A Humanitarian Shelter Terminology Framework

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ABSTRACT

Inconsistent and contradictory terminology for humanitarian shelter inhibits new engagement from built environment professionals in the shelter sector. This confusion is compounded by shelter terms that can only be accurately interpreted within a particular context or organization. This research aims to identify terms in use for humanitarian shelter to develop a shelter terminology framework. 65 documents from 34 Global Shelter Cluster members, and the *Sphere Handbook*, were qualitatively analyzed and 347 shelter terms identified. The resulting framework contains 8 main categories, including 25 subcategories of shelter strategies. This research reveals that shelter terms do not only apply to material support but often service or support-based assistance. Significantly, the shelter terminology framework will assist new actors seeking to engage with shelter sector projects. Through enabling new practitioners, researchers and education programs, the framework will progress specialist fields such as humanitarian architecture, planning, and engineering.

Keywords: transitional shelter, temporary shelter, emergency shelter, settlements, humanitarian architecture, humanitarian engineering, humanitarian response

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations within an overwhelmed humanitarian system are increasingly turning to the private sector in search of collaborative partnerships to develop shelter solutions for displaced populations. However, the proliferation of shelter terminology and its inconsistent use in the shelter sector impedes development and obstruct new actors. Terminology influences the implementation of coherent sector principles and inconsistent use is a barrier to meaningful engagement from new partners seeking to access shelter sector knowledge. Further, misunderstood terminology limits the development of new strategic approaches and innovation. Zyck and Kent (2014) highlighted that "exclusionary

vocabularies" are evident across the humanitarian sector as an obstacle to collaboration (Zyck & Kent, 2014, p. 18). Bennett, Foley, and Pantuliano (2016) argued that certain terms and concepts represent a body of language that is only available to a small handful of Western universities who have a research focus on humanitarian affairs. This "retinue of anecdotes" (Bennett et al., 2016, p. 64) excludes and obscures access to knowledge and understanding of humanitarian shelter from those situated beyond the shelter sector itself.

There are calls to move away from a centralized and bureaucratic conception of the humanitarian system to one that is more open, flexible and expansive. An open network of actors could accommodate new interpretations of what constitutes humanitarian action, as well as the recognition of new types of humanitarian actors. Bennett et al. (2016) described the humanitarian system as one that lacks a single, easily accessible entry point for new actors. This research explores patterns of shelter terminology, meaning and use, which impede access to sector knowledge.

A *Google Images* search for "emergency shelter" returns an array of shelter prototypes, the majority of which are conceptual experiments developed in response to a humanitarian crisis that is rarely described. The images include expanding accordion-style structures, cocoons, teardrops, pods, tessellating hexagonal forms, and glowing "beacons of hope" shown in post-apocalyptic landscapes (Google, 2018). It is uncommon to see *who* these shelters are intended to house, *where* they are to be located, for *how long* they will be occupied, or for *what type* of crisis. Well-meaning but misinformed design proposals are rarely grounded in the reality of a crisis or the needs of a community. Further, the sheer volume of information about humanitarian shelter that is dispersed across websites and databases worldwide is difficult to navigate, creating opportunities for "duplication, disagreement and inefficiency" (Knox Clarke & Campbell, 2015, p. 10).

This research explores a particular domain of humanitarian discourse emerging from 44 partners that make up the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC, 2018), as well as the Sphere Project (Sphere, 2018). The aim is to provide an overview of publications in the field, summarizing the array of shelter terminology in use across the shelter sector. A shelter terminology framework was developed using these terms, facilitating a common, systematic and comprehensive understanding of shelter-specific terms and activities. Significantly, this research provides an interpretive tool to aid in accurately conceptualizing the problem of shelter itself. This tool is intended to enable targeted engagement from practitioners, and to facilitate research, practice and education in this area. Additionally, the shelter terminology framework is intended to aid the progression of humanitarian specialist fields of architecture, planning and engineering.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It is often assumed that terms for shelter are implicitly understandable tacit knowledge. Further, publications relating to humanitarian shelter arise from academic institutions, private industry, and a vast number of organizations across the humanitarian sector. This body of knowledge reveals a wide range of terms that describe a comparably small variety of shelter types and approaches. Even when efforts are made to explain a shelter term, definitions are rarely interpretable beyond the context of a particular project or organization. For example, the glossary of terms in *Shelter after disaster: Strategies for transitional settlement and reconstruction* (DFID & Shelter Centre, 2010) provides definitions for shelter and settlements, but these are the only terms that include the caveat: "For the purposes of these guidelines" (pp. 305–324).

Sector-wide, a cacophony of terms continues to multiply in an ever-growing number of reports. The 2011 *Sphere Handbook* outlined core humanitarian standards as "a practical expression of the shared beliefs and commitments of humanitarian agencies and the common principles, rights and duties governing humanitarian action" (Sphere, 2011a). Yet, the publication's Minimum Standards in Shelter, Settlements and Non-Food Items section reads as follows in the introduction chapter:

> Non-displaced disaster-affected populations should be assisted on the site of their <u>original homes</u> with <u>temporary</u> or <u>transitional household shelter</u>, or with resources for the repair or construction of appropriate shelter. <u>Individual household shelter</u> for such populations can be <u>temporary</u> or <u>permanent</u>, subject to factors including the extent of the assistance provided, land-use rights or ownership, the availability of essential services and the opportunities for <u>upgrading</u> and <u>expanding</u> the shelter […] When such <u>dispersed settlement</u> is not possible, <u>temporary communal settlement</u> can be provided in <u>planned</u> or <u>self-settled camps</u>, along with temporary or <u>transitional household shelter</u>, or in suitable large public buildings used as <u>collective centers</u>. (Sphere, 2011a, p. 249)

In one paragraph, six different terms are used to describe forms of shelter (original home, temporary shelter, transitional shelter, individual household shelter, transitional household shelter, and permanent shelter); two descriptors (upgradable and expandable); as well as five terms for settlement (dispersed settlement, temporary communal settlement, planned camp, self-settled camp, and collective center). Throughout the *Sphere Handbook,* additional shelter terms are introduced without definition, where transitional shelter is the only type defined in the handbook's text.

Furthermore, the accompanying online glossary for the *Sphere Handbook* omits any reference to shelter and its typologies altogether (Sphere, 2011b). After this research commenced, the 2018 version of the *Sphere Handbook* was released, which has a more consolidated approach in its use of shelter terminology. In it, definitions for shelter kits, shelter toolkits, tents, temporary shelters, transitional shelters, and core housing are provided in Appendix 4 of the document (Sphere, 2018, pp. 282-283).

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), a lead partner in the Global Shelter Cluster, described the "overlapping definitions" shown in Fig. 1.1. The diagram is intended to identify and structure differing shelter terminologies (IFRC, 2013, p. 9), while also illustrating the associated qualities of each dwelling type (tent, module, simple house, established house).
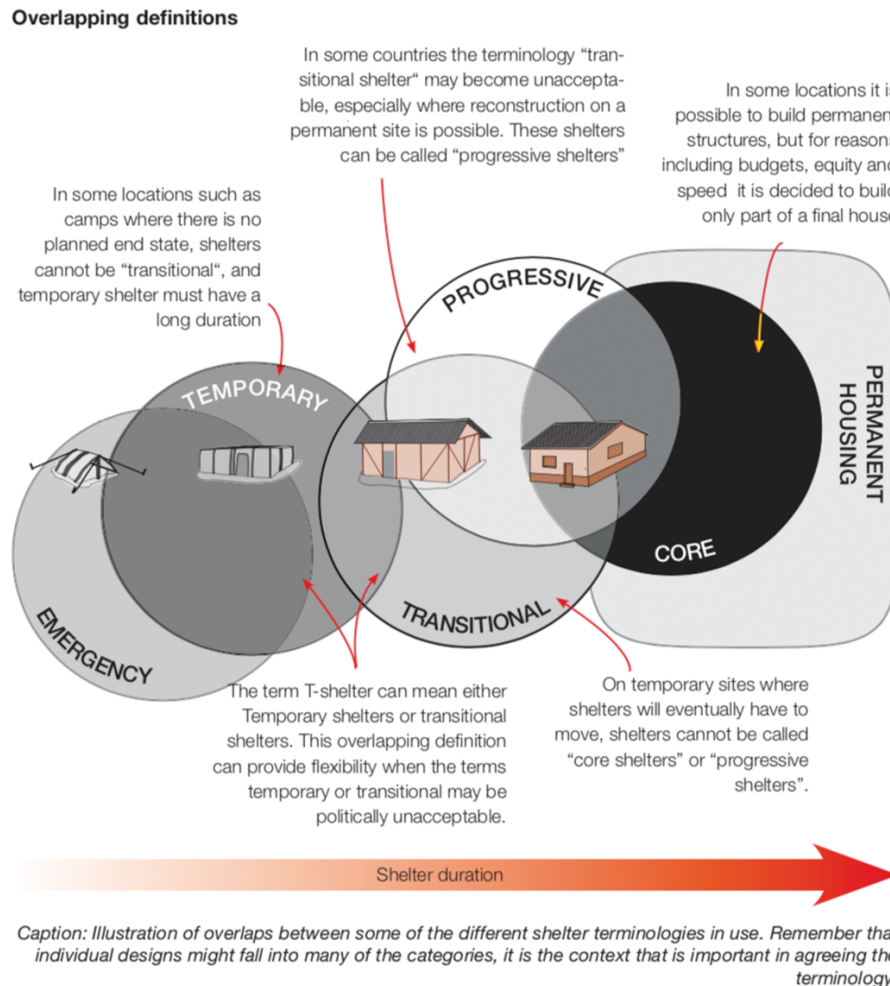
Overlapping definitions

In some countries the terminology "transitional shelter" may become unacceptable, especially where reconstruction on a permanent site is possible. These shelters can be called "progressive shelters"

In some locations it is possible to build permanent structures, but for reasons including budgets, equity and speed it is decided to build only part of a final house

In some locations such as camps where there is no planned end state, shelters cannot be "transitional", and temporary shelter must have a long duration

PROGRESSIVE

TEMPORARY

PERMANENT HOUSING

CORE

EMERGENCY

TRANSITIONAL

The term T-shelter can mean either Temporary shelters or transitional shelters. This overlapping definition can provide flexibility when the terms temporary or transitional may be politically unacceptable.

On temporary sites where shelters will eventually have to move, shelters cannot be called "core shelters" or "progressive shelters".

Shelter duration

Caption: Illustration of overlaps between some of the different shelter terminologies in use. Remember that individual designs might fall into many of the categories, it is the context that is important in agreeing the terminology.

Figure 1.1 – Overlapping definitions for shelter

Reproduced with permission from IFRC. (2013). Post-disaster shelter: Ten designs. Geneva, Switzerland, p. 9.

According to IFRC (2013), shelter terms frequently relate to an "approach rather than a phase of response" (p. 8). Terms for shelter in IFRC documents describe an overall process in which affected populations may build, upgrade or maintain shelter in a way that changes its originally defined typology. The terms "progressive" and "incremental" have emerged to capture this phenomenon, however, the overlaps depicted in Fig. 1.1 arguably increase confusion rather than providing clarity for those unfamiliar with shelter sector activities. The IFRC does define shelter types, as revealed in the literature review of IFRC & UN-OCHA's (2013) *Shelter after Disaster* literature review, but the definitions

provided are stated only "for the purposes of this book" (p. 8). This is also the case for terms outlined in the 2018 *Sphere Handbook*, in which definitions cannot be applied confidently beyond the context of the document.

The intended meaning of shelter terms may be apparent to those embedded within the shelter sector, but caveats around shelter definitions reveal how complex the deciphering process can be for those who are less familiar. For example, to develop a project brief, an architect, engineer or planner must fully understand the nature of a problem. A firm grasp of crucial terminology across a sector or industry is essential to an effective design or planning process and outcome. Further, in research, an understanding of key terms is also a fundamental component of a rigorously designed project.

2.1 A long-standing problem

Davis and Alexander (2016) stated that shelter has not been summarized adequately since the efforts of Davis (1978) in *Shelter after disaster*. Over two decades ago, Quarantelli (1995) highlighted the problem of "multiple and ambiguous" meanings surrounding shelter terms, resulting in "contradictory baggages of connotations and denotations which do not allow for knowledge and understanding of the phenomena involved" (p. 44). Quarantelli (1995) observed that terms for shelter came with the implicit assumption that they were self-explanatory. As such, he sought to define shelter terms according to four "ideal types": emergency sheltering, temporary sheltering, temporary housing, and permanent housing. In the years since, the number of shelter descriptors have continued to grow, often permutated with arbitrary interchanges between "shelter" and "housing".

Almost a decade later, during a review of the *Sphere Humanitarian Charter*, the issue of shelter terminology became more widely recognized in sector peer reviews and was identified as a significant obstacle to sector development (ShelterProject, 2002). Saunders (2004) elaborated further observing that the absence of a common and coherent language for shelter and settlement weakened the shelter sector and was resulting in "major differences of opinion" (p. 163). Saunders (2004) discussion extended to question the name of the sector itself, "Is it shelter? Is it housing? Is it human settlements?" (p. 161).

More recently, Boano and Hunter (2012) referred to shelter and reconstruction practices in emergencies as reflecting a "profoundly semantic confusion", arguing that when it comes to terms, "deciphering their nuances should be a necessity, as the consequences of conceptual confusion may create unwelcome results" (p. 3). The problem of unwelcome or inappropriate shelter has been observed by experts worldwide and is widely documented (Charlesworth, 2014; Davis, 2011; Duyne Barenstein, 2011; Fitrianto, 2011; Lizarralde, Johnson, & Davidson, 2010; Shaw, 2015). Boano and Hunter (2012) argued that conceptual confusion must first be removed to avoid poor shelter outcomes that are inappropriate to local conditions. They state that this deciphering is more than an academic exercise.

2.2 Terms describing phases of a shelter process

Most commonly, shelter terms are intended to be interpreted as a part of a "three-stage recovery" model (Davis & Alexander, 2016). These stages begin with first response emergency shelter, followed by medium-term temporary or transitional solutions, and finally, permanent housing. Some experts have advocated for a two-stage model, removing the need for transitional shelter as a bridging phase between emergency shelter and permanent reconstruction as seen in Fig. 1.2. The figure illustrates the three-stage versus two-stage conceptualization of shelter response, which is generally accepted in the shelter sector.
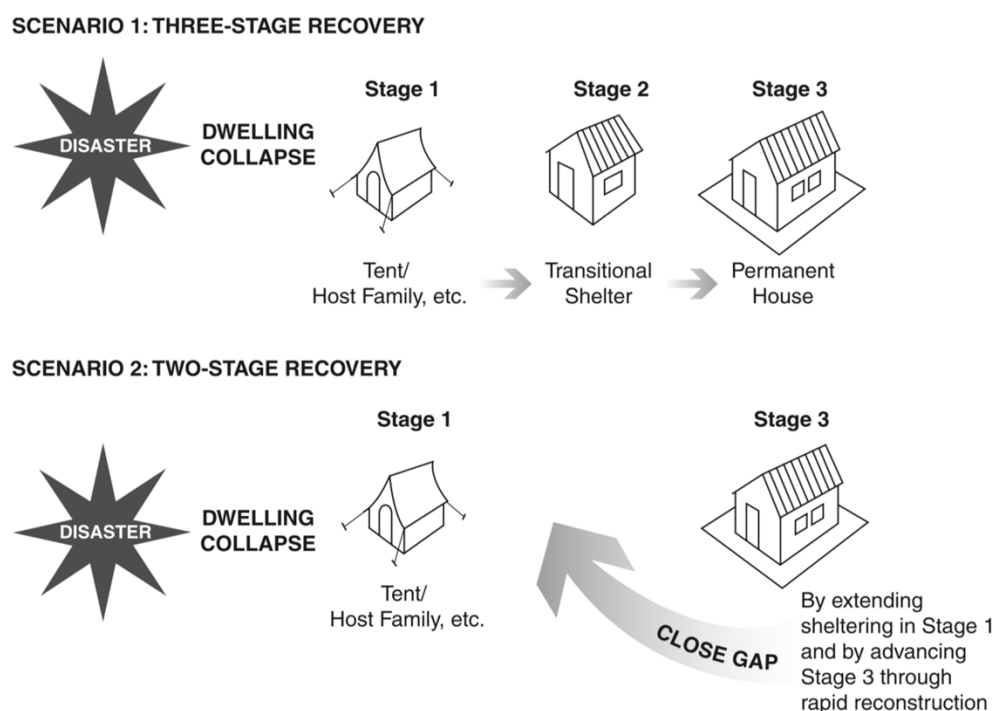
Figure 1.2 – Three-stage and two-stage recovery scenarios

Credit: Reproduced with permission from Davis, I., & Alexander, D. (2016). Recovery from disaster. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, p. 105.

Not everyone agrees on a staged approach to reconstruction, though the terms employed to describe alternative approaches remain similar. The Shelter Centre's (2012) interpretation of recovery distinguishes between incremental processes and a multi-phased approach while advocating for incremental shelter. The Shelter Centre's ideal conceptualization is an incremental transition through a continuum from the immediate emergency through to permanent housing. The multi-phase model includes three discrete phases as shown in Davis and Alexander's three-stage recovery model, but the Shelter Centre uses the term "temporary shelter" rather than "transitional shelter" (see Fig. 1.3).
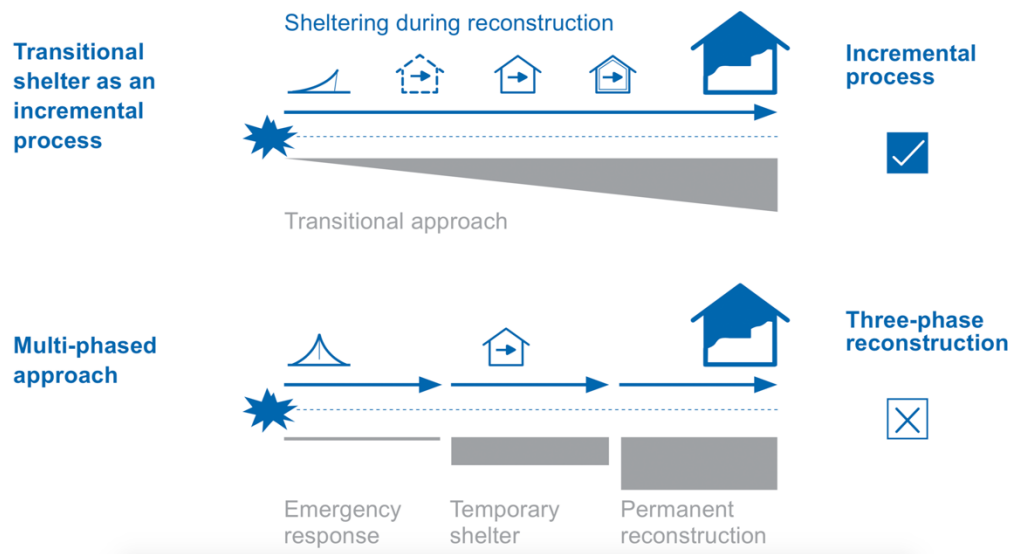
Figure 1.3 – Transitional shelter as an incremental process

Credit: Reproduced with permission from Shelter Centre. (2012). Transitional shelter guidelines, Shelter Centre, p. 3.

The *Transitional Shelter Guidelines* (Shelter Centre, 2012) sought to clarify shelter and settlement terms while also addressing issues of conceptual overlap. The publication provided answers to questions such as "are prefabricated shelters transitional shelters?" and "what is the difference between transitional shelter and core housing?" (Shelter Centre, 2012, p. 8). Despite this, the definitions provided in the publication have not been universally adopted, a fact evidenced by the continued proliferation of conflicting and contradictory shelter terms in the sector.

3. RESEARCH METHODS AND MATERIALS

This study involved a systematic review of key publications and websites from the shelter sector. The focus was specifically on the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), comprising of organizations across all the major partners in the sector, including UN agencies, Red Cross/Red Crescent, government, academia and non-governmental organizations. The GSC was targeted for data collection to fulfill the objective of gaining a comprehensive sector-wide overview of language surrounding humanitarian shelter in both post-disaster and refugee response.

In all, 65 publications from the GSC and partner organizations were selected. As well as these sources, the research included the three most recent *Shelter Projects* publications (Global Shelter Cluster, 2013, 2015, 2017), the 2015 version of the *Sphere Humanitarian Charter* (Sphere, 2015), three documents

from each GSC partner member as outlined in Table 1.1 below, and the 2018 *GSC Update* (GSC, 2018). The documents were sourced from web platforms, and included reports, online articles, websites, guidance material, and research publications.

Table 1.1 – Full list of the GSC partners' publications sourced

Global Shelter Cluster Partner Documents		
ACTED	2010	A shelter to recover
	2010	Shelter provision to flood-affected populations
	2014	Annual report
Australian Red Cross	2011	Gender and shelter
	2015	annual review
	2016	Emergency shelter
British Red Cross	2011	Haiti one year on. From rubble to shelter
	2016	What is shelter
	2014	Trustees report and accounts
CARE	2008	International policy brief on shelter
	2016	Post-disaster shelter in India. A study of the long-term outcomes of post-disaster shelter projects
	2015	Emergency shelter team annual review
Cordaid	2015	Shelter2Habitat developing resilient habitats after a disaster
	2015	2014 annual report
	2012	Final shelter report
CRS	2012	Learning from the urban transitional shelter response in Haiti
	2014	Annual report
	2016	Shelter and settlements

DFID	2011	Humanitarian emergency response review
	2015	Shelter from the storm by DFID UK. Exposure
	2015	Annual report 2014-2015
DRC	2015	2014 Annual report
	2016	Danish Refugee Council provides emergency response after large scale destruction in Malakal, South Sudan
	2016	What we do
ECHO	2015	2014 Annual report
	2016	Emergency shelter
	2016	Giving shelter
Emergency Architects Foundation	2014	Annual report 2013

Foundation has offices in France and Canada; Australian office now closed; No English publications were available that met the selection criteria.

German Red Cross	2011	Bangladesh. DRR in vulnerable communities
	2012	Disaster risk reduction in seven particularly vulnerable communities
	2015	Annual review 2014
Global Communities	2010	CHF builds pilot transitional shelter
	2014	2013 Annual report
	2015	Better approaches needed for rapid rehousing after disasters
Habitat for Humanity	2012	Disaster response shelter catalogue
	2015	Annual report
	2016	Shelter report
IFRC	2012	Shelter lessons learned

	2013	Post-disaster shelter. Ten designs
	2014	Annual report

A Working Group of the GSC. No publication outputs found

InterAction	2014	Annual report
	2015	Modules 1-5 notes, shelter and settlement training
	2016	Shelter
IOM	2013	Review of activities in disaster risk reduction and resilience
	2015	One room shelter. Building back stronger
	2015	Shelter highlights
IRC	2005	Shelter manual
	2013	Annual report
	2014	Growing humanitarian crisis in Iraq leaves thousands in need

Documents are in French.

Medair	2013	Medair expands shelter relief programme in the Philippines
	2014	Annual report
	2016	Shelter and infrastructure
NRC	2013	Shelter
	2014	Annual report
	2012	Urban shelter guidelines
OFDA	2012	Humanitarian shelter and settlements sector update
	2013	Humanitarian shelter and settlements principles
	2014	Description of humanitarian shelter and settlement activities
Oxford Brookes, CENDEP	2011	Good design in urban shelter after disaster

	2013	Changing approaches to post-disaster shelter
	2016	Shelter after disaster. Description of research area
ProAct	2005	Emergency shelter environmental checklist
	2009	Environment training modules for emergency shelter
	2011	Annual review
Relief International	2014	Annual report
	2016	Haiti. Emergency and transitional shelter
	2016	Pakistan. Construction of 2000 temporary shelters for IDPs
Save the Children UK	n.d.	Protection of children in emergency shelters
	2014	Annual report
	2015	Iraq. No windows, no roof. But for now, this is home
Shelter Centre	2010	Annual report 2009-2010
	2012	Transitional shelter guidelines
Shelter for Life International	2006	Transitional shelter assistance in Tajikistan
	2014	Annual report
	2016	What we do. Shelter
ShelterBox	2014	Annual report
	2016	Deadly earthquake strikes in Ecuador
	2016	Desperate need for shelter in Fiji in the wake of cyclone Winston
Swedish Red Cross	2012	Annual report
See publications for IFRC.		
UN-Habitat	2005	Financing urban shelter. Global report on human settlements

	2011	Enabling shelter strategies
	2013	Global activities report
UNHCR	2014	Global report
	2014	Global strategy for settlement and shelter
	2016	What we do. Shelter
UNOCHA	2005	Humanitarian response review
	2015	Shelter after disaster
	2016	Key things to know about the emergency shelter cluster
World Vision International	2012	Minimum inter-agency standards for mainstreaming
	2014	Annual report
	2016	Shelter and warm clothes for El Niño affected people

We applied qualitative content analysis as a method method due to its suitability for data in which manifest and latent meaning is context-dependent (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Kohlbacher, 2006; Pickering, 2011; Schreier, 2013). A categorization technique was used to summarize, explain, and structure data (Kohlbacher, 2006). Schreier (2013) described the outcome of this method as a "coding frame" in which main categories and sub-categories are generated and structured and then populated with references as encountered in the data, effectively defining those categories.

A list of shelter terms was built through the meta-analysis of the themes both in the sector and in the literature. Terms were then classified and mapped to a terminology framework and the main categories named. Through this process, areas of conceptual overlap or ambiguity within that framework were identified and further classified into sub-categories. Manual coding was supported by NVivo software to efficiently search every instance of the word "shelter" and its associated synonyms, house, housing, and structure.

Many combinations of terms indicated a simple reordering or use of a synonym—for instance interchanging the operand "shelter", "house", or "structure". Frequently, this was seen to have no impact on intended meaning, for instance, where "transitional shelter" and "transitional house" describe the same shelter strategy. However, these permutations sometimes impacted upon the intended meaning. "Durable shelter" is an example of this. It is a term that is appropriate for both first and second

stage shelter, where "durable house" usually only describes a third-stage (permanent) solution. For this reason, the researchers opted to include all terms in the framework, despite the apparent repetition.

As terms were encountered in the data, the intended contextual or latent meaning was interpreted pragmatically. The shelter terminology framework (or, coding frame) was maintained as dynamic and adjustable throughout the coding process.

4. THE "SHELTER TERMINOLOGY FRAMEWORK"

Data saturation was reached at 347 terms describing shelter. The final framework consists of eight main categories: immediate shelter; intermediate shelter; permanent shelter; pre-emptive shelter; non-specific shelter terms; shelter items; alternative strategies; and multi-phase shelter. Each category is explained by two-to-four sub-categories, resulting in 25 ways to describe shelter strategies, stages, types, and artifacts. The full shelter terminology framework is shown in Fig. 1.4.

In constructing the shelter terminology framework, the researchers identified that the term "transitional shelter" is a significant source of terminological confusion. As indicated in Fig. 1.2, two sub-categories of transitional shelters are represented. The first is in the "second-stage shelter" category (type a), and the second in the "multi-phase shelter" category (type b). These reflect a distinction which is discussed extensively in the *Transitional shelter guidelines* (Shelter Centre, 2012) and also the updated edition of *Shelter after disaster* (IFRC & UNOCHA, 2015). The sub-category "transitional shelter (a)" denotes a designed product intended to serve a purpose within a discreet second reconstruction phase. The sub-category "transitional shelter (b)" describes an incremental process.
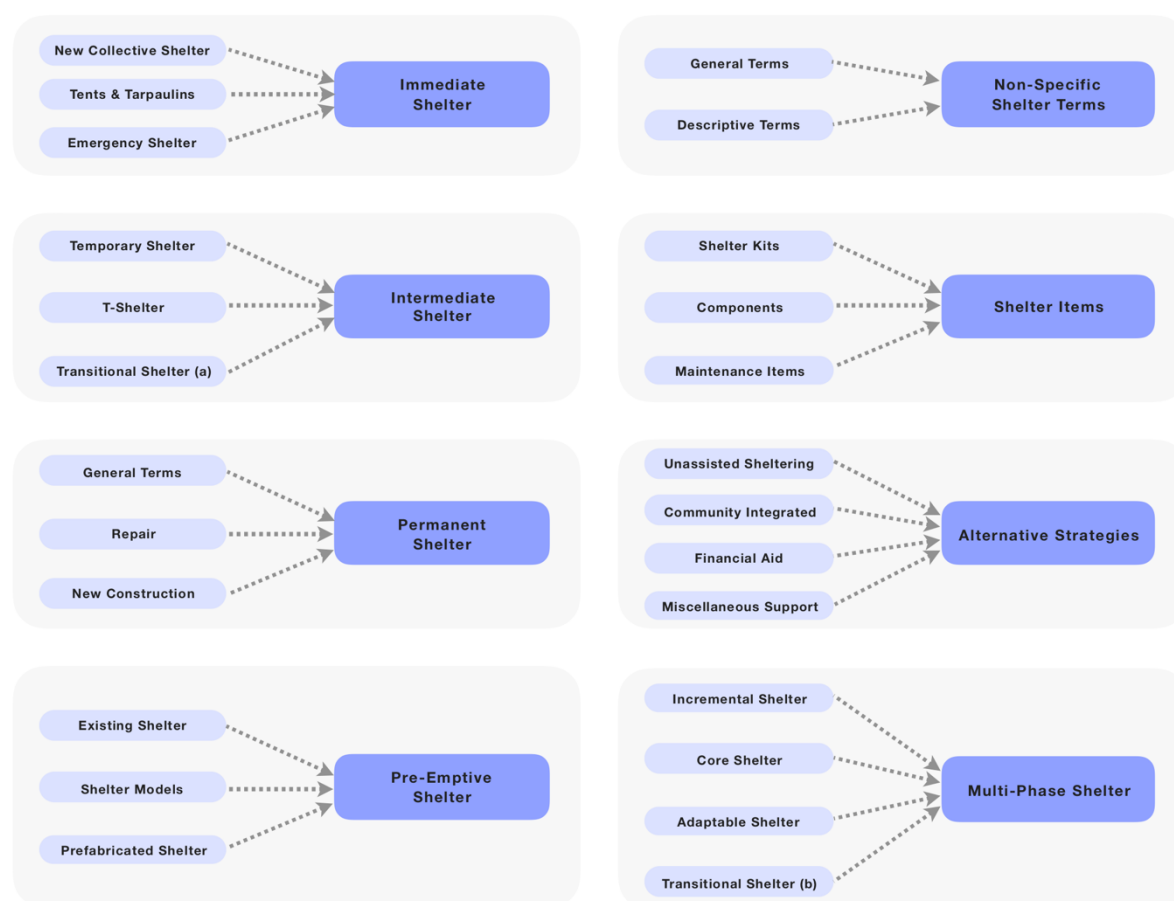
Figure: 1.4 – Shelter Terminology Framework. Source: Authors

4.1 Immediate shelter

This category summarizes terms associated with first response. Shelter terms incorporated in this category refer to strategies in which minimal response time is the priority to provide life-saving assistance. These shelter strategies are usually intended only to serve a short-term purpose. This category includes new collective shelter centers, lightweight tents and tarpaulins and basic structural materials that are frequently also referred to as emergency shelter.

Table 1.2 – Category 1—Immediate shelter

Total	Terms	Sub-category	Category
3	Collective Center; Transit Centers; Return Centers	New Collective Shelter	**1** **Immediate Shelter**

| 13 | Family Tent; Government-supplied Tent; Makeshift Tent; Phantom Tent; Plastic Sheeting; Shelter Tent; Tarp; Tarpaulin Sheeting; Tarp-Clad Shelter; Tent Structure; Tent on Concrete; Emergency Tent; Shelter-Grade Plastic Sheeting | Tents and Tarpaulins |
| 20 | Emergency Shelter; Early Shelter; Emergency Housing; Emergency Shelter (Temporary); Emergency Structure; Immediate Shelter; Initial Shelter; Phase One Shelter; Rapid Shelter; Short-Term Emergency Shelter; Temporary Emergency Shelter; Urgent Shelter; Emergency Family Shelter; Recovery Shelter; Emergency Shelter Kit; Special Emergency Shelter; Early Recovery Shelter; Immediate Emergency Response Shelter; Rapidly Deployable Shelter; Short-Term Shelter | Emergency Shelter |

4.2 Intermediate shelter

This category incorporates semi-permanent shelter strategies intended to serve a medium-term purpose, or an average of three to five years. It includes the subcategories: temporary shelter, product-focused notions of transitional shelter, and some types of transportable shelter. All of these can be described as "T-shelter" depending on the context. These "T-words" are often used interchangeably to describe intermediate shelter by GSC partners, even within the same document.

Table 1.3 – Category 2 —Intermediate shelter

9	Temporary Shelter; Temporary Accommodation; Temporary Home; Temporary House; Temporary Resettlement Site; Temporary Structure; Temporary Emergency Shelter; Shelter (Temporary); Temporary Shelter Kit	Temporary Shelter	
7	Two-Storey T-shelter; Rural T-shelter; Urban T-shelter; Transitional Shelter (T-Shelter); T-Shelter Phase; Transitional Shelter (T-Shelter); T-Shelter Kit	T-Shelter	**2 Intermediate Shelter**
12	Transitional Home; Transitional House; Transitional Shelter (Semi-Permanent); Transitional Shelter (T-Shelter); Upgraded Transitional Shelter; Urban Transitional Shelter; Expandable Transitional Housing; Transitional Night Shelter; Semi-Permanent Transitional Shelter; Transitional Shelter Kit; Transitional Individual Household Shelter; Transitional Household Shelter	Transitional Shelter Product (a)	

4.3 Permanent shelter

This category denotes shelter strategies associated with long-term recovery. These include descriptive words such as durable and concrete shelter. Three subcategories are identified within this category:

general terms describing a permanent shelter outcome, terms associated with the repair of damaged housing, and terms indicating new construction or reconstruction.

Table 1.4 – Category 3 —Permanent shelter

18	Permanent Shelter; Final House; Lifetime Houses; Long-Term Housing; Long-Term Shelter; Durable Structure; Durable Building; Integrated Housing; Permanent Durable House; Permanent Durable Shelter; Permanent Home; Permanent House; Durable Home; Durable House; Permanent Structure; Post-Disaster House; Durable Solution; Long-Term Shelter	General Terms (Third Stage)	**3 Permanent Shelter**
5	Repaired Housing; As-Built Shelter; Shelter In-Kind; Rehabilitated Shelters; Repaired Dwelling	Repair	
8	Concrete House; Contractor-Built Houses; Concrete Shelter; Permanent Core House; New House Construction; Permanent Reconstruction Housing; Permanent Core House; Permanent Reconstruction; Mud Brick Shelter	New Construction	

4.4 Pre-emptive shelter

This category outlines shelter terms describing strategies conceived before a crisis event. Sub-categories include existing shelter, shelter models and prefabricated shelter. Existing shelter includes locations in the community intended as evacuation points such as cyclone shelters, and also existing housing. Terms in the shelter model's sub-category describe demonstration, or pilot products and prototypes that are not necessarily intended for immediate use or deployment. Finally, the prefabricated shelter sub-category contains terms relating to shelter that is mass manufactured in anticipation of a crisis event. This sub-category may also describe products suited to other categories (for instance immediate, intermediate, or permanent shelter solutions), however, due to the pre-emptive nature of a prefabricated shelter strategy, the researchers included it as a discrete shelter sub-category.

Table 1.5 – Category 4 —Pre-emptive shelter

13	Pre-Disaster Shelter; Community Spaces; Institutional Structure; Cyclone Shelter; Evacuation Shelter; Existing Housing; Pre-Disaster Home/House; Safe Shelters; School Evacuation Centre; Collective Centre; Pre-crisis Shelter; Existing Public Building	Existing Shelter	**4 Pre-Emptive Shelter**

13	Shelter Prototype; Core House Model; Demonstration Shelter; Demonstration Unit; Model House; Pilot Emergency Shelter; Pilot Transitional Shelter; Temporary Shelter Prototype; T-Shelter Model; Trial Shelter; Pilot Shelter; Model Shelter; Prototypical Shelter Design	Shelter Models
20	Prefabricated Shelter; Deployable Shelter; Fabrication Unit; Modular Housing; Modular Shelter; Precast T-Shelter; Pre-fab Transitional Housing; Shelter Module; Imported Shelter; Transportable Shelter; Transportable Housing; Shelter Stockpile; Prefabricated Shelter Unit; Prefab Unit; Prefab Shelter; Pre-manufactured Portable Shelter; Prefabricated Container Shelter; Moveable Shelter; Container Shelter; Foldable Shelter; Modular Light Shelter	Prefabricated Shelter

4.5 Non-specific shelter terms

This category incorporates all terms that refer to shelter in a way that is either general or descriptive, without denoting a specific shelter type. General terms describe humanitarian shelter broadly as a phenomenon, for example: "post-disaster shelter", "disaster response shelter", and "relief shelter". Descriptive terms describe a quality of a particular shelter but are not intended to refer to a commonly understood shelter strategy or type, for example: "disaster resilient shelter", "reinforced shelter", and "basic shelter".

Table 1.6 – Category 5 —Non-specific shelter terms

25	Developmental Housing; Disaster Response Shelter; Essential Shelter; Housing Unit; Humanitarian Shelter; Post-Disaster Shelter; Post-Disaster Structure; Post-Earthquake House; Primary Shelter; Shelter after Disaster; Shelter Product; Shelter Facilities; Shelter Unit; Shelter Solution; Shelter Strategy; Shelter Structure; Small Shelter Unit; Non-Food Item (NFI); Relief Shelter; Post-crisis Shelter; Individual Shelter; Individual Housing; Shelter Assistance; Shelter Intervention; Basic NFIs	General Terms (Non-Specific)	**5 Non-Specific Shelter Terms**

38	Standardised Shelter; Disaster-Friendly Houses; Disaster Mitigation Housing; Disaster Resilient Housing; Disaster Resilient Shelter; Disaster Resilient Structure; Earthquake Recovery Housing; Earthquake Resistance Housing; One Room Shelter; Basic Shelter; Two Room Shelter (TRS); Intermediate Shelter; Semi-Permanent Shelter; Semi-Permanent Home/House; Medium-Long Term Shelter; Impermanent Shelter; Reinforced Shelter; Scaled Shelter Solution; Short-Term House; Hybrid Structure; Night Shelter; Modular Tunnel Shelter; Non-camp Shelter; Flood-Resilient Shelter; Refugee Shelter; Accessible Shelter; Bathing Shelter; IDP Shelter; Participatory Shelter; Covered Living Space; Covered Space; Covered Area; Dome Shelter; Mud House; Hut; Refugee Housing Unit	Descriptive Terms (Non-Specific)

4.6 Shelter items

"Shelter items" relate to kits, components, or maintenance items. It is not always clear whether kits refer to a complete shelter solution or not, but this sub-category generally refers to a strategy in which recipients are required to construct the shelter themselves. Shelter kits may serve both immediate and intermediate shelter needs. Terms in the components sub-category suggest a less comprehensive assistance package, in which additional items may be required that are not included. Maintenance items include any ongoing requirements for repair and materials for seasonal adaptation of shelters.

Table 1.7 – Category 6 —Shelter items

23	Covering Kit; Emergency Shelter Kit; Essential Items Kit; Household Shelter Kits; T-Shelter Kit; Temporary Shelter Kit; Transitional Shelter Kit; Return and Repatriation Kit; Shelter Covering Kit; Shelter Kit; Shelter Repair Kit; Emergency Shelter Kit; Standardized Shelter Kit; Recovery Shelter Kit; NFI Kit; Mobile NFI Kit; Mobile Emergency Shelter Kit; In-Kind Kit; Full Sealing-Off Kit; Family Shelter Kit; Shelter Relief Kit; Shelter Recovery Kit; Portable Shelter Kit	Shelter Kits	
			6 **Shelter Items**
18	Key In-Kind Shelter Items; Shelter Components; Emergency Shelter Materials; Construction Materials Kits; Shelter Tool Kit; Key Shelter Items; Shelter Materials; Community Tool Kits; Material Package; Material Vouchers; Household Non-Food Items; Shelter Non-Food Items; Basic Building Materials; Tools; Relief Items; Prefabricated Parts; Shed Nets; Insulation	Components	

| 10 | Minor Shelter Repair Kit; Major Shelter Repair Kit; Sealing-off Kit; Winterization Package; Seasonal Shelter Items; Emergency Sealing-Off Kit; Climatization Package; Shelter Fixing Kit; Shelter Tool Kit; Shelter Repair Kit | Maintenance Items |

4.7 Alternative strategies

This category refers to shelter strategies that do not involve material assistance. It incorporates terms describing unassisted (self-built) shelter solutions, community-integrated, financial-aid programs, and miscellaneous support for capacity-building and advocacy.

Table 1.8 – Category 7 —Alternative strategies

11	Vernacular Shelter; Shelter Self-Recovery; Self-Made Shelter; Self-Built Shelter; Salvaged Materials Shelter; Rudimentary Shelter; Makeshift Shelter; Self-Sheltering Solution; Debris to Shelter Approach; Community Labour; Urban Self-Settlement; Rural Self-Settlement	Unassisted Sheltering	
10	Community Shelter; Half-Way House; Host Community; Host Family; Rental Accommodation; Subdivided Houses; Short-term Flat; Hosting; Host Shelter; Host/ing Support	Community Integrated	
16	Cash Assistance Program; Cash Grant; Emergency Cash Grant; Rental Subsidies Program; Rental Support; Resettlement Grant; Shelter Subsidy Scheme; Loan Voucher; Rental Assistance; Rental Arrangement; Conditional Cash Grant; Cash Transfer Program; Cash-for-Rent; Cash-Based Transfer; Vouchers; Loans and Guarantees;	Financial Aid	**7 Alternative Strategies**
22	Structural Assessment; Training; Site Planning; Shelter Workshops; Non-Material Assistance; Legal Support; Advocacy; Guidelines Assistance; Construction Training; Capacity Building; Promoting livelihoods; Technical Training; Contracted Labour; Direct Labour; Local Information Centres; Technical Expertise; Programme Integration; Market Support; Return and Transit Items; Infrastructure; Environmental Management; Specialist Labour	Miscellaneous Support	

4.8 Multi-phase shelter

This category is indicative of a move toward process-based thinking in the shelter sector. Rather than developing discrete products, this category outlines strategies intended to flank multiple stages of response. These strategies include incremental-shelter processes in which a shelter can evolve to

become permanent, core shelter products to support similar incremental improvement, various adaptable solutions, and process-based notions of transitional shelter.

Table 1.9 – Category 8 —Multi-phase shelter

8	Progressive Shelter; Incremental Housing; Upgradable Transitional Housing; Upgraded Transitional Shelter; Upgradable Shelter; Upgradable House; Enhanced Emergency Shelter; Incremental Building;	Incremental Shelter	
8	Permanent Core House; Core Building; Core House; Core Shelter; Core Structure; Part (Core) Shelters; Shelter Core; Single-Room Core Shelter	Core Shelter	**8 Multi-Phase Shelter**
15	Flexible Shelter; Extendable Shelter; Expandable Shelter; Scalable Shelter; Flexible Shelter; Retrofitting/ Reuse / Recycling; Expandable Housing; Transferable Shelter; Enhanced Shelter; Reusable Shelter; Re-saleable Shelter; Collapsible Shelter; Re-sellable Shelter	Adaptable Shelter	
2	Shelter Continuum; Shelter Process - Also: see Transitional Shelter (a)	Transitional Shelter Process (b)	

5. DISCUSSION

The shelter terminology framework addresses a significant problem impeding participation in the humanitarian sector by potential new actors. The veracity of interpretation regarding shelter terminology is fundamental to ensuring positive outcomes for people impacted by the significant upheaval of disasters or conflicts. This research pays particular attention to those efforts made by GSC member groups and the network of connected terms informing the shelter discourse. It is this network— or framework—that is presented here as a tool for conceptualizing interconnected shelter phases, products and processes, rather than a focus on individual shelter definitions. The shelter terminology framework expands upon a three-phase model of shelter response, incorporating notions of immediate, intermediate, and permanent phases, while acknowledging the overlap of terms in particular contexts that are intended to describe a multi-phase shelter process. The framework identifies terms that denote preconceived (pre-emptive) shelter strategies, which are intended to serve a purpose across one or more shelter phases, dependent on the context. Additionally, the shelter terminology framework acknowledges non-material shelter support and bottom-up initiatives.

The framework derived out of this research serves to structure and categorize shelter terms as encountered in the data. It is designed to be a tool that can aid in conceptualizing shelter strategies by illustrating patterns in terminology use. It is intended to be flexible and adjustable and to provide a shared conceptual language. It is not presented as exhaustive, nor is it an authoritative list of shelter types or definitions. The authors assert that the primary value of the framework lies in its use in assisting in deciphering nuances and facilitating the understanding of shelter terms in context. Additionally, the overall framework and the descriptions of categories impart a condensed overview of shelter types and activities that is readily graspable by existing and new actors alike.

One explanation for terminological ambiguity could lie in the frequent interchangeability of "T" words such as transitional, temporary, transportable, and "T-shelter". The *Transitional Shelter Guidelines* define transitional shelter as: "an incremental process which supports the shelter of families affected by conflicts and disasters, as they seek to maintain alternative options for their recovery" (Shelter Centre, 2012, p. 2). The guidelines also outlined five characteristics of transitional shelter, stating that it can be: "(1) upgraded into part of a permanent house; (2) reused for another purpose; (3) relocated from a temporary site to a permanent location; (4) resold, to generate income to aid with recovery; and (5) recycled for reconstruction" (Shelter Centre, 2012, p. 2).

The definition of transitional shelter is moving to encompass all shelter types except those that are a final shelter built at once, or any prefabricated shelter. The guidelines also exclude core housing from its definition of transitional shelter. Core shelter is the construction of part of a shelter, onto which the permanent house can be built upon, whereas the guidelines that "the approach does not allow reuse for another purpose, the relocation to another site or recycling of components for permanent reconstruction" (Shelter Centre, 2012, p. 8). This distinction could be problematic for those unfamiliar with nuances of shelter types, especially given that the first characteristic listed in the guidelines includes instances where shelter is upgraded into a permanent house. It is unclear why reuse, relocation, recycling or reselling are stated as determining factors in whether a core shelter is deemed to be "transitional", given the guideline's incorporation of incremental shelter processes within the definition.

Conceptualizing transitional shelter as multi-phase or incremental points to the potential of design thinking in developing innovative shelter solutions. The Shelter Cluster state in *Shelter Projects 2015-2016* that "shelter is 'more than just a roof', it is not just the structure that protects from the elements, but is the series of activities that a household undertakes to save and construct, adapt and expand a dwelling, as well as the range of continuing actions and livelihoods that people do in and around their home" (Global Shelter Cluster, 2017, p. x). For architects, responding to social dimensions in the creation of space is fundamental to good design practice. As is conceiving buildings as situated within a broader context of complex processes that extend to an urban, and even global scale. The notion of

transitional shelter as a process rather than a product speaks powerfully to the potential of architecture and design as the best point of engagement for these professions.

Discourse about shelter in the humanitarian sector is moving toward its conceptualization as a process and the incorporation of modes of shelter assistance that are support-based. This trend is reflected in the shelter terminology framework, which includes terms that describe both material and non-material shelter strategies. While the majority of terms relate to material assistance—as reflected in seven of the eight main categories—non-material shelter strategies are included within the "alternative strategies" category. This category could be seen as paradoxical in that there are shelter strategies that are characterized as non-material, but also terms that describe the total absence of any external support (terms relating to self-sheltering activities). In many cases, the best shelter support is capacity-building to enable self-recovery.

Non-material approaches include advocacy, expert assessments, community consultation, cash support, or community-resettlement programs. The authors deemed it appropriate to include self-sheltering activities in the "Alternative strategies" category to acknowledge scenarios in which the decision to "leave well alone" is the most appropriate course of action. Particularly in situations in which damage to housing is assessed as minimal, or if a community has the resources required to recover from a disaster. The authors assert that this interpretation is in contrast to unassisted sheltering, when external material aid is required but not provided. This situation generally arises when needs exceed the response capacity of humanitarian agencies or governments due to the increasing scale and complexity of disasters (Davis & Alexander, 2016).

It must be noted that the presented shelter terminology framework does not account for socioeconomic factors such as tenure, nor residential building types and urban typologies such as row houses and apartments. There are also no categories that enable distinction between context-specific shelter strategies particular to urban, peri-urban or rural settings. Furthermore, as stated in the previous section, this research does not delve into inconsistencies that exist around terms for settlements, nor the humanitarian shelter sector itself.

This research does not explore the impact of geographic variation of terms identified by Saunders (2004) as a source of contradiction and confusion, nor does it examine the impact of language and the effects of translation on shelter terminology. Furthermore, the framework reflects a Western interpretation of housing and humanitarian aid and new actors must be cognizant of further overlays and local nuances, including local knowledge and resources.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The resulting shelter terminology framework is expected to progress humanitarian fields and emergent specialist area of design and planning, by enabling targeted engagement from practitioners through both research and education. The framework illustrates patterns of use and the variations in understanding surrounding terms for other shelter and settlements and makes sense of a complex area of human endeavor.

The significance of this research for practice and across the shelter sector is in enabling greater clarity and alignment between different clusters, as identified as an objective in the *2018-2022 GSC shelter and settlements strategy* (Global Shelter Cluster, 2018). The report identifies that integrated, localized responses are critical for successful shelter projects, starting with, "agreement on definitions and understanding of terminology" (Global Shelter Cluster, 2018, p. 19). Furthermore, it is anticipated that in providing clarity, the provided shelter terminology framework might also reduce the difficulties associated with the accurate interpretation of shelter sector information and prevent what Boano and Hunter (2012) describe as "unwelcome results" seen in the shelter sector (2012, p. 3).

For built environment professions, it is anticipated that architects, engineer and planners equipped with a clear understanding of the nature of humanitarian shelter types and approaches are more likely to contribute meaningfully. Additionally, in education, enabling clear and consistent interpretation of shelter terminology will impact positively on research and courses recently emerging from academic institutions.

For shelter research, this study holds significance for a multitude of specialist fields that are emerging in the private sector as a result of intensified partnerships with the shelter sector. These include various industries of development, finance, business, technology and design. Looking ahead, this research illustrates how the evolution of the term and nature of "transitional shelter" highlights a nexus point where fundamental changes in thinking about shelter and the future of the shelter sector lie, particularly in the understanding of shelter as a process and not simply a product or unit. Additionally, the need to conceptualize shelter as integrated within broader settlement systems is essential in developing successful humanitarian shelter strategies.

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