

Kachin Shelter Partners Technical Working Group (TWiG)

Venue: UNHCR Office in Myitkyina

Date: Thursday 03 October 2013

Time: 10:00 AM to 12:45 PM

Meeting Participants:

- Paul Knudsen, Shelter Expert, Shelter Cluster
- U Myint Maung, UNHCR
- U La Seng, KMSS
- Ma Ja Lawt Htu, KMSS
- Haung Zay, KBC
- Maran Khun Aung, Shalom

Agenda & Discussion

1. Minutes of the last meeting
2. Kitchen designs
3. Details
4. Tool kits and carpenter training
5. Sphere
6. Shelter Strategy
7. AOB

Minutes of the last meeting

The participants were given the minutes from the last meeting and provided with time to go through them. No corrections were suggested. If there are other matters arising from the minutes that should be commented upon this can still be done before the next meeting. The action items from the last minutes (as immediately below) was presented and discussed. The comments included here about further actions will be included in the action items from this meeting and again updated at the next meeting.

Agenda item	Action	By whom	Time
Shelter design,	To provide sketches of bracing of rafters	Cluster Lead	4 th September '13

details			
Kitchen	Proposal for design drawings for two types of kitchen. Individual annexes to shelter buildings and free standing structure (can be used as individual or collective kitchen).	Cluster Lead	15 th September '13
Other structures	Make prioritized list of other necessary buildings for camps	Cluster Members	Before next meeting
Building in NGCA	Building in NGCA. Make allowances for the extra challenges of work in these areas, i.e.: materials, climatic conditions, topography and available skills and supervisory capacity.	Cluster Members	Continuously
AOB	Next meeting to be announced	Cluster Lead	In good time before the meeting

Kitchen designs

Two versions were presented. As add-on to shelter buildings, where the kitchen is to be placed next to the entrance to each shelter, and where the entrances will be covered under a lean-to roof. This is the preferred solution for most camp dwellers, but it requires space in front of the buildings to avoid making this a fire hazard.

The other version is a free-standing building where kitchen spaces can be used as individual kitchens or shared between several household, depending on how many kitchen units are built. This of course depends on space and funds. In both cases it is intended that the kitchen should give about the same space for each kitchen and the main difference is the location related to the shelter.

Details

To help on how to make the details from the new standard design, detailed drawings have been made to show the principles of how to practically do it. The Cluster Lead Field Associate (Shelter) has made some sketches that were distributed, but more details are needed to answer all questions, especially regarding the new standard design, safety details and how to make construct.

Work will continue and detailed drawings/sketches will be distributed to the participants when complete. Follow-up should be made at the next meeting

Use of plywood

Particularly we have some concerns regarding NGCA. In particular where plywood has been used as substitute for bamboo mats or strip bamboo, the complaint has been that the quality of bamboo of Chinese origin does not comply with the specifications in Myanmar. A rough conversion means that 3-layer plywood from Myanmar can be substituted by 5 or 6-layer Chinese bamboo to give equal thickness and strength, and the 5-layer plywood can be substituted with 9-layer Chinese plywood.

Due to the plywood having no flexibility, it is necessary to make buildings to more exact dimensions when plywood is used, making sure that joints are neat and nice, and that all joints between plywood sheets are covered with battens to make solid connections between sheets.

For floors there is no need to use battens but all joints should be made over joists, and the joints that go across joists should be supported with pieces of battens or joists under the joints to ensure a solid connection (also in this direction).

Plywood should be treated with oil, paint or varnish to protect it against moisture and weathering in general.

Use of bamboo

Two papers on cutting/harvesting bamboo and on treatment of bamboo were handed out as general information about the material. It may be useful information when considering constructing with this material or discussing the availability of good quality bamboo during different seasons.

Cutting of bamboo affects the quality of the materials afterwards. First the bamboo should be of the right age, but then it is important when it is cut. Generally it is recommended that the best time for bamboo cutting is during the last part of the rainy season and beginning of the dry season, when the content of starch and carbohydrates is at its lowest. This will make the bamboo more resistant to attacks by tree-boring insects and fungi.

Treatment of bamboo is a difficult matter. The most effective method, using chemical treatments that are highly toxic and can cause pollution both where the material is used and when disposing treated bamboo. The less efficient treatment methods are safer, but do not provide as good protection of the material. In general the Cluster Lead could not recommend using methods which also causes pollution and risk health problems for the people working with or living in shelters treated with such methods.

Tool kits and carpenter training

In order to improve on the local capacity for taking care of the day-to-day maintenance of shelters, it is important that the people living in them takes part in this effort and that they are helped to get necessary skills, tools and materials to do the most common type maintenance.

This type of maintenance can consist of repairs to floors and walls, fixing of stairs, doors and windows etc., as these are typical building parts that deteriorate relatively fast and where daily care and maintenance can make a difference to having the best life possible in the shelter plus increase the lifespan of the buildings.

For the major maintenance works it will still be necessary to use skilled craftsmen and crews to do the work, either from IP's or contractors.

A copy of the toolkit proposal that has been made for the shelter projects in Rakhine State was handed out to the participants for their scrutiny and comments. It may be minor differences in requirements in Kachin compared with Rakhine, and it is important that all the tools and materials to be provided are relevant.

The time of implementing this will depend on approval of the actual toolkit, a plan for training of carpenters (camp crews) and agreement with CCCM on the whole package, including responsibility for the project and replenishment of materials and other items that may be damaged. It is also a question of obtaining the necessary funds.

Feedback from the Cluster partners is important in terms of the content of training, the detailed needs for tools and materials in the toolkits and suggestions regarding organization of carpenters and crews in the camps.

Sphere

While the concepts of minimum standards, notably the Sphere Project, are considered to be well-known, it is still useful from time-to-time to step back and look at what this really is about, and why we have these guidelines and standards to follow.

The item was not presented in the meeting, but the hand-out that has been made for the presentation will be provided to the participants, and the forum is encouraged to keep this matter on the agenda for future meetings, as this is the basis for all of our work on shelter and camp infrastructure.

Shelter Strategy

The intention was to discuss the Shelter Strategy in its most recent version after discussion with the national Cluster in Yangon. However, feedback was still outstanding from Yangon. However, the latest version is not expected to differ much as the main points have been discussed with the Cluster Coordinator in Yangon.

The main objectives were presented and discussed. Participants of the meeting had no concerning comments regarding these and they are considered to be approved.

AOB

The next meeting is expected in 3 weeks. This meeting also marked the end of contract for the Shelter Expert, and soon will see the arrival of new colleague in this position. The actual meeting date will be announced within the next two weeks, when the incoming-staff is in place. He will have a handover with the outgoing Shelter Expert and comes from Rakhine, having had direct experience of constructing temporary shelters in the last year and as part of, working closely with the Rakhine Shelter Cluster. His appointment is foreseen as longer term, part of the Cluster Lead's efforts to deliver against their strategic priorities in the weeks and months ahead.

For the next meeting members were encouraged to forward proposals for the agenda.

The outgoing Shelter Expert thanked the participants for their support and contributions during his three-month mission, especially for making the TWiG a relevant place to discuss matters of concern for all shelter partners. He also wished the participants the best in their future work and hoped that the good cooperation between the Cluster Lead and the other partners would continue in the weeks and months ahead.

SUMMARY/ACTION

Agenda item	Action	By whom	Time
Shelter	Alternative solutions to bracing of roof structure	Cluster	To be included with

design, details	to be distributed. Along underside rafters, tie-beam to rafter, and vertical from gable to tie-beam/column. Shelter Expert recommends as the easiest to implement being bracing on the underside of the rafters, as this means that the bracing can support each rafter and does not have to be in one length for the whole span (joints can be made at the rafters). Lastly that this will serve two purposes, both to keep the roof structure in a vertical position, as well as ensure the shape of the whole building (avoid twisting).	Lead	the invitation for the next meeting
Other structures	Make prioritized list of other necessary buildings for camps.	Partners	Before next meeting
Kitchen designs	Standard kitchen designs. Comments to be submitted to UNHCR regarding design, details or BoQ's to be used as input in submission to Global Shelter Cluster (Geneva) for approval as a new standard design.	Partners	10 th September '13
Details	Not use toxic/polluting treatment on bamboo. Rather, harvest bamboo for construction work at the right time of the season to reduce problems of tree-boring insects and fungi.	Partners	Continuous
Tool kits and carpenter training	Cluster partners to provide feedback on: - what camp carpenters should be expected to do, - proposed toolkit, - carpenter training and - organization of work crews in the camps.	Partners	Before next meeting (in writing), or at next meeting (verbally)
Sphere	Distribute written information that can be a quick guide to Sphere Project	Cluster Lead	To be distributed to the members with the minutes
AOB	Next meeting to be announced	Cluster Lead	In good time before meeting.