Emergency shelter team annual review 2015

This year has been a very busy year for CARE’s emergency shelter team. We have continued to support the large response in the Philippines and have provided significant support to shelter programming in Lebanon, Iraq, Malawi, Vanuatu and the major response to the earthquake in Nepal.

Alongside the active responses we have been continuing to play a leading role in the global shelter sector, further developing CARE’s learning and knowledge around shelter response and investigating exciting opportunities with academic partners for on-going research and development to improve our work.

In this financial year the Emergency Shelter Team has provided support to the following countries:

The shelter team would like to thank all those who have supported us this year.

Our strong relationship with Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG) and the very significant support they provide has been invaluable in enabling the Vanuatu and Nepal responses and ensuring the team has the capacity to support these and other responses.

Thanks to funding from ISG, we have recruited a senior advisor. He will support our general programming as well as advance some long-term initiatives. We are excited to realise the potential of this extra capacity and further our relationship with ISG around our construction capacity and the quality of our work.

Special thanks are due to all who have made individual donations, especially the intrepid participants in the Construction Challenge. A significant portion of the team’s funding comes from these donations.

Finally, we’d also like to thank Bluebeam and CSC, which have both provided free software which makes the team’s work easier, and Emirates, without whom our travel costs would be much higher.
The team
This year the shelter team has seen two new members of staff. Amelia Rule joined as a deployable shelter advisor and Bill Flinn has joined the team as our new senior shelter advisor.

Amelia Rule
Amelia has had a very busy start to her new role, with deployments to Lebanon and Nepal soon after starting.

Amelia has a background in the built environment and urban shelter and settlements. Originally trained as an architect in London she started working in the emergency shelter sector in 2009. Initially working for the UK Government’s Department for International Development (DFID), then the British Red Cross, Amelia’s work has focused on urban post-disaster recovery and regeneration, working incrementally towards increasing community resilience through participatory programming. She is especially interested in the potential opportunities of including careful consideration of gender aspects at each stage of a shelter programme as well as the impact humanitarian shelter interventions can have on longer term development.

Bill Flinn
Since starting with the team in May, Bill has been supporting CARE’s response to Typhoon Pam in Vanuatu, and has spent several weeks in Vanuatu establishing the response. Bill is an architect and a builder, particularly experienced in domestic scale building in timber and green construction techniques. His working life has been divided between design and build in the UK and development and humanitarian work on four continents. For nine years he worked in Central America and Mexico in appropriate technology and human rights, before returning to the UK to specialise in Shelter after Disaster. In recent years he has worked in Indonesia, Philippines, Pakistan, Myanmar and Western Sahara, amongst others. He has worked on CARE responses several times. He also teaches at the Oxford Brookes CENDEP master’s course on Shelter After Disasters.

In his new role Bill will be supporting the team and country offices with expert advice based on his wealth of experience and will be leading on the development of a project called Promoting Safer Building. This project, led by CARE in collaboration with several other agencies, aims to increase the safety and quality of buildings built by people who recover for themselves after disasters. By researching the way people build and why, and by understanding how we can support and influence that process, it is hoped we can support far more people in a more lasting way to build back stronger after disasters.
The year in numbers
Emergency shelter team members (including shelter experts on temporary contracts) worked 343 person-days on active deployment this year, on 29 separate deployments. These included:

- 16 to support active emergency responses
- 5 to support emergency preparedness
- 5 for coordination or learning (e.g. regional meetings or programme evaluations)
- 3 for interagency coordination with the Global Shelter Cluster

The team provided support to the design of 20 shelter projects around the world.

Three-quarters of the team’s time was spent on supporting programmes overseas, and the remaining one-quarter on various other activities including research and learning, mobilising resources, external representation and team administration (‘non-programme activities’).

The total direct cost of the Shelter Team in this financial year was £122,240.76. This was funded in part by grant funding for particular projects (‘project funding’). The remainder was funded by CARE International UK’s unrestricted fundraising from the public, which includes the Construction Challenge, and corporate donations. Intercontinental Hotels Group (IHG) provides $25,000 per year to support the shelter team. Due to timing of donations two of these donations fell into the FY15 accounts. ISG Plc has provided a grant of £50,000 to support the team, of which £12,000 fell into the FY15 accounts.

How did the team spend its time? How was the team funded?

CARE collects data on how many people have been supported each year, and in what way. Given the difficulties of collecting information about projects in often extremely remote or sensitive locations in 90 countries, it takes a long time to collect and verify. As such, this information is not yet available for the 2015 financial year.

In the 2014 financial year 451,439 people received direct assistance related to shelter & housing from 48 projects in 19 countries.
Programme updates

Typhoon Haiyan
CARE’s response to Typhoon Haiyan included cash, materials and technical support to 16,500 households. Starting soon after the typhoon, she shelter team went to evaluate progress 12 months on.

A detailed report on the shelter response has been produced. Overall the programme appears to be successful, with a large majority of people confident in their ability to recovery safe, dignified and appropriate housing. Over 50% had already completed their houses at the time of the evaluation. There were also several valuable lessons that will help improve future responses, not least around health and safety, where ISG provided valuable input to the study. The team hopes to repeat the study at the end of the 2015 to keep tracking progress and learning lessons.

Refugees in Lebanon
The team has been working with CARE in Lebanon to support some of the millions of refugees from the Syrian conflict. Tensions between host populations and refugees in Lebanon are rising after over four years of the crisis. The volatile northern city of Tripoli houses tens of thousands of refugees, including many Palestinian refugees who have been displaced multiple times. The shelter team led a detailed assessment of the situation in and around Tripoli, resulting in strong recommendations for future programming. Recommendations include providing support to both refugees and poor Lebanese households, upgrading infrastructure and facilities at household and neighbourhood levels and working with municipalities to identify projects which will reduce tensions and ensure fair rental conditions.

With the strong assessment to underpin CARE’s proposals funding was successfully obtained from the US Bureau of Population, Refugees & Migration and work will start in September 2015 with continued support from the Shelter Team.
Earthquake in Nepal
On 15 January 1934 Nepal was rocked by an 8.0 magnitude earthquake that killed over 8,500 people and destroyed thousands of homes. At the Kaman Sing Jhapa Magar was 20 years old. Now - 80 years later - Kaman is reliving the nightmare for a second time.

99 year old Kaman Sing Jhapa Magar. CARE/Lucy Beck

In the small and remote village of Paslang, Kaman is preparing to celebrate his 100th birthday. He is the oldest resident of the village, and the only one who still remembers the last earthquake first-hand.

The house he shares with his daughter, granddaughter and great-grandchildren is now uninhabitable so Kaman sleeps outside under a tarpaulin: "It’s a struggle sleeping outside. We are facing many kinds of struggle. The bed is too small and we don’t have enough clothes so it is cold at night."

Kaman’s family received relief items from CARE including blankets, which granddaughter-in-law Daal says are the most important items in the package.

Now Daal and Kaman worry about the process of rebuilding their home from scratch, a process Kaman will only be able to watch. They have no idea when they will be able to sleep in a proper house again. For most in the village shelter is the number one concern – tarpaulins and tents for the time being so they are not exposed to the cold mountain nights and then help with the long and difficult task of rebuilding homes and regaining livelihoods.

After the 7.8 magnitude quake in April, CARE mobilised a major response in Nepal, deploying tens of specialists and three members of the shelter team, and raising over $27m so far. The emergency in Nepal is not yet over, and CARE is still supporting people to cope with monsoon rains and prepare shelter for winter. At the same time we are mobilising to help people like Kaman and his family re-build their houses. CARE will train masons in earthquake resistant construction and provide technical support and resources so people can re-build the safe houses they so sorely need.
Plans for 2016
59.5 million people were displaced in 2015, and with conflict increasing and climate change leading to more and larger natural disasters, it is unlikely the shelter team will be less busy in 2016. The response to the earthquake in Nepal and the displacement from the Syria conflict will continue to take up a significant proportion of the team’s time. As always, the team will prioritise supporting emergency response above all else, but we also plan to work on several initiatives to strengthen CARE’s and others’ preparedness and ability to respond.

The Promoting Safer Building programme to improve our support to stronger re-building after disasters will be a primary focus of the senior advisor. The first part of this is the start of a four year Engineering Doctorate in partnership with University College London. Funded by UCL with Engineering & Physical Science Research Council funding the student will study self-recovery after disasters, and will also support the shelter team in Nepal and elsewhere.

The team is developing in-depth guidance on addressing the needs of different genders in shelter responses, including how to effectively empower women through shelter projects. This guidance will be tested in 2016 and published later in the year. It will be followed by a series of concise guidance notes for project teams.

A series of guidance notes will be produced to better support responses where the team cannot deploy to support directly. These will include guidance on selection of relief items and shelter materials, procurement, quality assurance and more.

Together with CARE’s wider humanitarian teams, the shelter team also hopes to develop stronger expertise in addressing Housing, Land & Property rights in shelter programmes, and to learn more about the longer-term impact of giving cash rather than material assistance.

This year will also see the results of our study into the long-term effects of Indian shelter programmes over the last ten years, and we hope to identify resources to do a follow-up study of the Typhoon Haiyan response in the Philippines 30 months after the disaster.

Partnership and collaboration is vital in achieving good responses at scale, so the team will continue to play a leading role in the Global Shelter Cluster. The team will also continue to work with our corporate partners to mobilise the right resources and expertise to do our work, and we see several areas for stronger collaboration.

We are excited about some of the opportunities and initiatives that are coming in 2016. If you have any questions about the team, its work, or how you could support it, please do get in touch.

CARE Emergency Shelter Team
Typhoon Pam caused major destruction in Vanuatu in March. With an existing presence, CARE took a leading role in the remote southern islands, providing emergency kits and vital construction supplies, coupled with construction training, to help over 6000 households re-build quickly & safely.

Major flooding in Mozambique and Malawi displaced tens of thousands in January 2015. We sent 2000 shelter kits to Malawi from stocks in Dubai. CARE Mozambique & other partners have been trained over the last 2 years by the shelter team, so they responded to the floods as a consortium.

In early 2014 the team built 4 community centres in Jordan’s Azraq refugee camp. Each has two big halls, which have been used throughout the last year for events (including an address from Malala Yousafzai), training and as safe play & learning spaces for children and vulnerable people.

In 2015 we initiated a study of the long-term effects of CARE’s shelter programmes in India over the last 10 years. We visited new villages built after the tsunami and other disasters, and interviewed over 250 recipients of support. The lessons will be published and will influence future emergency responses.