



Malawi Shelter Cluster Technical Working Group (TWG) on Promoting Safer building Practices Notes of the meeting held on 13.05 .2021 from 10h-11.30h via ZOOM

Participants:

(in order of appearance on my zoom participants list)

	Name	Organization	Mail
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8	Andrew Finlayson	BGS (British Geological Survey)	afin@bgs.ac.uk
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Agenda:

1. recap & conclusions last meeting
2. discuss draft matrix with criteria for identifying contextually appropriate construction materials and technologies
3. introduction to how geoscience work can support shelter response with Q&A



1. Welcome recap conclusions last meeting

Cecilia gave a brief recap of the whole process that the TWG has gone through following a step by step protocol to

1. understand the context better:
2. define preliminary objectives for safer construction IEC materials:
3. Analyse the key stakeholders and audiences to be targeted with safer reconstruction messages or other promotion:
4. Understand the best ways to engage with the different target's groups.
5. Develop more detailed safer construction messages.

For each of the steps conclusions are documented in the previous meeting minutes and presentations (also see attached presentation for summary). During the discussions one topics kept coming up repeatedly: what are the proper “green” materials and related techniques to be promoted in Malawi? A key challenge in taking a decision with regard to materials is, that the use of wood for construction or for burning bricks is strongly discouraged or even banned by new environmental protection law, and to some extent the use of other natural materials (like earth or grass) is also rather unwanted on political level. At the same, affected communities often do not have access to or cannot afford other materials than those that are directly available from nature such as earth, wood and grass for thatch. For humanitarians working in such contexts trying to support affected people’s recovery as widely as possible, it is very difficult to provide support to communities under the constraint on the use of naturally available materials. They find themselves in a conflict to choose between supporting a few selected people with high quality (and costly) house construction (e.g. using concrete blocks) and leaving the majority behind, or supporting larger number of people at lower cost, to improve as much as possible on existing practices and locally sources materials on order to raise the standard of construction incrementally over time.

The discussion on “green” materials was continued over the course of several meetings and concluded that there could not be one material or technique suitable for every given context in Malawi. It was acknowledged by all participants, that material choice needed to be made carefully for each location, with respect to availability, affordability, environmental impact as well as technical and socio-cultural factors and of course adhering to legal restriction on the use of certain materials. It was also acknowledged that these factors have to be evaluated case by case depending on local circumstances. Where wood is available from government-controlled plantations or where bricks are burnt using other fuels than wood (as presented in a project using agricultural wastes to burn bricks), wood and brick can be very good choices in that location and should not be ruled out by default.

→ It was agreed to develop a tool that would support the choice of materials according to criteria jointly set out and agreed in the TWG.

2. discuss draft matrix with criteria for identifying contextually appropriate construction materials and technologies



A first draft of the matrix including the criteria discussed in the last meeting and with suggested ranking system was presented for feedback and discussion. See Matrix <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1P9dtD9II3-vUay9hBv36D6R3mcRGJOD6WPXAh6ZnEjl/edit?usp=sharing>
All the criteria were discussed, and some recommendations made for modifications. The ranking method also needs to be further detailed but in general participants agreed to the methodology and criteria.
Shadreck highlighted again that it was imperative to adhere to the ban of wood and the discussion turned around whether people were allowed to use wood from their own plantations or gardens. It was agreed, that where people used wood from their own sources to rebuild agencies should promote and support reforestation at least at the same scale as the harvesting. Otherwise the use of wood is banned.
Another discussion was around how to distinguish materials suitable for construction in urban areas.

3. introduction to how geoscience work can support shelter response with Q&A

Susanne Sergeant (Seismologist from British Geological Survey.) presented a brief introduction of geoscience work in connection with shelter recovery after disaster from the Philippines and Nepal. Andrew Finlayson (Geomorphologist from BGS) presented geoscience information for Malawi, such as hazard maps, land/soil types and groundwater characteristics etc. and showed how such data can be used to inform shelter recovery as well as WASH programming

- Participants flagged interest to organise a longer session with geoscientist from Malawi to build those connections and to better understand and learn how to use such data and where to find it

AOB and way forward

- It was suggested to put all presentations and meeting minutes on a platform (a folder) accessible to all participants. Cecilia will follow up on that.

the **next meeting will be on Thursday June 24th at 10h Malawi time.** Invitation will be sent as calendar invite.

feel free to join the TWG Whatsapp group to be better connected: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/DJEj8QAwGN39Nk5o6y6EXA>

