

3.3 Emergency Settlement and Shelter Problems

Trainer's Note

Session at a Glance:

Content	Activity	Time
1 Introduction	Brief Oral Presentation	5 minutes
2 Recurrent problems	OH presentation with plenary discussion	20 minutes
3 Emergency camp design and construction	Presentation of video (ICRC "A Refugee Camp" with short plenary review	25 minutes
4 Shelter Strategies	Small group exercise with plenary review	35 minutes
5 Conclusions	Brief Oral summary of main points	5 minutes
Total Session Time: 90 minutes		

Required Materials: 3.3 OH set, videocassette form ICRC " A Refugee Camp" (16 minutes) flipcharts, Emergency Shelter Response exercise handout (attached at the end of this note).

Trainer's Notes:

1. Introduction

This session on site and shelter problems, like the other "problem" sessions, is intended to show the types of recurrent problems that seem to persist in disaster-affected, and particularly, refugee camp populations. Explain that the point of these "problem" sessions is to show very practical ways to address these problems in a realistic rather than theoretical way. The Sphere guidance that follows in the next session can then be discussed as "solutions".

If you are not an architect, engineer, or camp planner yourself, it is critical that you read through the background material and Sphere chapter very closely and explain your "tour guide" status to the group. If there are expert site or shelter planners in the group, work closely with them to help explain the more technical areas of the presentation. This material is readily understood by generalists, and usually presents no real problems in understanding, given enough time to talk things through.

2. Recurrent Problems

Using the OH slides prepared for this session, present each problem and provide examples from your own experience to fill out each problem in greater detail. If there are people in the group who have seen illustrations of these problems, ask them to contribute them to the discussion as you cover each problem, rather than waiting until the end. Remind the group that these are only representative problems, and that there are many others that are also common. At the end of this presentation ask if any participants have experienced other types of problems in relations to sites and shelter programs.

The presentation follows closely with the background reading provided for this section. Remind the participants that a description of each problem and corresponding solutions are to be found in the background reading.

3. Emergency Camp Design and Construction

This part of the session is a video case study from Azraq, on the Jordan - Iraq border from 1991. The film depicts the situation of the "expellees" from Iraq during the Gulf War. Although not a "typical" refugee influx emergency, the situation exemplifies the basic issues associated with emergency camps and a textbook response to a real emergency situation. Provide about 10 minutes for open discussion following the film. The film is designed for training and so is basically self-explanatory in most instances.

4. Shelter Strategies

This short exercise asks participants to match typical shelter response strategies to different emergency situations. There are 7 scenarios provided. If the group of participants is large enough divide them into seven approximately equal teams. Assign each team one of the scenarios from the exercise and then ask them to follow the instructions on the handout. Each team must pick a strategy from the list (the group should agree) and then illustrate how this strategy might be monitored and or evaluated using the indicators from the Site and Shelter Chapter of the Sphere book. The group action will need to be quite quick and reporting format should be very brief. The conclusion of this exercise is simply that not all emergencies require emergency tent camps. The 2004 edition of the Sphere document carefully orients the reader to the different shelter strategies available and presents camps as only one of several different available strategies, to be pursued only after other solutions

5. Conclusion

There is no single best way to meet shelter needs after disaster. Shelter types are widely variable, as are the effects on shelters from different types of disasters. The Sphere guidance is a good starting point and does provide valuable guidance, particularly in the assessment and analysis standards and indicators.

Review the conclusions from the small group work and the discussion of the "problems presentation". Even though shelter and site issues are complex and very contextually dependent, there do seem to be recurring problems and issues that site planners and emergency shelter program planners have learned from field experience. The Sphere materials in this chapter represent some of the more agreed-upon findings from many situations around the world.

Using Sphere in Emergency Settlement and Shelter

Step 1 - In your groups, take time consider one of the scenarios provided below. After establishing the probable needs, resources, and (making some assumptions) other contextual issues, consider the 5 emergency shelter options below and choose the one you think most appropriate for your scenario.

Step 2 - Be prepared to explain why you have made this choice, and what assumptions support your strategy.

Step 3. (Only if there is enough time!)- After agreeing on the best shelter option for your scenario, list 5 indicators from the Sphere book that would help guide your planning, execution, and evaluation of the shelter programme. Be ready to cite page and text of each indicator.

SHELTER PROGRAM OPTIONS

1. shared housing between homeless and local house-holders
2. material or other assistance to support self-built emergency structures
3. repair kits or materials for protecting damaged but still usable structures
4. tents and other "emergency" prototype shelters
5. mass shelter options

The Scenarios

SITUATION 1:

A major earthquake in Yemen destroys several small villages and renders 50,000 people homeless. Crops are standing in the fields, unharmed and ready for harvest. Government emergency planners decide to appeal for international assistance since reserve stocks of tents are very low in the country.

SITUATION 2:

Very heavy flooding along with a tropical storm of fierce magnitude destroys homes and crops of a large refugee community along a fertile river valley. 50,000 people are without shelter, food supplies or safe drinking water. Emergency managers have identified a temporary site located on higher ground that could be used. Civil defense units do have some military-style tents. Emergency food and medical aid will also be needed along with a system to support these people for several weeks (or months) until the danger of flooding has passed. The affected community leadership is requesting an emergency program of support to last until a new crop can be harvested.

SITUATION 3:

In the Middle East, a "holding area" for 50,000 people is hastily put in place in the desert as the "expellees" from a neighboring country are temporarily detained at the border area until all of the people can be documented, screened, and assisted with travel arrangements for their onward travel to their home countries - a process that could take several weeks. The local authorities can truck water in, but they have appealed to international agencies for immediate shelter response in this harsh site.

SITUATION 4:

In the Horn of Africa 50,000 nomadic people who need "temporary" refuge from fighting and drought are beginning to group around a food distribution site. They bring some of their own shelter materials with them and deploy their shelters in large extended family groups. Due to their impoverished condition and the local lack of their traditional building materials, they will need assistance of some type before the rains begin in a few weeks time.

Water can be trucked to the site while negotiations over the rights to drill a deep well are discussed with local government officials. Supplementary feeding centers and medical clinics are quickly established as malnutrition is high and the population has trekked a long way to reach this area.

SITUATION 5:

In the outskirts of Istanbul, national immigration officials are beginning to call for a refugee camp for some 50,000 refugees fleeing violence in the former Yugoslavia. Most of the refugees are arriving using tourist visas, many even crossing and re-crossing the border in order to keep their legal status in place. The international community has been asked to aid in an immediate shelter programme on land made available by the Turkish ministry responsible for the use of public lands.

SITUATION 6:

In the Balkans, in a high altitude and remote valley, an estimated 50,000 villagers are slowly returning to their badly damaged, (and in 30% of the cases - destroyed) homes. Winter will begin in 4 months, and the international community is concerned about a massive influx to urban centers if no shelter program is carried out in this area.

SITUATION 7:

Due to increased fighting and insecurity in the countryside, a wave of 50,000 people has moved into the major urban center of a small Pacific island nation. There is simply not enough available vacant housing stock to absorb the new influx. Many of the families have close ties with relatives living in the city and the government-owned schools and gymnasias could be used in many cases.