRAMEWORK AND REPORTING FORMAT

The guidelines given below could be used to develop a Program Monitoring framework:

Overall objective of the monitoring framework

1. Key areas of focus for monitoring systems

2. Detailed operational plan:

- Field level:

- Joint Program monitoring at community level by Oxfam technical and social exerts and/or consultants/ partner management staff
- Review by the program management system and practices at the partner level - facilitate improvements in the monitoring framework and systems at partner level;
- Joint Desk review by the Oxfam and/or partner management staff of partners' field staff monitoring reports;
- Oxfam and/or partner management participates in partner review with their program team;
- Case studies identification, follow up and development

- Oxfam/Partner Level:

- Desk review by program and finance teams of the program and financial reports received from partner;
- Review by Program lead with other technical and social teams;
- Donor Monitoring Reports/Quarterly/annual reports prepared by Program lead with inputs from team members
- Sharing of highlights and challenges in relation to specific result areas are shared proactively with other affiliates, in the case of a joint response in forums such as the Humanitarian Country team meetings.

Oxfam/ technical advisors/ consultants/ partners/ observations/ reports: This would be discussed by Program Managers with the different team members in the review meetings and identify how it could be taken further. Action plan would be communicated to the relevant people and shared in forums such as the Humanitarian Country Team meetings if relevant.

AN EXAMPLE OF A FIELD VISIT REPORTING TEMPLATE FOR OXFAM STAFF

Name of the partner visited:

Name of the project:

Dates:

Place of visit:

Visited by:

1. Objective of the visit:

2. Analysis of Progress against key result areas in the project (based on field visit as well as partner reports, etc)

3. Key observations:

- Effectiveness of strategies adopted in the project:
- Key highlights in the project:
(Things that are working well- can also document this through case studies)
- Areas of concern: (mention what needs to be discussed with the team/Program Manager, what you need support with)
- Capacity building needs identified and proposed plans to address these:

4. Key areas for follow up: (mention what, by whom, when and how)

5. Progress against areas of follow up identified in the previous visit

6. Key recommendations for improving the quality of the program

Note: If distance monitoring is done, it would be valuable to document analysis based on partner reports and other communications.

Annexure- 2

IASC Gender Handbook SHELTER Different Needs – Equal Opportunities December 2006 refers to the following guidelines:

Gender, site selection, design, construction and/or shelter allocation

In the initial stages of an emergency where populations have been displaced, shelter and site selection are especially important for safety, protection, human dignity and to sustain family and community life. Women, girls, boys and men have different needs, roles and responsibilities related to shelter/houses. Gender considerations have to be integrated into shelter planning and program to ensure people affected by crisis benefit equally from safe shelter.

Gender considerations in site selection:

The site of the shelter should not pose additional protection risks to anyone in the population.

- Location of the sites in close proximity to the border can expose the affected population to raids by armed groups placing women, men, boys and girls at risk of abuse, abduction or forced recruitment.
- Site planning in general should ensure that basic services are easily accessible. Therefore, site planning should assign specific locations for service provisions. If basic services are not easily accessible, women and girls can be exposed to protection risks like sexual assault during collection of firewood or sexual harassment of children as they walk long distances to school.
- Assigning sites for individual or communal shelters should take into consideration proximity to services. Close proximity to basic services frees up time for women, men, girls and boys to undertake other useful activities. Girls and boys will have more time to attend school, men and women to attend training courses and to participate in community activities.
- Spontaneous camps and communal shelters in particular have the disadvantage that they can become overcrowded quickly. Overcrowding can lead to increases in violence against women and

vulnerability of young men to being recruited for gangs or by rebel groups.

Gender considerations in design and construction

Design of shelter, facilities and services:

- In most communities, women bear the primary responsibility for household chores, and therefore the design of the sites and shelters must reflect their needs and should be undertaken with them.
- Separate facilities like bathrooms and toilets should be constructed for men and women. They should not be in isolated or dark lonely areas where women and girls may be sexually assaulted.
- Sanitation facilities and other communally used areas should be lit properly.

Privacy: Privacy is specifically challenging in communal shelters and even individual family shelters sometimes do not provide adequate privacy.

- The privacy and security of families and individuals is essential, particularly during the night, when the risk of abuse and assault is high. Unaccompanied and separated girls are specifically at risk of abuse.
- Lack of privacy exposes children to sexual activity of adults especially in communal shelters.
- In many communities and cultures women and girls expect to be provided with private spaces for changing clothes etc.

Lighting: Dark corners create opportunities for abuse. Increased and better lighting is critical to good site planning and shelter design. It reduces risks and improves security.

Supplies of construction materials and related issues:

- In emergencies it is possible that some women and girls are unable to construct their shelters, and find themselves dependent on men other than their family members, for help in construction. Without any money or goods to hire someone, women and girls may be exposed

to sexual exploitation. Aid agencies should be aware of this and undertake measures to prevent and/or address such situations.

- Pregnant women, the elderly, the disabled and other people with specific needs may not be able to build their own shelters and may require support.
- In case shelter construction is a paid activity/ income earning activity, opportunities should be identified for women and girls to benefit from this. In some instances young women and adolescent girls may want to learn and work on construction. In other instances where such work is not socially acceptable for women they could identify alternative means of participating in the programs to address social taboos and changes in gender roles.

Gender considerations in shelter allocation

The allocation of shelter can be problematic if systematic participatory assessment and analysis is not undertaken with the community to identify and address the concerns and needs of women, men, girls and boys. Often protection risks arise because of the failure to understand the different needs of individuals. The specific needs of child-headed households and single young and older women and men must be met without creating further stress, danger and exposing people to undignified solutions.

- Sometimes, older persons, pregnant women, children, persons with disabilities etc cannot push their way to the front of a line and therefore have to wait for long periods of time before being allocated adequate shelter/housing or construction materials.
- Sometimes women and girls are forced into having sex in exchange of receiving assistance to construct their shelters or gaining access to shelter materials.
- Specific groups of the population can be put at risk if their shelters are located near the perimeter of the camp. Groups such as these should be placed where they can be most secure; for example, it can sometimes be near the centre of the camp.

Gender consideration in housing, land and property (HLP)

In the aftermath of a crisis the approach taken to shelter will depend on land use and ownership. HLP should be an integral part of shelter solutions as gender and access to HLP is a critical issue for post crisis reconstruction and long term stability and development. In times of crisis, groups with specific

needs such as women and orphans are particularly at risk in a variety of ways. Widowhood, for example, leaves many women at greater risk during and after the crisis, as their rights as female head of household are often not protected by law (both legislation and customary law), or are disregarded altogether. The experiences of women and orphans during crisis are compounded in many cases by their inability in the post crisis period to access housing, land and property that is rightfully their. Moreover, promoting gender equal access to HLP can have a positive impact on rehabilitation and reconstruction programs after crisis. Access of women and groups with specific needs to HLP can catalyze and encourage populations to return to their places of origin, thus facilitating the return process itself. This calls for the development of gender supporting mechanisms implying immediate measures addressing housing, land and property restitution, administration and dispute resolution for affected and displaced persons and conflict affected communities.

What do we need to ask the community in order to ensure gender-responsive design, site selection and building of shelter?

What are the population demographics?

- Total number of households/family members—disaggregated by sex and age.
- Number of single female and male headed families and number of families headed by children (boys and girls).
- Number of unaccompanied children, older persons, persons with disabilities, chronically ill, pregnant and lactating women.

What kind of materials was used for building shelters before/ after displacement?

Who builds the shelters? What were the different roles of women, men, boys and girls?

- What were the various roles of women and men in construction prior to the emergency?
- If women are not involved in shelter construction and/or decision making on related subjects, how can they be supported to participate meaningfully in such activities?
- How are the shelter materials being distributed and allocated? What are the systems put in place for this? What are the impacts of these systems on women and girls? What systems have been instituted to assist persons with specific needs to build their shelters? What

support will the community provide? How will the assistance gaps in shelter provision be identified? How will these gaps be addressed and monitored for their positive or negative impacts on the affected persons?

- Have any agreements been made with the local authorities and host communities on the use of natural and forest resources for shelter materials? Are there systems in place to prevent retaliation and physical and sexual assault on women and girls involved in collection of shelter materials from natural/forest resources? Are women, girls, boys and men of the affected community part of the various agreements and discussions with the host community/local authorities? Are there agreements on what the affected persons are allowed to collect?
- Are the types of shelter materials used, suited to the local climatic conditions and environmentally friendly?

What are the community practices and culture patterns for household and care arrangements?

- What are the cooking, washing and household cleaning practices and where are their preferred locations – individual or communal? Are the designated areas safe? Well-lit? Easily reachable and accessible?
- Can the latrines, washing, bathing and sleeping facilities be secured with latches and locks? Are the rooms partitioned so that women, men, girls and boys have privacy to change?
- What are the division of labour and the wage labour practices of the community affected by crisis? Who works in the home, on the land, or in jobs outside –in informal sectors?
- What are the systems and who is responsible to ensure that persons with disabilities and older persons having specific needs are assisted and provided care arrangements? What actions will be instituted to prevent all forms of exploitation?

Who may need targeted and affirmative actions to support in shelter construction?

- Which groups (by sex and age) may not be in position to construct their own shelters?
- Are there older men and women travelling without family members or accompanied by children that require targeted shelter support?
- Have these needs been discussed with the community and how will the support be monitored to avoid exploitation of any nature?

How should shelter/ living spaces be allocated? How should shelter materials be supplied/distributed? How should shelters be constructed?

- How have unaccompanied boys and girls been accommodated? Are they being cared for and supported by the community? Are their living situation being monitored in a satisfactory manner by the community to assess their safety? Are their houses/shelters well-located and not isolated?
- Has partitioning material been allocated to individual families to facilitate privacy?
- Are there separate and safe shelter allocated for single women? Is this culturally appropriate or do single women need to be accompanied by a male relative? Have solutions for such groups been discussed with the group members themselves and agreed upon with the women and men in the community?
- Are their noticeable changes in family structures e.g. many female or male headed households? Have these resulted in changes in gender roles in relation to shelter construction tasks and decision-making?
- Who does household work and physical labour activities in the community? Where do they undertake these activities? Do they create protection risks for women, girls, boys and men? How does the community think the protection risks can be avoided?

What are the cultural and community practices concerning shelter/homes? Are any specific shelters required for religious practices?

- Who is the primary resident/tenant? Are men and women treated equally?
- Do cultural norms enable women and men to participate equally in decision making on shelter issues? If not are targeted and affirmative actions required to support women to participate in a meaningful manner?
- Are there discriminatory practices/policies which impact on women or men, for example in the allocation of land plots, shelter sites or rooms in collective accommodation?
- What is the broad gender division of labour in productive (e.g., agriculture, income generating activities) and reproductive (e.g., household chores, child care) responsibilities, and time allocated for each responsibility?
- How do religious affiliations/leaders affect women and men differently? Are they promoting equal treatment or discriminating?

Who owns land and property? What are the laws governing land and property ownership during displacement and return?

- What was/is the ownership of land and property (including housing) before
- displacement, during displacement and upon return for men, women, boys and girls?
- What are the protection mechanisms of land tenure and/or property rights (legal, customary, restitution mechanisms, etc.), for men, women, girls and boys?
- What are the protection mechanisms of land tenure and/or property rights (legal, customary, restitution mechanisms, etc.), for men, women, girls and boys?

Actions to ensure gender equality programming in site selection, design, construction and/or shelter allocation

Equal participation

- Undertake participatory assessments with women, girls, boys and men to define shelter needs and the most appropriate way to address protection risks and cover all concerns.
- Establish community shelter committees with equal participation or women and men and develop terms of reference for the shelter committees which include the committee taking responsibility to address the gender and age concerns as related to shelter.
- Monitor women's effective participation in the decision making on shelter and that their needs are discussed and met.
- Set meetings to discuss shelter related matters with women and men together and separately at times when men and women find it convenient to attend based on their daily work or chores.
- Ensure that women are comfortable with the venue of the meeting and that the setting makes women feel free and uninhibited in expressing their views/concerns.
- Discuss and provide community-based childcare during meetings so that men and women can participate.
- Ensure that consultations on specific needs include women and men of different age groups and backgrounds.
- Ensure equal participation of women and men in the supply and distribution and monitoring of the distribution of shelter materials.
- Identify those at risk of exploitation and develop mechanisms through consultation with them to reduce the risks during construction/shelter programs.

- Ensure equal pay for equal work for women and men if incentives/salaries are included as part of shelter programming.

Training and skills-building

- Work with the community to identify skilled men, women, adolescent boys and girls who can support shelter construction both from the host community as well as the affected community.
- If traditionally men have been in charge of construction and women are interested in participating in construction activities, community meetings can be called for to identify those women who are interested. Basic training in construction that can provide women opportunities to equally participate in the process should be encouraged. Women may be interested in clay wall making or brick making and training can be provided in these areas. The same is true for men if women have traditionally been in charge of building.
- Make sure that women and girls requiring support in construction due to their specific situation do not have to resort to asking others for assistance and becoming dependent on men for shelter construction or allocation as this can expose them to sexual exploitation, resulting in women being forced to trade sex for shelter.
- In construction projects make efforts to divide labour and responsibility among women and men based on their particular preferences and promote cooperation and mutual respect.

Recognizing and addressing differences, including cultural.

- Provide adequate material for partitions between families and within individual family shelters;
- Provide privacy: a woman/girl should not be compelled to share accommodation with men who are not members of her immediate family;
- Work with people in the community to design a place for meetings; counselling services; skills training that covers the needs of men, women, youth and children. Separate times and types of activities may have to be assigned to each group.

Meeting the needs of groups with specific needs.

- Assist the community to identify people with specific needs by sex and age with shelter construction needs and ensure that these needs are prioritized and met.

- Encourage the development of a community support system for people with specific needs in terms of shelter construction. Ensure the participation of women and adolescents in the process.
- Conduct regular structured dialogues and discussions with women, girls and groups with specific needs on shelter issues to ensure any protection concerns highlighted are discussed and resolved
- Monitor unaccompanied minors to ensure their protection in safe foster homes. They should not be exposed to servitude or sexual exploitation in their new homes.
- When designing shelter, establish child-friendly spaces where children can meet and share their experiences.
- Make arrangements for lighting in communal areas and for individual use.

Checklist to assess gender equality programming in site selection, design, construction and/or shelter allocation

The checklist below is derived from the action section in this chapter, and provides a useful tool to remind sector actors of key issues to ensure gender equality programming. In addition, the checklist, together with the sample indicators in the Basics Chapter, serve as a basis for project staff to develop context-specific indicators to measure progress in the incorporation of gender issues into humanitarian action.

Shelter Sector – Gender Checklist

Analysis of gender differences

1. Focus group discussion on shelter construction, allocation and design conducted with men, women, boys and girls of diverse backgrounds and results fed into programming.

Design

1. Single people, young and old have access to dignified shelter.
2. Public spaces for social, cultural and informational needs of women and men, boys and girls are provided and used equitably.

Access

1. Male and female heads of households and single men and women have the same access to housing and shelter supplies.
2. Obstacles to equal access are promptly addressed.

Participation

1. Women and men are equally represented and participate in the design, allocation and construction of shelters and camp facilities.
2. Men women, adolescent boys and girls have equal opportunities for involvement in all aspects of shelter construction receiving equal pay for equal work.

Training/ Capacity building

1. Equal opportunities for training for men, women, boys and girls in construction skills training.
2. % of men and women trained in shelter construction.
3. % of men/women involved in shelter construction.

Actions to address Gender Based Violence

1. Routine spot checks and discussions with communities to ensure people are not exposed to sexual violence due to poor shelter conditions or inadequate space and privacy.
2. Mechanisms put in place to ensure people can report any harassment or violence.

Targeted actions based on gender analysis

1. The specific needs of girl and boy headed households are met.
2. Where construction materials are supplied ensure female headed households have direct access to materials.

Monitoring and evaluation based on sex-and age-disaggregated data

1. Sex- and age disaggregated data on program coverage is collected, analyzed and routinely reported on.
2. Plans are developed and implemented to address any inequalities and ensure access and safety for all of the target population.

Coordinate actions with all partners

1. Number of sector actors who participate in or contribute to inter-agency coordination efforts on gender equality programming, including regular meetings of the gender network.
2. The sector/cluster has a gender action plan, has developed and routinely measures project-specific indicators based on the checklist provided in the IASC Gender Handbook.

ANNEXURE- 3

OTHER RESOURCES

**A list of resources on gender and shelter in emergencies which has been compiled by I
ASC**

Resources on Gender and Shelter in Emergencies	
1	<p><u>Gender Checklist: Urban Development and Housing</u> (ADB, 1998) is meant to assist staff and consultants in implementing the Bank's policy and strategic objectives on gender and development (GAD). It guides users through all stages of the project/program cycle in determining access to resources, roles and responsibilities, constraints, and priorities according to gender in the urban development and housing (UDH) sector and in designing appropriate gender-sensitive strategies, components, and indicators to respond to gender issues.</p> <p>http://www.adb.org/Documents/Manuals/Gender_Checklists/Urban/default.asp?p=gen</p>
2	<p><u>Addressing the Needs of Women Affected by Armed Conflict</u> (ICRC, 2006) is a guidance document that intends to translate the findings of the ICRC study <i>Women Facing War</i> into practical terms. Aimed at staff concerned with the planning and implementation of humanitarian programs, this document is intended as a means of sharing ICRC's experience in this area with other organisations. It is an important tool which can be used to address women's needs on an operational level, illustrating best practices and lessons learned.</p> <p>http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/p0840</p>
3	<p><u>Gender Standards for Humanitarian Responses</u> (Oxfam GB, 2004) fall within the "Analysis Standards" and "Human Resource Capacity and Training Standards" set out in The Sphere Handbook. Their content is supplementary to Sphere standards and indicators, and should be read in addition to them. The included section on protection is not intended to be definitive as it is the subject of ongoing research. The guidelines included here are a very brief and incomplete draft, as it is simply not possible to develop standards on gender without some attention to protection issues. The final section of this document is a comprehensive collection of gender-sensitive technical indicators, which, taken together with indicators described in Sphere, should result in a fairer and more effective humanitarian response.</p>

	(currently not available on the web)
4	<p>“Chapter 4: Minimum Standards in Shelter, Settlements and Non-Food Items,” The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (The Sphere Project, 2004) is divided into two sections, comprising 1) Shelter and Settlement and 2) Non-Food Items: Clothing, Bedding and Household Items. Both sections provide general standards for use in any of several response scenarios, such as the return to and repair of damaged dwellings, accommodation with host families, mass shelter in existing buildings and structures, and temporary planned or self-settled camps. Both sections include minimum standards, key indicators, guidance notes, and descriptions of dilemmas, controversies or gaps in current knowledge. The aim of the Sphere Project is to improve the quality of assistance provided to people affected by disasters, and to enhance the accountability of the humanitarian system in disaster response.</p> <p>http://www.sphereproject.org/content/view/27/84/lang,English/</p>
5	<p>Gender and the Involvement of Women in Local Governance: A Handbook of Concepts Training and Action Tools (UN-HABITAT, 2004) provides a series of tools and exercises for trainers to train local leaders on gender and local governance issues, and serves as a resource guide for local leaders to involve men and women equally in municipal planning of other activities with a focus on urban environments.</p> <p>http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/getPage.asp?page=bookView&book=2285</p>
6	<p>Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in UN-HABITAT Field Programs: Kosovo Urban Planning and Management Program (UN-HABITAT, 2003) provides conceptual grounding in gender mainstreaming, a strategy for incorporating gender into UN-HABITAT's programs in Kosovo, and tools that will assist in turning the strategy into practice.</p> <p>http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/1268_30583_Kosovo_Gender.pdf</p>
7	<p>Toolkit for Mainstreaming Gender in UN-HABITAT Field Programs: Northern Iraq Settlements Rehabilitation Program (UN-HABITAT, 2003) provides key resources for use at the field level to incorporate gender perspectives into all levels of Settlements Rehabilitation Programs and combines practical and conceptual tools for gender mainstreaming in northern Iraq.</p> <p>http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/1267_94527_Iraq_Gender.pdf</p>
8	<p>UNHCR Tool for Participatory Assessment in Operations (UNHCR,</p>

.	2006) outlines 10 basic steps to ensure women, girls, boys and men participate in analyzing protection problems together; in discussing capacities to face protection problems; and in finding solutions together. This UNHCR Tool offers a practical methodology for field teams to operationalise protection and to support the implementation of a rights-based and community-based approach in their search for solutions to the protection problems of all people of concern. http://www.unhcr.org/publ/PUBL/450e963f2.html
9	. UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies (UNHCR, 1999) is intended as a managers' guide to setting up emergency operations for large-scale influxes and provides advice in a nontechnical manner on how to tackle various aspects of emergency response. Managers would need to seek further advice on highly technical information. http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/darfur/uploads/idp/Emergency%20Manual%20by%20UNHCR.pdf

Other useful resources: (Source: sheltercenter.org):

1. 'After the Tsunami: Sustainable building guidelines for South-East Asia', UNEP (United Nations Environment Program), SKAT (Swiss Resource Centre and Consultancies for Development) This manual designed to help project managers meet this challenge by providing them with guidance in the area of 'sustainable reconstruction'. The manual explains how the choice of appropriate design and construction methods and sustainable materials and technologies during the planning, implementation and maintenance phases of reconstruction can protect natural resources and reduce energy consumption and pollution.

2. 'Guidelines for Public Health Promotion in Emergencies' ,Oxfam (2001)It is not possible to provide a blueprint for setting up a public health promotion program in emergencies as situations will vary greatly. Work may be undertaken in a camp situation, or an urban or rural environment as a response to a mass exodus of people, flooding, drought or other calamity and each situation will present specific challenges. In addition work in areas of ongoing conflict may also require taking novel approaches to service provision where contact time with beneficiaries may be significantly reduced. Oxfam may also find themselves intervening in situations which present different levels of risk and this must be assessed and interventions planned accordingly.

3. 'Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response', Sphere Project **The cornerstone of the handbook is the Humanitarian Charter, which is based on the principles and provisions of international humanitarian law, international human rights law, refugee law and the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief. The Charter describes the core principles that govern humanitarian action and reasserts the right of populations affected by disaster, whether natural or man-made (including armed conflict), to protection and assistance. It also reasserts the right of disaster-affected populations to life with dignity. The Minimum Standards and the key indicators have been developed using broad networks of practitioners in each of the sectors. Most of the standards, and the indicators that accompany them, are not new, but consolidate and adapt existing knowledge and practice. Taken as a whole, they represent a remarkable consensus across a broad spectrum, and reflect a continuing determination to ensure that human rights and humanitarian principles are realised in practice.**

4. 'The Good Enough Guide' (2007), Oxfam **Questions that help identify what is working and what is not often go unasked during an emergency response. They are left instead to evaluators. As a result, information that could inform decision-making and save lives is sometimes discovered only after a crisis is over. One way of discovering the difference or impact a project is making is to ask the women, men, and children caught up in the emergency. For years NGOs have been promising to be 'accountable' to them: to seek their views and to put them at the heart of planning, implementing, and judging our response to their emergency.**

Some other useful resources on shelter rehabilitation and related issues

- **Disaster Resistant Construction Practices:**
http://www.un.org.in/untrs/reports/Disaster_Resistant_Construction_Practices.pdf
- **Guidelines for Reconstruction of Houses:**
http://www.un.org.in/untrs/reports/RCC_Booklet.pdf
- **Guidelines for Reconstruction of Houses (General and Public Buildings):** http://www.un.org.in/untrs/reports/Masonry_booklet.pdf
- **Shelter and Habitat workshop (UNDP):**
http://www.un.org.in/untrs/reports/Shelter_Habitat_2007_Consultation_report_draft.pdf

- **Infrastructure for all:**

Meeting the needs of both men and women in development projects- A practical guide for engineers, technicians and project managers.- A WEDC publication.

www.wedc.lboro.ac.uk/publication/

- **Oxfam GB's 'Engineer CD':**

A collection of most useful documents for engineering works and emergency response.

Please contact the Oxfam GB humanitarian department in Oxford.

- **'Engineering in Emergencies':**

A RedR publication.

Please email info@redrindia.org for more details.

- **Plastic sheeting in humanitarian relief:**

A guide to the specification and use of plastic sheeting in humanitarian relief'

www.plastic-sheeting.org/ref/Plastic_Sheeting_2007.pdf

- **Transitional Shelter - Displaced Populations, Corsellis & Vitale, 2004:**

<http://www.sheltercentre.org/shelterlibrary/index.htm>

- **Housing reconstruction after conflict and disaster:** Humanitarian Practice

Overseas Development Institute, London, 2003

<http://www.odihpn.org/documents%5Cnetworkpaper043.pdf>

- **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards In Disaster Response:**

The Sphere Project

<http://www.sphereproject.org>

- **Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) Principles of Accountability:**

<http://www.hapinternational.org/projects/standard/development/principles-of-accountability.aspx>

- **People In Aid Code of Good Practice:**

<http://www.peopleinaid.org/code/online.aspx>

- **The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief:**

<http://www.ifrc.org/PUBLICAT/conduct/code.asp>

- **Oxfam briefing Note, A place to stay, a place to live:**

Challenges in providing shelter in India, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka after the tsunami 14 December 2005

http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/bn051214_tsunami_shelter

- **'Targeting poor people- Rebuilding Lives after the Tsunami':**
Oxfam briefing Note, June, 2005
http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/bn050625_tsunami_targetingthepoor
- **The tsunami's impact on women:**
Oxfam Briefing Note. March 2005
http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bn050326_tsunami_women/download
- **Learning the lessons of the tsunami – One month on, Jan 2005:**
http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/doc050125_tsunami_externalbulletin
- **Back to work:**
Oxfam Briefing Paper, December 2005
http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingpapers/bp84_tsunami_livelihoods
- **Oxfam International Tsunami Program Review:**
PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, December 2005
http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/pwc_review_dec2005
- **Building a shelter:**
Oxfam Australia, Sri Lanka, November 2005
<http://www.oxfam.org.au/world/emergencies/2004-sunami/articles/buildingshelter.pdf>
- **'Transitional Settlement: Displaced Populations':**
The University of Cambridge Shelterproject, Oxfam, 2005
http://www.sheltercentre.org/shelterlibrary/items/pdf/Transitional_Settlement_Displaced_Populations_2005.pdf
- **Keeping recovery on course: challenges facing the Pakistan earthquake response one year on:**
Oxfam Briefing Note, October 2006
http://www.oxfam.org/en/files/bn060129_road_to_recovery_pakistan/download
- **The Tsunami Two Years On: Land Rights in Aceh:**
Oxfam Briefing Note, November 2006
http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/briefingnotes/bn_tsunami_2yrs_landrights_0612

- **Rethinking Disasters, Oxfam International, 2008:**
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/downloads/oxfam_india_rethinking_disasters.pdf
- **After the cyclone: lessons from a disaster:**
Oxfam Briefing Note, February 2008
http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/downloads/bn_sidr.pdf?m=234&url=http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/policy/conflict_disasters/downloads/bn_palestine.pdf
- **Living with Hope:**
Oxfam Briefing Note, March 2008
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWB.NSF/db900SID/SHIG-7EDJCG?OpenDocument>

SECTION 19: OXFAM CONTACTS:

Oxfam International is a confederation of thirteen organisations working together in more than 100 countries to find lasting solutions to poverty and injustice: Oxfam America, Oxfam Australia, Oxfam-in-Belgium, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam Germany, Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam Hong Kong, Intermón Oxfam (Spain), Oxfam Ireland, Oxfam New Zealand, Oxfam Novib (Netherlands), and Oxfam Québec. Please call or write to any of the agencies for further information, or visit www.oxfam.org.

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About this hand book

The context of the tsunami was unique, given the huge scale of the disaster, the widespread destruction it caused across national boundaries, the lack of sufficient preparedness and the unprecedented response by the international community and humanitarian agencies. This led to a lot of challenges, both for the aid agencies as well as for communities in their efforts towards shelter rehabilitation.

While the identification of land for rehabilitation in itself was challenging for the government, ensuring that people got access to safe land suitable for them in terms of access to facilities and livelihoods were crucial concerns in the Indian context.

There were many funding organizations that came forward to undertake reconstruction of permanent shelters. Oxfam decided to undertake construction of a few houses and tried to ensure integration of minimum standards, codes of conduct and principles that Oxfam is committed towards, (including Sphere, HAP I, Red Cross Code of Conduct). Oxfam believes that adopting a rights based approach in humanitarian interventions is essential to ensuring the dignity of disaster affected people.

This handbook is intended to be an effort towards pulling together the rich learning that emerged from Oxfam supported shelter responses in India. Though the context of each disaster would be unique, this would provide implementing humanitarian teams with examples of the challenges that they are likely to encounter and some interesting ways in which they were dealt with by Oxfam's tsunami response team in India.

This handbook also has practical recommendations and guidelines that could serve as a ready reference for Oxfam and partner teams. There has been an attempt to draw from experiences on the ground and community perspectives. Therefore, though this handbook cannot be viewed as an all encompassing checklist of do's and don'ts, this is intended to offer interesting examples which would encourage teams to discuss and debate the pros and cons of different approaches in shelter interventions.

It is believed that this would be a practical reference which could be relevant in all stages of planning, implementation, evaluation and beyond in humanitarian shelter rehabilitation programs.

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail information@oxfaminternational.org