

Introduction and background

This learning day is being organised by the GCRF Translations Award-funded 'Self-recovery from Humanitarian Crisis' research project. Led by Oxford Brookes University's Centre for Development and Emergency Practice (CENDEP) with CARE International UK, the project is co-developing best-practice guidance for the support of shelter self-recovery. One workstream of this project is to better understand the wider impacts of shelter, including health, especially in the context of self-recovery. Self-recovery, recovering largely with their own resources, is the inevitable reality for most people affected by natural disasters and conflict. Whilst there is broad agreement that housing has many impacts on mental and physical health, the Shelter sector is still developing understanding of how to incorporate a 'health lens' into humanitarian programming. Women and children, the elderly and people living with disabilities are disproportionately affected by unhealthy housing conditions.

The 24th [UK Shelter Forum](#), co-hosted by Catholic Relief Services and the University of Bath in May 2019 focussed on the topic of "Health and Shelter". This event prompted awareness of the need for the humanitarian shelter sector to engage further with the relationships between shelter and health. More recently, research by InterAction found some evidence of the impacts of shelter and settlements assistance on health¹. However, there is a lack of robust evidence and therefore an ongoing need to develop ways of monitoring impact and creating an evidence base that could influence policy and practice.

Shelter self-recovery sits within the humanitarian/development nexus; humanitarian and development practitioners can learn from each other as they strive to understand how to promote healthy homes in a variety of settings. The eventual aim is to modify policy and practice in order to mitigate housing and settlement related health issues, in line with SDG 3 (Good Health and Wellbeing) and 11 (Sustainable Cities). Success in improving health and sustainable settlement will also have a positive impact on progress towards SDGs 4 (Education), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 13 (Climate Action) and 5 (Gender Equality).

Discussion will include several health issues/risks connected to housing such as, but not limited to:

- Indoor air pollution - respiratory infections such as pneumonia, heart disease...
- Lack of effective vector control – malaria, Chagas disease...
- Water and sanitation – diarrhoeal diseases...
- Infections spread by sharing living space with animals – Trachoma...
- Extremes of heat and cold - especially their impact on the elderly
- Noise - impact on cardio-vascular disease
- Overcrowding and poor-quality housing- spread of infectious diseases, mental health impacts

Draft Agenda for 14th May (timing to be confirmed but likely to be 1000-1600 BST, via Zoom)

The detailed agenda is being planned currently. In outline, the day will include three main sessions, all based around multi-sectoral collaborative learning. We will use 'breakout rooms' to allow interactive discussion.

Session 1

Led by practitioners and researchers from humanitarian and development settings and experts in specific health issues, this session will provide an overview of what we know about the impacts of humanitarian shelter and housing on health. We aim to prompt later discussion of questions such as:

- *To what extent is health a priority issue for people in different settings; how do we know?*
- *What are the challenges of measuring health impacts of shelter interventions? How can we overcome these?*
- *What can humanitarian shelter learn from other sectors (epidemiology...development/public housing...)*
- *If people are 'self-recovering' (making decisions and plans as they navigate their own recovery pathways), what information might they need that could lead to healthier housing outcomes?*

Session 2

Smaller 'breakout' groups to allow discussion between different sectors and areas of expertise.

Session 3

Plenary discussion aiming to map out future steps - in research, evidence-building and monitoring & evaluation.

For further information contact Sue Webb s.webb@brookes.ac.uk. Project information at <https://self-recovery.org>