

CHAPTER 8 / PART A / SECTOR OVERVIEW

HOUSING AND SMALL-SCALE INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Definition

Housing and small-scale infrastructure refers to a variety of different activities with the same goal – to establish physical conditions for a temporary or permanent home for internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Lack of a basic physical setting is often the primary obstacle for return of refugees and IDPs after an emergency. Housing is a primary need and human right, and the protection of this right is the primary mission of UNHCR and thereby also of DRC. Beyond survival, shelter is necessary to enhance resistance to diseases and to provide protection from the environment. It is important to human dignity and to sustain family and community life.

DRC defines physical rehabilitation as:

An activity that restores and/or ensures physical infrastructure (e.g. shelter, buildings, roads, schools, health clinics and utility supply) in order to provide for basic needs like physical protection and public services to live a normal life. Additionally the objective is to initiate and sustain return, repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons and to give the residing population a positive incentive to stay in the community.

Physical rehabilitation varies very much according to the context and this tool is particularly based upon DRC's experience from Europe. Hence there are many ways to categorise physical rehabilitation, one of them being the distinction between rehabilitation benefiting individuals and families or rehabilitation benefiting the whole community. Therefore, the focus can either be on private houses and apartment buildings (private or public) or on public buildings (e.g. schools, kindergartens, and community centres) and public services (e.g. roads, water and electricity supply). The two categories can be described as follows:

1.1. Individual Assistance

Individual assistance is about providing shelter for people in need but can be seen as ranging from distribution of plastic sheets to a thorough reconstruction of a house, depending on the scenario in which the programme is implemented:

Table 1.1: Types of Shelter Assistance

Acute crisis	Displacement	Durable solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refugee camps - handing out e.g. plastic sheeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - host families - collective centres - spontaneous settlements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - total repair

The main factor dividing the different options for physical rehabilitation is the degree of emergency. If one has to deal with a situation in the conflict phase where people have abandoned their houses and live in open air, an emergency shelter project distributing plastic sheeting and food supplies is relevant whereas proper reconstruction projects belong to a later phase of rehabilitation. The more volatile the situation is the more temporary solutions are applied, and vice versa. Within the three categories, the assistance is individually designed according to a given time frame, the number and condition of the people in need, funding perspectives, weather conditions and the degree of destruction to the buildings.

Emergency shelter is regarded as a critical determinant of survival in an emergency. It serves as a temporary solution to immediate desperate need of living space by facilitating primitive shelter of plastic sheets and organising refugee camps.

Shelter can be seen as a more permanent assistance than emergency shelter but compared to reconstruction, shelter remains a temporary solution. It is often implemented in war areas or immediate post war areas. The aim of the shelter project is twofold. In the short run, it aims at making buildings usable as temporary homes whilst it in the longer run, it aims at preparing buildings for reconstruction by means of weather protecting. There are several variations of shelter projects. It can be moderate rehabilitation of the original home of a refugee or IDP. It can also target host families where a family already living in their own house is offered partial rehabilitation of a first floor, a garage or an annex to give accommodation to refugees or displaced persons for a specified period of time. Other variations are the collective centre, which is a question of establishing a transit centre in a large building (e.g. a former hotel) for a larger number of families, or spontaneous settlement. The latter is the case when a large building not normally suitable for domestic use (e.g. a factory) is occupied by IDPs or refugees and then rehabilitated to a minimum extent to accommodate a large number of people.

Reconstruction is a step further than a shelter and it is per definition the most durable solution by encompassing a thorough restoration of a private house or an apartment building. In a permanent rehabilitation situation, i.e. return or integration, reconstruction is naturally the most desirable but also the most expensive type of assistance. When facing large target groups the choice of assistance needs not only to be balanced to the context but also to the cost-effectiveness.

1.2. Community Assistance

One of the core elements in physical rehabilitation is to consider the involved community. DRC believes that rehabilitating public buildings such as schools, health clinics and roads will be a motivation and an attractive element in peoples' choice of return. Focusing not only on individual housing but also on the infrastructure makes the return more sustainable, also because it creates a more tolerant environment in the receiving communities. Supporting public services in a local community may be one of the most important cornerstones in the rehabilitation process.

To some extent it is possible to divide the public physical rehabilitation into social and technical infrastructure. The first accounts for rehabilitation of schools, community centres, clinics, kindergartens and so on whilst the latter concerns water and electricity supply, roads and bridges. When rehabilitating public facilities the reconstruction approach is almost always pursued.

2. Principles

When DRC implements housing and small-scale infrastructure projects the following three operational principles should be taken into particular consideration: Sustainability, participation and collaboration.

2.1. Sustainability

DRC believes that a holistic or integrated approach benefits the sustainability of rehabilitation projects. This can be done by applying multi-sector or complementary programmes to assist at several levels: reconstruction of private dwellings, reintegration support (legal as well as social), assistance in establishing a livelihood, capacity building of local authorities etc. Furthermore, DRC strives to include the receiving community in the projects – both by implementing elements concerning rehabilitation of public infrastructure benefiting the entire receiving community, but also by including the local authorities, local NGOs, the local population and other as actors in the process towards return, reconciliation and reintegration. In this way, a physical rehabilitation project becomes a means to an end in terms of protection and reconciliation.

Rehabilitation projects should never stand alone, but always be part of a larger solution. With this principle DRC also wishes to ensure that the programmes are build upon local structures' capacities, and that these are able to ensure running, maintenance and continuation of the rehabilitation projects. All these aspects are exactly the reasons why DRC can provide an added value to the rehabilitation project, which a private contractor cannot.

Somaliland

When reconstructing a school in Somaliland, DRC ensured that relevant resources were present in the area. Besides rebuilding the actual school building, also basic conditions and requirements for running of the school were ensured. Hence, teachers were identified and trained accordingly, materials were purchased locally to stimulate the local economy and local craftsmen were trained in maintaining the building and the equipment. As education in Somaliland is not funded by the state, tuition from the parents is required, and this often becomes a problem for poor families. Therefore, DRC raised extra funding to pay for tuition, teachers' salaries and training, teaching equipment etc. An organisation consisting of representatives of the beneficiaries were set up in order to carry on the supervision of the school.

» See section 6.5.9 for further information on sustainability.

2.2. Participation

A guiding principle for DRC's physical rehabilitation activities is that beneficiaries should be consulted and involved in planning, implementation and monitoring of the activities themselves. Involving the beneficiaries has multiple advantages. Knowledge is being shared, it is ensured that the activity is a priority, the feeling of ownership and responsibility towards the outcome is increased, it can prevent unintended conflict caused by the activities, and it is more cost effective. A participatory approach also contributes to increase the sustainability of the project and to empower the involved persons and communities.

The aspect of participation is very much dependent on the context. In Africa, for example, beneficiaries are implementing almost everything while the participatory approach is less used in the Balkans. In this regard, it is worth noting that the term »participation« is not always uniformly understood. By participation, DRC generally means the active and voluntary involvement of beneficiaries in all phases of a project. In physical reconstruction, however, participation may be more narrowly understood by stakeholders, as implying only contribution of labour in the implementation phase. In this way, participation may take on a negative quality of pure hard work.

Case: DRC reconstruction in Bosnia

DRC in Bosnia has experienced a lack of will of beneficiaries to get involved in DRC physical rehabilitation projects with a high degree of self-help because other agencies in the area were offering »turn-key« houses for the same target group.

When interpreted as »labour contribution« the principle of participation may clash with another principle, namely that of targeting vulnerable groups, since the sick and elderly, e.g., can of course not physically rebuild a house. Vulnerable groups should, however, of course be involved in other ways when planning and evaluating rehabilitation activities. Generally, it is always important to assess the existing capacities amongst the target group and if needed, to provide upgrading of skills.

To some extent the use of participation is determined by donor regulations, since very narrow reconstruction contracts may out rule the possibility for DRC to be flexible enough to take into account beneficiaries' needs and wishes. However, a limiting contract with donor should never justify that beneficiaries are not heard when planning, implementing and evaluating physical rehabilitation projects.

» See section 6.5.1 for further details on participation.

2.3. Collaboration with Authorities and the Local Community

During the preparation and implementation of physical rehabilitation projects, DRC finds it extremely important to keep a close co-operation with local authorities, the local community and other relevant stakeholders in order to ensure acceptance, relevance and sustainability of the project. This concerns in particular, selection of beneficiaries (e.g. establishing of vulnerability criteria), priorities for reconstruction, building permissions if needed, establishing of general standards and securing that building regulations are being met, monitoring of the work and hand-over processes to original owners or the authorities themselves. Concerning technical infrastructure co-operation is of utmost importance in terms of the formal owners of the facilities being consulted and included. Often, the Technical Department of local authorities can assist in making assessments of destruction and damages of water and electrical supply. The relation to local authorities and/or community authorities is thus a working relationship that also can be seen as a capacity building relationship.

2.4. Targeting

In addition to the above operational principles, DRC also seeks to ensure that activities are designed to meet the needs and capacities of the target group. In

relation to shelter and reconstruction of private homes, the target group is often people wishing to return or actually returning to their own home or unoccupied or abandoned buildings. The target group can also be host families accommodating refugees or IDPs in their home or property.

DRC gives priority to assisting the most vulnerable groups in a certain context. These are for example elderly people, disabled persons and single parents. This principle should not be seen in opposition to the strong emphasis on including people or communities' own capacities. By analysing needs, capacities and vulnerabilities of the individual beneficiary or group of beneficiaries DRC can decide on a reasonable degree of beneficiary participation and activity for each individual case.

3. Methodology – Planning and Implementation

The following methodological considerations guide DRC's physical rehabilitation strategy:

3.1. Analysis of the Context

Physical rehabilitation is very much dependent on the context and has to be balanced accordingly. Besides timing in relation to the conflict, the geographic and socio-economic aspects are relevant. In developing countries reconstruction of private houses is rare whilst this is one of the major activities in more industrialised countries. A country's financial capacity, history, tradition, security, climate and natural and human resources always influence on what type of physical rehabilitation is relevant and how this should be implemented.

3.2. Stakeholders

Besides analysing the context of a country, one should engage in strategic considerations about how to secure the involvement of relevant persons, how to identify beneficiaries, and how to prevent any further conflicts (see Sections 6.3 on targeting, 6.5.5. on Do No Harm, 6.5.6. on collaboration with Local Partners). Stakeholders are of particular importance to rehabilitation projects.

The following questions can be asked:

» Beneficiaries

- How shall the selection process take place?
- What »profile« are we looking for? (based on individuals or whole communities)
- Inclusion of any especially vulnerable groups?

- What kind of binding agreements between DRC and the beneficiaries (and maybe the receiving community/authority) should be made?
- Can the beneficiaries contribute to the rehabilitation process?
- » Donors
 - Which donors fund physical rehabilitation?
 - What are their strategies and what is highly prioritised by them – geographically and politically?
- » International actors
 - What is the strategy and what is highly prioritised by the actors of the International Community – geographically and politically?
 - How do you get support from relevant IC actors?
- » Local authorities
 - What is highly prioritised by the local and the state authorities – geographically and politically?
 - Do they have any hidden agenda in relation to accepting a physical rehabilitation project in their region?
 - How do you get support from the authorities – how co-operative are they?
 - Do they have the sufficient motivation and resources to maintain the restored infrastructure?
- » NGO community
 - Do other local and international NGOs work in the same field and area?
 - What are the possibilities for co-ordination and co-operation?

3.3. Standardisation

Moderate rehabilitation means a rough refurbishment of the buildings in order to ensure their functionality as habitable buildings, but without any cosmetic or luxury work done at all. International donors usually decide upon the concrete level and quality of constructions, but DRC strongly advocates for uniformed standards in a given region in order to avoid animosities and jealousies amongst beneficiaries. Shelter standards should from the very beginning be part of a long-term solution in the sense that shelter constructions during an emergency period should be compatible with later standards of reconstruction.

The concrete standards for shelter rehabilitation will unavoidably vary from conflict area to conflict area in accordance with pre-war housing quality, local traditions, climate, urgency of needs, material supply situation, size of available funding, the number of needing beneficiaries etc. In any case, however, certain basic needs have to be met.

The buildings have to be sealed (roofs, windows, doors and holes) for incoming water (rain, snow), adequate space has to be refurbished on the inside as living space for beneficiaries and basic facilities such as water and drainage have to be established.

3.4. Implementation Methods

Two different principles dominate the implementation of physical rehabilitation programmes. These are the self-help approach and the contractor approach. They can be described as follows:

In the self-help approach, the individual owners or group of beneficiaries perform parts or the complete rehabilitation work or contributes financially. This approach is preferred by DRC.

DRC delivers the material, tools and through efficient monitoring of the working process offers theoretical and practical guidance and advice whilst checking the quality of work. The advantage of such an approach is, besides cost efficiency, the fact that it turns the beneficiaries into active contributors instead of being passive receivers. Through this, it enhances their ownership and sustainability of the process. Disadvantages are high requirements to stock management and to monitoring along with difficulties in maintaining time schedules and project deadlines. The self-help approach also requires a tradition for mutual assistance amongst the population and willingness to do community work on a voluntary basis.

In the contractor approach, architects and engineers from DRC select beneficiaries, assess the building or facility in question, prepare a tender material, perform the tender process and select the cheapest bidder. Subsequently, a construction company is contracted to perform the repair and DRC monitors the construction and hand over the buildings to beneficiaries. The advantages are that it is a fast and efficient methodology as regards deadlines and that the quality of work usually is ensured. This approach also supports the capacities of the local building industry and it can have a strong impact on the political, economic and social relations in the local communities. It is particularly relevant to use the approach with contractors when the beneficiaries are too vulnerable and incapable to participate in the work, i.e. are disabled or elderly and when the social network in the community cannot be mobilised to undertake repair for this group. The disadvantages are that it is an expensive system, the beneficiaries may perceive themselves as customers rather than participants, and it reduces the NGO involvement.

DRC can choose to work according to a combination of the two approaches in order to respect the requirements for both high building standards and deadlines as well as beneficiary involvement. The combined implementation principle implies that professional contractors will, as a minimum, do the following, highly complicated, part of the reconstruction:

- » Deliver reinforced concrete elements;
- » Install all electrical components needed for connecting to the supply net;
- » Install all water supply components needed for connecting to the supply net (In the two latter cases it is usually even a demand from the public utility companies before connecting to the networks); and
- » Reconstruct the structural elements of the building when deemed necessary based on technical assessments

Elements such as roof constructions and other difficult tasks may be contracted pending an individual assessment. The degree of beneficiary participation depends on the capacities and vulnerabilities of the individual beneficiary family/group, potential networks and of the whole community.

3.4.1. *Step-by-Step Instructions*

When planning shelter or reconstruction activities several questions need to be investigated. A general needs assessment should be complemented by an assessment of technical, legal and administrative issues.

Depending on the context, physical rehabilitation runs through the following main phases:

- » Selection of buildings or items for rehabilitation
- » Registration of damage to the buildings/facilities
- » Calculation of the amount of work needed
- » Selection of contractor or employment of volunteers
- » Management of the works
- » Criteria for quality control
- » Final hand-over
- » Moving-in procedures

More specifically DRC should pay attention to following conditions:

- » Ownership clearance
 - Is there an »official« body for verifying the property ownership?
 - If not – then what should be done?
- » Building permissions
 - Are there special permissions to be obtained before building can be started?
 - Which administrative body is relevant? (Municipal, Regional, National)
- » Reconstruction standards

- Are there standards according to the law or to local tradition?
- Do the donor(s) have »their own« standards?

» Cost assessment

- What will the costs »typically« be for materials and for works?
- Should the two be separated or should a »turn-key« model be used?
- How is the local supply situation? Is it necessary to import material?
- Is an official cost and categorisation system developed?

Categorization of Damages in the Western Balkans

In the Balkans for example, the International Management Group has developed a system of categorisation of damages based on grades of destruction. The average grades of damage are then used for categorisation of damaged houses – between 4-6 depending on the country. The idea behind the categorisation is to find some reliable average price per category thus easing the concrete assessment and budgeting of projects. The average price can be found by filling out relevant Bills of Quantities for each category houses.

» Tender procedures

- Are there any specialised agents who can do tender-material preparations?
- How are the special tender requirements set by donor(s)?

» Contractor requirements

- Are there special »official« demands to the contractor? (company size, tax registration etc.)
- Which demands should DRC make in a pre-selection phase? (experience, references etc.)
- Who is liable in case of flaws?
- How can one make sure this will not increase the costs? (withhold last payment, demand bank guarantees)
- How should/can the contractors be paid? (cash, bank transfers)

» Utility connections procedures

- How does the reconstructed infrastructure get connected to the utility (water, electricity networks)
- At what price?

- Can the rehabilitation of technical infrastructure be included in the project if needed?
- » Property laws
 - Is there an institutional body regulating the law of property issues?
 - If so, are there special clauses in the law for return, occupancy rights, evictions etc?
- » Registration of returnees
 - Which papers do the returnees need to be »re-integrated« officially?
 - Who issues them?
 - When, and based on what documentation?
 - How do beneficiaries prove their eligibility for possible pension, social benefits etc.?

4. Methodology – Evaluation and Monitoring

4.1. Indicators for Evaluation and Monitoring

Appropriate indicators for physical rehabilitation programmes are to a large extent quantitative and could be:

- » beneficiaries return permanently to their restored home and take up their pre-conflict life
- » education and health services are resumed

The means of verification could be:

- » surveys and reports by monitors
- » contracts
- » monthly progress reports
- » technical inspection
- » interview with beneficiaries
- » statistical data (e.g. decrease in death rate, diseases)
- » development of a new curriculum

Selected Reference Material

- » Emergency Handbook, Chapter 12: Site selection, planning and shelter, UNHCR (See Annex D4)
 - » The Sphere Project: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, chapter 1: Minimum standards in water supply and sanitation (See Annex G8), and chapter 4: Minimum standards in shelter and site planning (See Annex G7), 2000.
 - » ILO: Employment Intensive Reconstruction Works in Countries Emerging from Armed Conflicts, International Labour Office, Geneva, 2000
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