



Participation in Humanitarian Shelter

Policy Brief on Haiyan Response – January 2017

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The Haiyan Response

On November 8, 2013 Typhoon Haiyan made landfall in the Philippines with wind speeds in excess of 315 kph, sweeping through the Central Visayas region. In its wake, over 16 million people were impacted and 4.1 million people were displaced¹. Assessments determined that 1,012,790 households needed shelter assistance (518,878 partially destroyed and 493,912 totally destroyed). Humanitarian shelter partners were able to support 344,853 households², achieving 70% of the initial target of 500,000 households laid out in December 2013³.

Research Overview

In the wake of Haiyan, longitudinal research was conducted on 19 shelter programs spanning 6 different modalities including: [1] repair and retrofit; [2] transitional shelter; [3] core/progressive shelter; [4] rental subsidies; [5] hosting support; [6] resettlement. In total, 210 interviews were conducted and 360 surveys were distributed among field staff, beneficiaries, and local government officials. The purpose of this research intended to determine how, and when, beneficiary participation is important in humanitarian shelter programs. Key themes and recommendations are presented below.

Participation Themes

➤ Involvement over Control

The most satisfied beneficiaries had the ability to influence evolving decisions in recovery, but they did not have to make the final decision in many cases. For example, beneficiary selection that was conducted using participatory vulnerability mapping, instead of external criteria, was found to lead to fewer disputes. Organizations could then use this data to evaluation selection. Similarly, involvement in shaping shelter designs, even if not controlled by the beneficiary, led to higher levels of satisfaction.

➤ Women and Children

While gender continues to gain increasing recognition in the humanitarian shelter sector, examination of programs following Haiyan highlighted several gaps in attending to gender in shelter. Shelter requirements were found to disproportionately affect women. In particular, unpaid labor contributions by women during construction were found to reinforce gender pay inequalities and limited the ability to seek paid employment. These examples echo calls to further recognize the multiple roles that women take on during recovery, including earning income, managing household duties, and making decisions to guide household recovery⁴.

¹ USAID/OFDA. “[Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda fact sheet #22](#).” April 21, 2014.

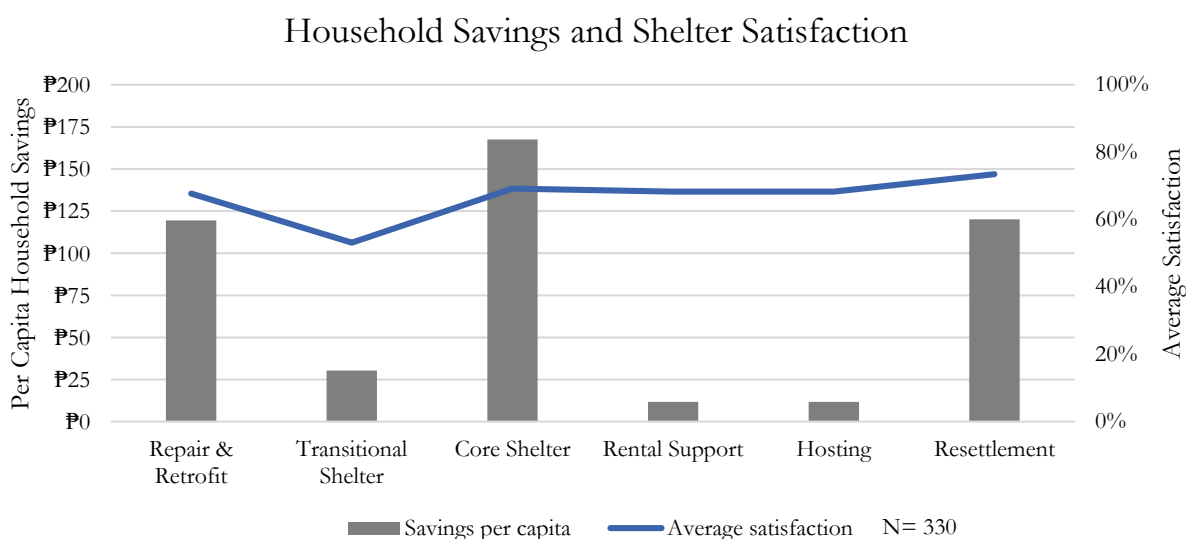
² Shelter Cluster. (2016) [Analysis of shelter recovery](#).

³ Shelter Cluster. (2014). [Strategic operational framework for transition post-Yolanda](#).

⁴ Care International. (2016). [Gender & shelter: good programming guidelines](#).

➤ Unexpected Costs

Evidence on household savings shows that repair & retrofits, core shelters, and resettlement placed less financial burden on beneficiaries. A comparison of modalities and household savings is presented below. Transitional shelters, rental support, and hosting had significantly lower average household savings, in part attributed to indirect cost increases associated with shelter and settlement decisions.



These cost increases fell into two categories: (1) transportation and services and (2) shelter construction. Transitional sites saw households spending upwards of 50% of income on transportation back to economic markets and schools. Rental support, when outside a household's native community, resulted in lost economic opportunity costs where jobs either paid less or were harder to secure. Hosting typically targeted short term needs without providing pathways to long term tenure.

For construction costs, direct expenses such as materials and labor were usually accounted for, but incidentals were often missed by organizations. Incomplete shelter packages and errors in market value of materials accounted for up to 30% increased costs incurred by beneficiaries. Similarly, unaccounted for labor expenses, such as feeding workers, was found to be up to 20% of labor expenses.

Recommendations

Following extensive analysis of shelter assistance provided in the aftermath of Haiyan, the following recommendations for policy changes are proposed:

- Shelter support should seek to provide resources for beneficiaries to make *informed decisions*.
- Hiring of construction labor for shelter programs should promote *equal pay and responsibility among men and women*.
- All direct build programs (including transitional shelter, core shelter, and resettlement housing) should use *pilot houses* as a method of facilitating input from beneficiaries and skilled labor.
- In place of using pre-determined criteria for vulnerability and beneficiary selection, community vulnerability mapping exercises showed significantly fewer conflicts in later phases of shelter programs. Whenever possible, *locally-driven, participative risk mapping* should be encouraged in early phases.
- Organizations should perform a *mid-program financial impact assessment of shelter activities* to ensure that shelter support is not creating increased financial burden on households.

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