

GSC Annual Event 2024 - Session Notes - Day 2 – 4.2

Date: Thursday 13th June 2024

Time: 14:00 – 15:30

Thematic area: Improving Environmental Impact

Facilitator: GSC ST member: Mandy George | SAG member: Chiara Jasna Vaccaro

Group work facilitators and note-takers:

Group number and name	Facilitator	Note Taker	Room
1: Funding	Eva Mach (Head of Environmental Sustainability, IOM)	Pascal Panosetti (GSC/IFRC)	ALPHA (main auditorium)
2: Funding	Alexandra Kappeler, (Programme Manager & Deputy Head of Construction Expert Group, SDC)	Pablo Medina (GSC/IFRC)	ZETA (50)
3: Long Term Change	Patrick Mutai (NW Syria Shelter Cluster Coordinator)	Madeleine Marara (GSC/UNHCR)	OMEGA (20)
4: Long Term Change	Lizzie Babister (Habitat for Humanity International/GSC Focal Point for Research)	Elsa Perreau (IMPACT)	THETA (60)
5: DRR and CCA	Emilia Wahlstrom (UNDRR, Programme Management Officer)	Jamie Richardson (CRS)	SIGMA (60)
6: DRR and CCA	Charles Kelly (Environmental Adviser, GSC)	George Foden (ECOP/ Loughborough Uni)	IOTA (25)

Summary of the discussion

The objective of the session was to present the GSC strategy on improving environmental impact, discuss and workshop some of the more challenging aspects of the strategy to collectively brainstorm the way forward to impact long-term shelter programming, and draw up a list of ideas for next steps around 3 key challenging questions:

1. How do things need to change over the long term to really green the shelter and settlements response?
2. What alternative funding sources exist for environment and climate change in shelter and settlements programming and coordination?
3. How can we integrate issues like DRR and Climate Change Adaptation into shelter and settlement work in a reality of increasing need and decreasing resources?

After the presentation of the GSC strategy for improving environmental impact, participants split into groups to discuss the above questions. The facilitators then presented the key takeaways to the audience. Key takeaways included:

1. **LONG-TERM CHANGE:** To achieve systemic change in greening shelter responses and consider longer time scales for environmental impact, several key strategies are essential:
 - **Education and Awareness:** Implement education programs on waste management and disaster risk reduction (DRR), emphasizing reuse and providing clear data on environmental impacts.

- **Materials and Construction:** Promote the use of local materials with documented CO2 footprints and life cycles. Encourage suppliers to develop greener materials and non-food items (NFIs). Evaluate construction methods for innovation and sustainability.
- **Settlement Sustainability:** Focus on durable and sustainable solutions, including reforestation and holistic settlement planning that addresses waste management and site sustainability over extended periods.
- **Contextual Analysis and Advocacy:** Conduct thorough local context analysis, raise awareness, advocate for policy changes among donors and humanitarian actors, and establish clear indicators and actionable goals.
- **Behavioral and Policy Changes:** Encourage behavioral shifts and advocate for policy changes among donors and humanitarian actors to prioritize environmental impacts and protection. Build capacity and awareness among affected people, including displaced and local communities.
- **Simplification of Approaches:** Simplify tools and guidelines to enhance accessibility and usability for shelter professionals, recognizing the complexity of environmental considerations in humanitarian settings.

2. **ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES:** The following priorities were identified

- **Flexibility in Funding and Processes:** Advocate for donor flexibility to adjust funding and project processes based on sustainability assessments mid-project.
- **Support for Innovation:** Allocate sufficient time and resources to foster innovation in shelter solutions, ensuring projects are sustainable and impactful.
- **Measurable Impact and Evidence-Based Funding:** Prioritize measurable impact and evidence-based finance to demonstrate effectiveness and secure funding.
- **Diversification of Funding Sources:** Explore alternative funding beyond public sources, including public-private partnerships, diaspora involvement, and climate finance options that often require co-funding and bankable projects.
- **Partnership and Outreach:** Strengthen outreach efforts to form partnerships aligned with common objectives and interests. Identify key stakeholders and collaborate across clusters and sectors for integrated approaches.
- **Clean Energy Initiatives:** Promote clean energy solutions and determine responsibility within cluster frameworks or individual agencies.
- **Understanding Climate and Public Finance:** Develop a deeper understanding of climate finance mechanisms and their integration with public finance strategies.

3. **DRR and CCA**

Participants identified the following challenges in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA): being viewed as non-essential, lack of capacity, scarce resources, and competing priorities. They noted limited expertise and tools at field levels, subpar land for settlements, and the ineffectiveness of measuring DRR outcomes. There is insufficient investment and funding, particularly for long-term preparedness, with varied implementation timelines. Specific funding and prioritization for CCA are lacking, compounded by

structural funding barriers and a focus on short-term emergency responses. Additionally, participants highlighted a lack of information on climate change, expertise, holistic planning, and the integration of energy access into climate adaptation, resulting in a grey area between emergency response and development.

They then identified and prioritized possible solutions. The most prioritized ideas were:

- Create a repository of efforts and case studies, organized by keywords, for easy access and learning.
- Provide practical guidance for implementation at multiple scales, from global to local.
- Support the development of concrete action plans for DRR/CCA within country-specific contexts.
- Foster connections with local actors to integrate DRR and CCA for sustainable, long-term implementation.
- Establish actionable links to local climate forecast mapping to inform local decision-making.
- Develop location-specific initiatives that bridge scientific research with funding and implementation efforts.
- Provide training materials for staff and beneficiaries to mainstream DRR and CCA in all interventions and planning initiatives.
- Establish dedicated funding streams to ensure DRR does not compete for funds.

In summary, effective strategies for integrating disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) identified included connecting with local actors for sustainable implementation, utilizing local climate forecast mapping for informed decision-making, and initiating location-specific projects integrating scientific research with funding. Key priorities identified also included developing training materials to mainstream DRR and CCA, establishing dedicated funding streams, and creating a repository of case studies for learning. Additionally, advocating for DRR mainstreaming in donor projects, conducting detailed flood analyses remotely, and providing guidance on CCA integration from the outset of emergencies are crucial. Defining focal points for settlement-level risk information, understanding local practices, and promoting cross-sectoral collaboration further enhance resilience efforts.

3 Priority Recommendations or 3 Key Takeaways

1. **Systemic Change for Greening Shelter Responses:** Participants emphasized the need for systemic change to integrate environmental considerations into shelter and settlements over the long term. This includes promoting education on waste management and disaster risk reduction, using local materials with documented sustainability metrics, and ensuring settlements are designed for long-term sustainability. Advocacy for policy changes, behavioral shifts, and simplified tools were highlighted as crucial for achieving these goals.
2. **Alternative Funding Sources and Innovation:** There was a strong call for flexibility in funding and processes to support sustainability assessments mid-project. Participants stressed the importance of allocating sufficient time and resources for innovative solutions in shelter responses. Diversifying

funding sources beyond public finance, including through partnerships with private sectors and diaspora communities, was identified as essential for funding sustainable initiatives.

3. **Integrating DRR and CCA Amid Resource Constraints:** Participants acknowledged significant challenges in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and climate change adaptation (CCA) integration due to limited resources and competing priorities. Key solutions identified included fostering local partnerships, utilizing climate forecasting for informed decision-making, and developing tailored action plans at both global and local scales to enhance resilience in shelter and settlements.

These takeaways underscored the importance of collaborative efforts, innovative funding approaches, and strategic integration of environmental considerations to enhance long-term sustainability in humanitarian shelter responses.