

Catholic Relief Services West Sumatra Earthquake Emergency Response Transitional Shelter Program Approach

Based on in-depth shelter assessment in affected communities and on-going coordination within the Shelter Cluster with government and humanitarian agencies, CRS has revised and refined its proposed shelter approach. Most significantly, CRS assessments have evidenced that

- most affected households are actively salvaging materials and building temporary shelters with own resources (including coconut trees) on or near their destroyed homes, indicating the urgency of delivering transitional shelter support;
- material inputs are widely available in local markets throughout the affected areas, so that cash grants appear to be a more effective and flexible approach to transitional shelter than provision of construction inputs.

CRS is currently completing its emergency shelter distributions in targeted communities in Agam and Pasaman Barat districts with 7,648 households (out of a target 8,000) served as of November 8th. This emergency shelter intervention is an entry point into target communities: CRS and its local partners aim to support vulnerable households in these same communities in the (re)construction of transitional shelters that are safe, adequate and durable as per Sphere standards.

To complement materials salvaged from damaged houses, CRS proposes to provide a complement of household cash grants worth IDR 2,000,000 (approximately \$211) and technical support to an estimated 8,000 affected households over the next three months.

JUSTIFICATION

1. Initial Field Observations:

Field observations during emergency shelter beneficiary registration and NFI distributions indicated that many earthquake-affected households had already begun salvaging materials from their damaged houses and constructing temporary shelters with these salvaged materials and/or other materials they may have had on hand prior to the earthquake. At the same time, the types and amounts of materials earthquake-affected households had at their disposal varied significantly, as did their ability to undertake temporary shelter construction, either through access to skilled and/or unskilled labor from their own households, through social networks, or via payment. It was also apparent that earthquake-affected households were encountering shortfalls in material and/or labor resources for construction of safe, adequate, and durable (S.A.D) shelters, and that addressing these shortfalls would be the most appropriate objective for a transitional shelter intervention. However, due to the variation in available resources earthquake-affected households already have at their disposal, the CRS team felt that shelter support would need to be similarly flexible, allowing

households to determine and access the types and amounts of specific materials or labor inputs they need. These observations pointed towards cash assistance rather than provision of a predetermined kit of shelter materials.

Likewise, during initial field observations the CRS team noticed that the shelters which earthquake-affected households were beginning to construct could fall into several broadly defined structural typologies, determined largely by the kind of materials they were able to access. The degree to which households were able to construct these various types of shelters in an earthquake-resistant, appropriate (i.e., comfortable) and durable manner also appeared to vary widely. The degree of completion households had been able to achieve varied as well, with some households having only salvaged and stockpiled materials and others having already built a reasonably “complete” temporary shelter. These observations indicated the need to develop a *flexible technical assistance (TA) strategy* that would offer households a range of TA points, relevant to the different structural typologies and to various stages of shelter completion.

2. Shelter Program Design Assessment – Summary of Findings

Shortly after determining that we would focus much of our relief and shelter support in Agam, the CRS team developed and conducted a *Shelter Program Design Assessment* to gather more in-depth information about the shelter situations and needs of earthquake-affected households. Relying on an open-ended questioning methodology, primary objectives of the assessment were to determine: whether earthquake-affected households had or had not built a temporary shelter; if they had not, why; and if they had, how (i.e. with what material and labor inputs). Assessment findings generally confirmed previous observations and provided other relevant information.

Reasons cited by households as to why they had not yet built temporary shelters:

- a lack of salvageable or on-hand materials from collapsed houses
- an unwillingness to salvage from “slightly” or “moderately” damaged homes, out of uncertainty as to whether their houses are currently safe to occupy, whether the damage to their houses is repairable, or due to unclear ownership of the house (e.g. in cases with multiple offspring of deceased parents)
- insufficient labor
- insufficient money
- the expectation of government/outside assistance, either for provision of a temporary shelter, or for repair or (re)-construction of permanent homes
- (less frequently) a lack of access to land on which they could construct temporary shelter, either because the affected household was renting the house or because the house had taken up the entire plot of land

Salvaging Materials for T-shelter reconstruction

- Households whose houses had collapsed were more likely to have salvaged materials than those whose houses were still standing, even if structurally damaged.
- Materials most frequently salvaged were structural roof timbers, corrugated roof sheets, and nails; materials most frequently purchased were nails and other hardware.

- Households did not cite market access or availability of materials in markets as significant hindrances to purchasing shelter materials; some communities located further from markets/vehicle-accessible roads than others had collaborated to bring materials to their villages.
- Some households had cut and milled palm trees that had stood on the same plot of land as their house; some of these households had paid for the felled trees to be milled into structural timber.

Sphere compliance of existing T-Shelters

Of households who had already built a temporary shelter, many had used CGI or plastic sheeting for walls and complained of excessive heat and poor ventilation. Some households with timber-frame temporary shelters had already incorporated corner-bracing; none observed had incorporated cross-bracing at wall portals. Moreover, (a) connections between timber structural members were typically made with one or two nails; nails did not appear to be driven completely through and hammered flat; (b) connections observed may be susceptible to nails pulling out under extreme lateral loading.

Planned improvements or additions to temporary shelters most frequently cited included

- installation of a ceiling (typically 3mm plywood) to reduce heat gain from CGI roofs
- installation of a cement/concrete floor
- installation of a perimeter curb to prevent surface water infiltration
- replacement of CGI sheet wall sheathing with wooden planking (or less frequently, usually at our suggestion, palm thatch or bamboo matting).

TRANSITIONAL SHELTER APPROACH

a. Overall Shelter Program Objective:

Earthquake-affected households in target villages of West Sumatra province have a safe, adequate and durable place to live in the interim period before their permanent houses have been repaired or (re)-constructed.

In order to achieve this program objective, CRS and local partner Walhi propose a transitional shelter program approach that combines flexible technical assistance with cash grants to help households build or improve their transitional shelters. Implementation approaches will promote community ownership and accountability.

b. Targeting Criteria & Beneficiary Selection

During initial meetings with selected communities, CRS and Walhi teams of field engineers and social mobilizers will work with the community to form a Community Shelter Committee (CSC). The CSC and CRS/Walhi teams will then visit all households who received emergency shelter assistance to determine whether they already have built *Pondoks* (an appropriate local term for transitional shelter) and whether these *Pondoks* meet identified SPHERE standards for safety, comfort, space, and durability.

Transitional shelter support will be provided to all earthquake affected families who are not currently living in SPHERE compliant shelter – including households still living under tarps and households living in *Pondoks* of inadequate space, comfort or quality. Once eligible beneficiaries are identified, preliminary beneficiary lists will be posted publicly in the community for review through a complaint mechanism.¹

Additional vulnerability criteria that may affect a household's ability to build a transitional shelter of adequate quality include:

- Very limited resources (i.e. households on the government's poverty list)
- Physical challenges to building their t-shelter by themselves (sick, elderly, pregnant, unskilled)
- Lack of sufficient salvaged materials to build even a low quality shelter (i.e. people still living under tarps, even if next to standing houses)

The community mobilization strategy described below specifically aims to provide incentives to communities to find appropriate solutions to assist the most vulnerable households on a case by case basis.

c. Technical Design

Technical Assistance Strategy

Technical assistance messages will be developed as a series of *TA Points* illustrating simple construction techniques that households can use to ensure that their temporary shelters are safe (primarily earthquake-resistant), comfortable, and durable enough to last 18-24 months (the anticipated length of time it will take for households to repair or re/construct permanent houses). The *TA Points* will be organized according to the 2-3 typologies of temporary shelters that are prevalent in earthquake-affected communities. As a whole, the technical assistance package will offer a "menu" of appropriate techniques for improvement of or additions to *Pondoks* from which households can choose depending on their shelter type, materials availability, and specific construction details.

The main priority for TA will be the promotion of safe, adequate and durable construction of transitional shelters. Earthquake resistance, which is a safety standard, will be emphasized in order to instill knowledge in homeowners as they build their transitional shelters and also, in the longer term, their permanent shelters. Most shelters observed could be retrofitted for earthquake resistance with additional cross- or corner-bracing fairly easily and with only a marginal expenditure.

CRS will work with technical partner Build Change to deliver technical assistance to affected households in four ways:

- Home assessment visits: As CRS field engineers visit damaged homes or already existing t-shelters, they provide recommendations for site selection, size, material usage, and structure of the t-shelters, as necessary.
- Printed Materials: Each target household will receive easy to read and understand TA booklets and posters with written and graphic material illustrating the *TA Points*

¹ In all target communities, a program bulletin board will display all project information, communication, materials, decisions, etc., as well as a hotline number for complaints

- Community presentations: Working with Build Change, CRS field engineers will provide formal technical assistance to target households and local skilled labor on building safe, adequate and durable shelters, using a combination of powerpoint presentation and discussions around a model t-shelter and/or existing *Pondoks*.
- On-site TA support: CRS and Walhi field teams will provide roving engineering support in target communities throughout the transitional shelter construction process.

***Pondok* Grants**

Transitional shelter cash grants (or "*Pondok* grants") of IDR 2 million (or about \$211) will be provided to each target households. The value of the *Pondok* grant was determined based on an estimated Bill of Quantity which CRS engineers put together with different levels of salvaged materials for a t-shelter of approximately 18-20 m² as per SPHERE standards.

As an incentive for target households to invest in skilled labor support and to promote community solidarity in helping the most vulnerable households effectively build Sphere compliant t-shelters, a phased approach to grant disbursement is being piloted:

- an initial 75% to 90% of the *Pondok* grant is distributed up front² to support re/construction or agreed upon improvements to existing shelters
- the balance is distributed upon verification that target households – in particular vulnerable households - have been able to build transitional shelters that meet agreed upon quality standards.³

To reduce security risks in moving large amounts of cash, alternative to handing out actual cash grants are being investigated, including use of the postal service (which already hands out government cash grants to below poverty line households) or special travelers' checks redeemable at local banks. Particular attention will be given to ensure that these mechanisms do not place undue burden on beneficiaries, for instance negotiating outreach banking services to target villages. Any additional transaction cost would be borne by CRS.

***Pondok* Construction and S.A.D. Verification**

It is estimated that households will require 8-10 days after disbursement of the initial *Pondok* grants to make the recommended modifications/improvements/additions to their *pondoks*. During these 10 days, CRS/Walhi engineers will be present on site to provide direct technical assistance as required.

Payment of the second and final installment will be contingent on progress achieved in completing the t-shelters. CRS will conduct verification of sample households using the t-shelter assessment forms to evaluate improvements accomplished against baseline. This verification process will focus specifically on the most vulnerable households, i.e. those identified as facing the greatest challenge in effectively (re)-building quality t-shelters.

² CRS is currently conducting pilots with various installment amounts to determine the most appropriate incentive for meeting quality standards while ensuring sufficient upfront funds for quality construction in a timely manner.

³ Pilots are under way to evaluate the impact of making the second installment conditional on vulnerable households having made recommended T-shelter quality improvements.

About two weeks after disbursement of the second and final payment, CRS and Walhi teams will conduct complementary monitoring of beneficiary satisfaction with TA support and cash grant mechanism, as well as specific use of the cash grants in shelter re-construction.

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