

DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER IN URBAN AREAS

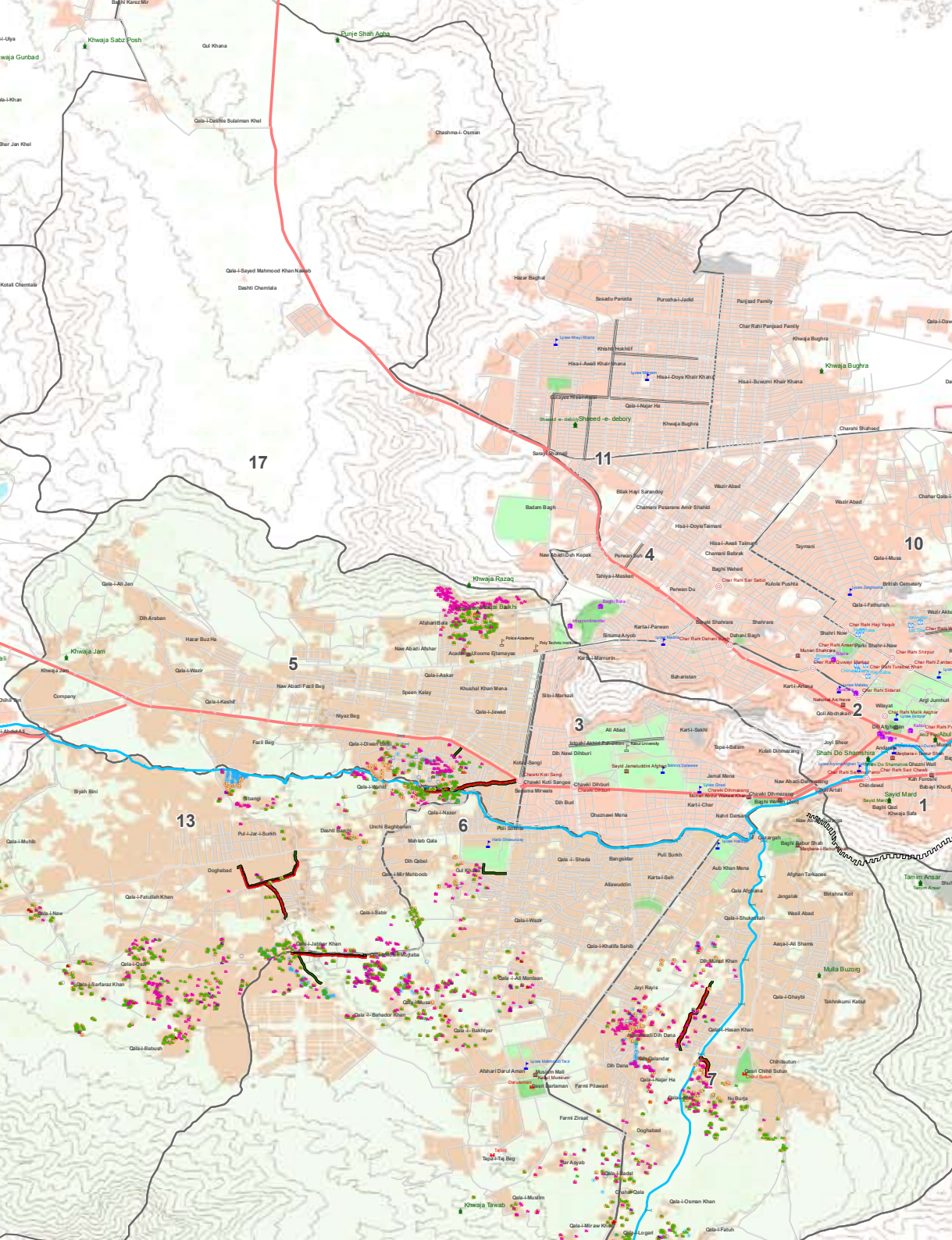
THE CASE OF "KASS"

The Kabul Area Shelter and Settlements project as a model



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR DEMOCRACY, CONFLICT, AND HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE (DCHA)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)



DELIVERY OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER IN URBAN AREAS: THE CASE OF “KASS”

THE KABUL AREA SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS PROJECT



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Copies of this manual can be obtained from: afghan@care.org.

Executive Summary

Adequate shelter is a basic human need and right. More than just a place to live, appropriate shelter provides stability and security for vulnerable populations. Without access to shelter, people are denied the ability to improve their situation in life and to access other basic services. As important as shelter is, it is not enough to merely provide four walls and a roof, but we must acknowledge the importance of home to the inhabitants and recognise that other services such as access to clean water, sanitation and improved living environment are also important.

The Kabul Area Shelter and Settlement (KASS) Project was designed with this in mind. By providing shelters in an urban environment, existing resources were able to be consolidated and improved, people were able to live in areas close to employment and family, and not relegated to satellite suburbs or cities where they could feel displaced and separate from the community. People were given the opportunity to live where they wanted to live, and this resulted in a 100% occupancy rate.

Funded by USAID/OFDA and implemented by CARE, the completed KASS project provided 3,774 households safe, adequate and habitable shelters, and an overall total of 6,625 households in seven districts of Kabul benefited directly from integrated shelter activities, including safe water supplies, sanitation, roads graveling, ditch drainage, health education, hazard preparedness and mitigation training, and support of local governance activities.

The success of the project rested on bringing in key stakeholders such as the Kabul Municipality (KM) and community members into all aspects of the project, from beneficiary selection, choice of project sites and also regular project discussions. The signing of a Memorandum Of Understanding with the KM, which ensured that all shelters would be recognised and respected for five years, provided the first steps in recognising land tenure and providing stability for the inhabitants.

Essentially, a successful shelter intervention must include strategies for good governance that focus on increasing people's understanding of their rights and responsibilities, as well as enhance the ability of authorities to listen to the needs of the people, that encourage all to find solutions to problems that affect everyone.

Preface

This Guide seeks to provide the reader with an understanding of the importance of integrated shelter-led humanitarian intervention, and the associated issues.

The guide is in two parts: Part One describes and analyses the relevant general issues affecting Shelter Led Interventions (SLI). Part Two details the KASS Project: the design, implementation and lessons learned. It is not intended that this be a step-by-step guide but rather an opportunity to discuss activities that generated outcomes which should be included in project designs, cognizant of varying contextual and environmental conditions.

This guide is intended to assist humanitarian practitioners, donor agencies, government departments, and other organizations to develop an improved understanding of integrated shelter needs and appropriate responses and strategies. It will be of particular value for those involved in planning and executing integrated shelter interventions with water and sanitation, and hygiene education components to vulnerable urban populations.

It is hoped that through this guide, future interventions will be better designed and implemented, resulting in outcomes of greater value and more lasting benefit to the Afghan people. It is also envisaged that this will provide insights into what may work in other areas or countries dealing with similar issues.

Introduction

Shelter projects, whether in urban or rural settings, typically seek to address only the needs of a place to live – that is, a dwelling. Invariably, agencies focus on the actual infrastructure construction without tying it in with other components such as water and sanitation, hygiene education, access to services and markets, and without community involvement to improve the overall living conditions in urban settlements.

Shelter-Led Interventions (SLI) place housing as central in humanitarian actions. SLI reflect the contention that without stable and secure housing, people's vulnerability rapidly increases, and that they are unable to progress or achieve stability in other areas, such as employment, schooling, health and relationships. Shelter vulnerability, then, compromises and restricts all other development efforts. Further, SLI reflects

an understanding that the home is pre-eminent in restoring, rehabilitating and advancing lives and livelihoods - but it requires that other essential, related development activities, be provided simultaneously.

These would include water and sanitation interventions, health services - especially mother-child health (MCH) - primary and adult education, community environmental health, access to credit and savings schemes, and related activities.

Part One of this document identifies the important issues and challenges in urban shelter interventions in Afghanistan.

These include:

- » Structural challenges
- » Security and conflict issues
- » Population growth
- » Environmental and geological issues and challenges
- » Political and legal issues, and
- » Gender and ethnic issues.

CARE's observation is that many of these issues are not considered in shelter project design, resulting in difficulties that arise in the implementation period, when it is often too late for these to be resolved. Part Two of this document describes the process by which the KASS

project proceeded, the issues, the lessons learned and the considerations that arose. KASS was a pilot project and the production of the manual in order to document issues as they arose was included in the design in order that this feeds into the broader sector.

A Note on Timeframes

CARE/Afghanistan was awarded a grant from USAID/OFDA to implement integrated humanitarian shelter delivery in selected areas of Kabul in May of 2006.

This project was named the Kabul Area Shelters and Settlements (KASS) project. It was implemented over 2006, and concluded in October 2007.

Part One: Issues in Urban Humanitarian Shelter Provision

1. The Afghan Context

Rationale for Shelter Led Interventions in Urban Areas

Shelter is a fundamental need and it is undeniable that for many people in Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan, current shelter options are inadequate, unhealthy and unsafe. That said, adequate housing does not represent a sufficient solution to the many problems facing the urban poor. Water, sanitation, waste management and access to basic health and education services are also fundamental needs, and are equally lacking in many parts of Kabul and the country as a whole. For urban residents, access to electrical service, while not an urgent need, is also important.

Work opportunities are also essential, as returnees have high expectations of gaining employment, generally coming from working backgrounds. Those coming from rural backgrounds because of local impoverishment or unemployment arrive with urgent needs for employment. Experience from housing settlement programs in other developing countries demonstrate that if residents have to travel too far in order to gain work, they will soon

migrate back into poorer housing if it allows better employment opportunities. Urban development projects therefore need to have a broader mandate than simply the provision of appropriate shelter. Whilst interventions can effectively start with housing projects, they cannot end there, because without appropriate, viable access to services such as water, education, health, sanitation and employment and so on, people will remain impoverished, and the shelter will be abandoned.

The Urban – Rural Divide

Providing shelter in urban settings, in comparison with rural areas is a more complex process, which needs to take account of substantial differences.

The key differences are of density, expectation, and control. In Kabul, and to a lesser degree in other urban centers, housing density is high, far higher than the infrastructure was planned for. Rural density is lower, and many of the problems (congestion, water pollution and contamination from latrines, solid waste and sewerage disposal, poor access to water, electricity, and public services) do not exist. Public services in general

are far less in evidence, and so quality of service and parity of access is less of an issue. In most cases, public services are not yet perceived as a right, and so are not expected or demanded. Their absence is not understood as a wrong. There are also higher expectations about what constitutes acceptable housing; new developments must plan for waste disposal by other providers, and at cost; water resources are stretched and new supply cannot be easily provided;

In terms of control, in urban settings, there are many more parties involved in negotiations and decisions, and the ethnic and political dimension of decision making is vastly more complicated. Villages have relatively high degrees of autonomy and are often mono-ethnic, or dominated by a single group or tribe, expediting decision-making. In rural settings, new projects can often rely on land being freed for developments; rarely is such free land available in Kabul, and so delivery of programs must seek to improve what already exists, rather than work with a blank page.

Population Growth and Rapid Urbanization

Kabul's population grew sharply in 2002-2003 with the return of many refugees from neighboring countries to around 2.8 million people in 2003, and reached around 3 million in 2004¹. Most recent estimates (referring to years late 2005

and 2006) variously suggest 2.7 million, 3.5 million, and 4 million². Current estimates indicate that the Kabul area has likely expanded to 4.5 million. Regardless of the actual precise number, it is widely agreed that Kabul's population is growing at a very high rate, approximately 15% per annum from 1999-2003/2004, and thereafter at about 5% per annum. Other major Afghan cities and towns have also rapidly swelled in number.

There are no means presently for controlling the influx of new residents to Kabul. New residents take up homes with relatives, extend existing housing or build new structures in existing compounds. Others take up residence in abandoned or ruined housing, rehabilitating it as best they can. Many people have assumed land on hillsides in the central city area, due to its proximity to bazaars and services, while others take land in new peri-urban areas at the edges of the city proper.

Whilst some settlements and houses have been demolished to make way for new roads and other developments, conflict between authorities, lack of demarcation of responsibility, outdated planning documents and weakness of policing in general mean that in most cases, there are no impediments to this occurring.

¹ Figures from the Central Statistics Office and the World Bank.

² Figures respectively from official Government of Afghanistan statistics; JICA; and Kabul Municipality.

The Kabul Master Plan of 1978 provided policy and regulatory guidance to accommodate a population of two million people in a 330 square kilometer (sq. km.) area up to 2003. The Kabul Municipality has recently proposed that its jurisdictional area be expanded beyond the 364.44 sq. km. that the Master Plan prescribed (with adjustments in 2000), to 1,030.51 sq. km., which is more reflective of the actual area that the Kabul area now occupies. A complication to this is that this expansion, while reflecting the real growth of Kabul, transgresses the district boundaries in neighboring districts.

Inadequate Financial Resources

Kabul's population is continuing to grow at a rate of approximately 5% per annum. This means an addition of 150,000 people per year who will generate an annual shelter requirement of roughly 25,000 units (@ six persons per household, per shelter), and access to land and services. The reality is that many other issues have a higher priority than urban development in Kabul. With this being the case, very little can readily change in the next five years, which will leave Kabul in an exponentially worse position, with more people caused by in-migration and natural growth, and limited funding for urban development activities to address both backlog and future needs.

There are external financial pressures as well as internal limitations: The Government has set targets for urban develop-

ment as part of the Millennium Development Goals. These targets are meant to be realized by 2010, and include 50% of Kabul households having access to piped water, and 50% of households having access to improved sanitation, waste collection and improved drainage. Current progress towards these goals is slow and hampered by vastly insufficient funding and implementation capacity. The reality is that the Government will almost certainly fail to reach these targets, and this will have a negative credibility outcome.

Invisibility of Shelter Needs in Urban Area

Consistent with the Islamic teaching on *purdah*, the separation of the public and the private, cultural norms predicate that families live in compounds, behind high walls that border the streets. In practice, this means that shelter is often a relatively invisible part of the infrastructure in Afghanistan – in sharp contrast with much of Asia, where poverty and inadequate housing are very evident. This can easily lead to the assumption that in Afghanistan, shelters are more or less adequate and living standards not as bad in other parts of Asia. In reality, behind compound walls, housing can be as bad as the shanties and slums of many Asian cities.

Secondly, it is true that many of the newly returned population of Kabul have been absorbed without major disruption or widespread calamity, and this also contributes to a possible interpretation

that existing structures and services are adequate. However, the fact that since 1999, Kabul has swelled from a population of less than 500,000 people to current levels of approximately four and a half million, demonstrates only the ingenuity and resilience of the Afghan

people who, in an unrestrained and chaotic environment, have been able to freely take up land, and exploit existing resources. This absorption and growth is not sustainable, and a crisis point will soon be reached if it indeed has not been reached already.

2. The Post-conflict Context

Impacts of War and Internal Conflict

The outcomes of war and conflict – a displaced population, decimation of infrastructure, and so on are generally obvious in post-conflict setting, and certainly so in Afghanistan. But less overt are the potent dynamics that shape social and political relations, post conflict. While state-building is occurring in Afghanistan, nation-building is not: that is to say, there is a distinction between physical rehabilitation and social rehabilitation that has so far been overlooked. Below the surface powerful tensions continue to govern interactions and events and to prevent cohesion of the nation.

And at a more personal level, the impact of severe, prolonged trauma on the population is little understood, but is seen through its fruits: high levels of domestic violence, self harm, mental ill-

nesses, depression, panic attacks, memory loss, hypochondria and substance abuse³. These dynamics are little seen, but widespread, and in dense urban settings, where ethnicity, and political loyalties and tribal affiliations come into conflict, and access to services is compromised, they can combine to cause high levels of stress, and spiral into anger and violence.

Security

After a brief hiatus following the expulsion of the Taliban in 2001, insecurity in Afghanistan in general has risen consistently over the last six years. Insecurity in this context includes, but is not limited to: opportunistic killings (arising during theft or assault); revenge killings (along ethnic, tribal or political lines); extortion and kidnappings; abductions; theft, burglary and armed robbery; assassinations; suicide bombings and other explosions targeted or apparently random;

³ See for example, ACFs document, Kabul Vulnerability Mapping. The IAM (International Assistance Mission) in Herat, in its Primary Mental Health Program, has also done a lot of work in the area of trauma, stress and mental health.

⁴ The use of the term Taliban to describe the insurgent movement is avoided because of the amorphous nature of resistant/insurgent movements in Afghanistan.

demonstrations of highly politicized and violent nature; anti-Government, destabilizing and insurgent movements⁴; ethnically based violence.

While some of these aspects are found only in some parts of Afghanistan, others are found in almost all parts, and almost all are present in Kabul, and have been for some time. Some trends such as suicide bombings and assassinations are more recent and analysis suggests are mimicked from other conflict zones; some trends (opportunistic burglaries, revenge killing, abduction and kidnapping) emerged in the security vacuum following the withdrawal of Coalition forces from Kabul in 2002, and show little sign of abating. Insecurity can lead to temporary and long term displacement, with populations moving to urban areas, bring added pressure on housing stocks and services.

Structural and Extrinsic Challenges

Shelter delivery in a post-conflict setting is made more complex by a number of structural and extrinsic factors. In Afghanistan, these include the weakness of the Government at central and municipal levels, the lack of development over many years, the ongoing paucity of trained and experienced technical staff, and an uncoordinated cohort of aid delivery mechanisms and agencies.

The Government of Afghanistan is in the unenviable position of trying to catch up on thirty years of infrastructure and technical development, with neither a

coherent vision, nor a skilled public service – and that is just one of the pressing tasks in the present environment.

In Kabul in particular, the locus of so much development and attention, Government and non-Government actors operate with little coordination; and in particular, many non-Government actors grew used to operating without consultation with the Government during previous eras. Drawing together the many actors in a coordinated fashion is a key priority in developing a cohesive urban development plan for Kabul.

Ethnic, Religious and Political Factors

Many actors in shelter delivery (as in other areas of aid delivery) have underestimated how the conflict in Afghanistan has enlarged and warped the influence and power of ethnic and religious leaders. Further, divisions between ethnic and tribal groupings, whilst long present in Afghanistan, have been radically exacerbated by war, betrayal and newly assumed political power. Partisan warlords with strong geographic, ethnic and tribal affiliations have secured formal positions, and others hold unofficial, yet powerful positions.

Informal connections to power remain the dominant means to achieve outcomes for most Afghans: there is a widespread and often justified cynicism about formal processes. This is further exacerbated by the increase in corruption.

Current Housing – Affordability, Condition, Coordination

Rents in Kabul (and to a lesser extent, elsewhere) have increased exponentially post September 11. At first this affected mainly only the more well appointed housing stock in wealthier suburbs, where NGOs, UN and the Assistance Community were located. The huge influx of new agencies and the money they brought with them pushed rents up by 500-1000% in a matter of months. Many agencies relocated into slightly poorer suburbs, displacing Afghan families, and then the rent spiral reoccurred.

But of more significance to the Afghan people has been the huge return of displaced people, which has led to a shortage of housing. For ordinary Afghans, rent now consumes more than 50% the monthly income, as opposed to 15-25% in earlier times.

Many houses have poor drainage and dampness is a common problem. Access to water and provision of sanitation is in the vast majority of cases highly inadequate and unsafe, and often below Sphere Project guidelines⁵. Many houses were quite crowded in 2004, when USAID/OFDA supported a study of selected conditions in Kabul, with an average of 2.2 families per living space,

though in some areas this is as high as 3.8 families per home⁶. On average, one third of households in Kabul are living in a single space measuring 4.6 x 3.3m. That translates to six people in an area of just 15m². These poor conditions are a significant factor in urban health problems, increasing the likelihood of contagious respiratory diseases and other illnesses. This data was confirmed by the results of the Shelter Opportunity Survey that was conducted at the onset of KASS. After the project was completed, these same households were able to enjoy living spaces of approximately 29m².

The Kabul City Master Plan, though dated and now suspended, still represents the most important planning and guiding document for urban development in Kabul. It describes the areas of the city where housing is permitted and those areas where further development and improvement is planned; because of this, and the fact that there is no document which succeeds it; it still focuses development efforts with regard to location of new services and facilities.

In Kabul, the City Master Plan is often the primary document for determining the status of informal housing and settlements. Settlements outside authorized areas are either illegal or un-

⁵ It is worth noting that SPHERE standards are designed for refugee camp and emergency settings.

⁶ ACF, 2004.

⁷ The definitions for illegal and unplanned settlements are found in sub-section *Informal settlement: illegal and unplanned* in Section 4, 'Land Issues'

planned⁷ and therefore were not included in any of the Kabul City Master Plan or other Government plans for development or improvement. An issue of concern therefore, has been securing some basic provision of services and development efforts in these areas. Security of tenure is also a major concern for residents in these areas, particularly in the illegal settlements. These issues are expanded on in Section 4, below.

The Socio-economic Situation

Whilst the post conflict economy is growing, Afghanistan is a long way from any kind of fiscal independence. Trade is very imbalanced and the country is highly dependent on donor money for virtually all ongoing expenses and capital outlays. It is not established economically in the region and it is still viewed with suspicion politically. Foreign investment has been low and shows no signs of improving⁸.

Whilst widespread food shortages, severe malnutrition, epidemics and social unrest have not yet occurred, Kabul's coping mechanisms are absolutely stretched, and urgent steps must be taken to avoid severe consequences in the short to mid term⁹.

3. Geographical and Environmental Background

Physical and Geological

Kabul city sits in a bowl, surrounded and bisected by high mountains. Whilst sub-

Several recent studies on vulnerability in Kabul, show that security of employment remains a key concern: estimates vary, but between 30 and 40% of Afghanistan's population are unemployed or underemployed, and certainly for many people in Kabul, daily employment and adequate remuneration are of the highest priority, and perceived as the key to improving living standards for all family members.

Women particularly have difficulty in finding work and in Kabul, where women-headed households make up 8-10% of the population, this is a significant problem. Children's participation in the labor force is increasingly seen as a valid coping mechanism for families whose income is insufficient. Clearly, in terms of shelter location, proximity to labor markets is a high priority.

Lack of income contributes also to housing vulnerability: people are unable to afford rents, or fall behind in payments and come under pressure to use high-interest credit sources; households revert to squatting in remote, dangerous or unsuitable housing, without access to water or electricity, contributing to health problems; or living with relatives in crowded conditions.

stantial expansion of urban residential areas is possible, there are natural constraints on habitable areas, due to the

steepness and inaccessibility of some areas. The Kabul river cuts through the city and flows heavily in the spring, as the snows melt, and then becomes progressively drier throughout autumn and winter. Annual flooding of riverside and

low-lying areas is common. Kabul's surrounds are arid/semi-arid, though irrigation networks allow extensive horticulture particularly in the North of Kabul, in the Shomali Plain.



Kabul city showing mountainous areas.

Despite a low annual precipitation of 300mm average, the Kabul basin has substantial groundwater resources, holding water runoff from the surrounding mountains, which reach heights of over 3,000m above the sea level. Groundwater tables lowered considerably during the period 1998-2004, due to droughts, however shallow wells which exist throughout the city are still the majority sources of water for city residents. Water tables have risen

slightly in recent years, but will probably lower consistently as demand increases. One clear implication of this for housing design is that bore wells should, where possible, be avoided, as they cannot be dug deeper. Hand dug wells, if properly lined, can be readily deepened, and more easily maintained. For this reason, in the course of this project, wells were dug to an average of 15 meter depth to allow adequate water supply as many existing shallow wells had dried up.

⁸ World Bank, 2005 The Investment Climate in Afghanistan Report.

⁹ Action Contre la Faim Afghanistan. "Kabul Vulnerability Mapping" 2004.

Geological Instability

Much of Afghanistan and the region in general is highly earthquake prone and recent years have seen catastrophic loss of life and infrastructure damage in earthquakes in Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan. An earthquake in Northern Afghanistan in Takhar province in 1998 claimed the lives of 4000 people; there were other strong earthquakes, all measuring above 6 on the Richter scale in 2001, 2002, and 2004. In each case the loss of life was between 500 and 3000, though exact numbers are unclear. Housing and infrastructure were substantially damaged in each case, highlighting the vulnerability of much of Afghanistan's building materials, practices, and designs.

In Kabul, there are a higher proportion of houses and buildings that use reinforced concrete and are generally of a more resistant design; however few private houses (or public buildings, for that matter) in Kabul or elsewhere are designed by qualified engineers or architects, and are not reliably structurally sound.

The majority of housing stock, used by the majority of people, is still of mud brick/ mud wall and pole/ thatch roof design, with little or no seismic reinforcement. Knowledge of earthquake-

resistant practices, both in terms of location and building, is extremely poor. These houses are built of local material, easy to build and maintain. Particularly vulnerable are the many houses recently built on the steep hillside in central Kabul. This makes most houses very vulnerable to even mild earthquakes. However, if earthquake-resistant principles are incorporated in housing design and construction, and improved quality materials are utilized, the ability of houses to withstand earthquakes can be significantly increased.

UN-Habitat recommends several factors to consider in earthquake resistant construction¹⁰. The ratio of weight to height plays important role in reducing earthquake risks: lighter and one storey buildings, with properly constructed roofs will suffer fewer damages. Another essential consideration of earthen construction is to use a compact, box-type layout where the walls, floor and roof structures are well connected to each other. The guidelines explain that regularly shaped buildings such as square, rectangular or circle design sustain less damage during earthquake since they vibrate in a more uniform manner. In contrast, in irregularly shaped dwellings, some parts move more than others, resulting in more stress and damage at the corners of the buildings.

4. Land Issues

Access to Land and Access to Housing

There is an acute shortage of low cost land and housing in Kabul, though in the last 12–18 months the Government has initiated the building of high-rise apartments, some of which are reserved for low-income people (though how these are to be allocated is unclear).

However, not all land is efficiently used. Many houses are single storey or have considerable room for expansion, and estimates are that at least 300,000 people could be readily accommodated in Kabul's existing built-up area, simply through housing infill and higher-density building. Further development on the east plateau could accommodate an additional 1 million people¹¹.

Land Planning and Management - Land Tenure or Occupancy Rights

Almost all land in Kabul, indeed in most urban areas in Afghanistan is owned by someone – an individual, a company, the Government. Apart from areas that are very remote or hidden, and buildings that are dangerously damaged, most non-owners need to pay rent for the land or housing which they are using. In the case of Government land, this is often in the form of a fee, which may or not be officially collected.

The issue of land ownership is also vexed. Land has often been secured under different Governments, the validity of which is now disputed by the Government or by the original, or supposedly original owners. Many people have found that land they had bought in good faith is no longer theirs, and they are without recourse to any recompense. In some cases, entire suburbs (often for political or ethnic reasons) have been denied tenure.

Informal Settlement: Illegal and Unplanned

The World Bank provides the following useful differentiation of illegal and unplanned settlements:

Informal settlements can be differentiated by at least two categories, illegal and unplanned. Settlers in unplanned settlements build on plots purchased from original owners on rural/agricultural land or in areas zoned other than residential within the Kabul Master Plan area. Although they are the legal owners of their plots, the settlements contravene the law as represented by the Master Plan. In contrast, settlers who have invaded public or private lands or that bought plots from powerful individuals on invaded lands are termed illegal¹².

¹⁰ Conversations between CARE staff and UN-Habitat, Kabul.

¹¹ World Bank. Kabul Urban Policy Notes Series n. 3.

¹² World Bank. Kabul Urban Policy Notes Series n.2.

It is presently estimated that some 80% or 2.8 million people are living in informal settlements in Kabul¹³. These settlements cover approximately 70% of Kabul's available land area. Most of the housing in these settlements is permanent in nature; only ~0.5% of Kabul's population is living in temporary housing (tents, plastic sheeting and tarpaulin constructions, etc).

Whilst there are elements that argue for the removal of these settlements, in the main, they are understood to be of benefit to the city's functioning. Residents in these areas work and consume goods and purchase sanitation services¹⁴, including the payment of electricity and area cleaning. Further, by allowing the people in these areas to exercise entrepreneurship and develop themselves, the Government has avoided becoming responsible for the widespread impoverishment that might otherwise result.

The Government has not seen itself under any obligation to extend services to illegal settlements, but the Municipality has now begun a process of gradually recognizing the unplanned areas, especially where residents can show formal or customary deeds. Development assistance programming is occurring in these areas. Illegal settlements are in a more tenuous position and no decisions have yet been taken. However those that are on Government land could feasibly be

formalized as well and this is the recommendation of the World Bank.

Land-owners and Land Users

The process of becoming a landowner in Afghanistan is complex and drawn out. In Kabul, for people wishing to acquire land, there are generally two ways in which it is most commonly done. Powerful individuals, generally with strong and nepotistic links to Government officials, have acquired land belonging to the Government, or to other organizations or collectives, divided it and then sold it. This land is almost always illegally bought and sold, and those eventually buying it and building on it are in vulnerable positions. This practice has by and large stopped, although illegal sales of previously acquired land by such powerful individuals are still occurring.

The second way is through the purchase of land zoned for purposes other than residential – the sale of farm land, or industrial land. Settlements on such areas are unplanned, and of a more secure status. Some people have also acquired land through squatting and, subsequently attaining some kind of deed, often from the local wakil or neighbourhood leader. Such land may be illegal, and is generally highly vulnerable to being claimed back by an owner at some point¹⁵.

Case study: Beneficiaries' ability to claim family land triggered by KASS project.

Sayed Gulam Sakhi, 48 years old, a resident of Afshar village in district 5 of Kabul was selected as a KASS beneficiary. His house was destroyed during war and his family was forced to rent a small house in the neighbourhood. He was at risk of losing tenure on his property. He supports his family of 6 members as a daily laborer. Most of his wages, Afs3500, went to paying a rent of Afs 2500 (or US\$50). The remainder was hardly enough to cover basic expenses of the family.

When KASS was planned in his community, the Beneficiary Selection Committee (BSC) selected him to receive assistance because his situation fitted the vulnerability criteria. With his destroyed house rehabilitated by KASS project, he was able to move his family from the rental house. Then he was able to use the rental money to send his sons to receive education and for his wife to receive medical attention. Through the KASS intervention, the family was able to break the cycle of poverty.

Roles and Responsibilities of Kabul Municipality and the Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH)

The Kabul Municipality is led by the Mayor of Kabul. Employees include the directors of various departments such as roads and planning, revenue, construction, traffic, greenery, cleaning and the administrators of each of the city's districts. The Municipality claims responsibility for housing, land assessment and ownership records, as well as for urban roads and other services, and consequently, the right to claim the revenue collection for all of these services. The Municipality has been authorized to sell state land throughout the city. However,

land tenure is often in dispute and regulations are still unclear, and allegations about the Municipality's collusion in illegal land sales, its unsystematic provision of title deeds, and its inconsistent collection of revenues have led to charges of corruption and conflicts of interest. As a result, the Municipality structure has been under review and reform. This is further hampering development of key planning documents.

The MUDH is responsible for nationwide urban management, including facilitating access to housing for all of Afghanistan's citizens. MUDH is mandated by the Government to prepare policies, programs and projects, as well as the Ur-

¹³ World Bank. Kabul Urban Policy Notes Series n.1.

¹⁴ In areas where septic pits are not used (for example, steep mountainous areas) residents can pay for night soil to be removed. This is then on-sold to farmers for fertilizer, or dumped in areas outside the city.

¹⁵ Much of this section is drawn from Ittig's useful documentation.

ban Management Sector of the National Development Budget (the “NDB” – the “aid” budget). MUDH’s role is primarily that of coordinating, monitoring and assessing all projects in the urban sector, and reporting back to donors, the Ministry of Finance and the Cabinet.

While it would seem logical that the Ministry for Refugees and Repatriation, the Ministry of Economy, and other departments be stakeholders in the development and expansion of Kabul, at this stage, their involvement seems extremely limited. There is much room for better coordination and collaboration with key stakeholders in order that the hopes for the positive use of donor funds and input into the country’s development, specifically here in regards to urban development, are not dissipated but rather capitalised upon and consoli-

dated for greater benefits to the community.

Clearly there are many challenges in urban humanitarian shelter delivery in a complex environment such as Afghanistan. Whilst there are always differences across countries and cities, key learnings from the KASS project can be applied to projects designed elsewhere for improved implementation and impact. The difference between success and failure can often rest in simple design features and not necessarily grand technical solutions. For KASS, these features revolve around community involvement, close relationships with key stakeholders such as the municipality and a commitment to improved options and choices for beneficiaries.

Part Two: The Kabul Area Shelter and Settlements Project

1. CARE Afghanistan: Experience and Strengths

Programming History in Afghanistan

CARE’s work in Afghanistan builds on a long and successful history dating back to the early 1960s. Although operations were suspended during the Soviet-Afghan conflict, CARE has maintained a constant presence in Afghanistan since 1989, even during the Taliban rule as one of the few international relief organizations. The presence during these difficult years enabled CARE to establish strong ties with local communities. Today, CARE has consolidated its position as one of the largest poverty-fighting organizations in Afghanistan.

Major interventions included emergency relief and rehabilitation through distribution of food and infrastructure repair, water and sanitation provision, assistance to vulnerable widows through provision of food and vocational training, rural assistance to drought-stricken farming communities, reconstruction of public works such as roads, ditches, schools and irrigation systems, basic education focusing on girls and community-based education, and local capacity building to

strengthen the capacity local organizations and communities representatives.

In the shelter sector, CARE Afghanistan has solid experience from implementing numerous interventions. Building on the achievements of the reintegration of Afghan Returnees in Shomali valley implemented in previous years, CARE continued in 2005 to support the sustainable integration of 6,000 households, of which 50% were returned refugees. The project approach was five-pronged to address some of the key factors to prevent successful integration. The project built capacity and improved health and hygiene awareness through improved shelter and sanitation, increased income and access to water both for drinking and irrigation. In other provinces, CARE assisted thousands of displaced Afghan families and returnees with integrated shelter construction, water and sanitation, vocational training and short term employment opportunities.

Recognising the Value of Community Involvement to Promote Ownership

Community development interventions have long term impacts and are sustainable when there is full participation and buy-in at the grassroots level. It is intrinsic to CARE's programme approach to adopt strategies that build the capacity of local communities. This is

done through the establishment of local shuras or community councils. Community members are given an opportunity to exercise their responsibilities by electing their representatives to councils who will represent their need to the appropriate authorities and will ensure that assistance will reach the targeted communities. This is a key strategy for the promotion of good governance.

2. The KASS Project

Overview

Addressing the needs of urban development in a post conflict environment in a country like Afghanistan is an immense challenge. Destroyed housing, decimated infrastructure, dislocated populations, dysfunctional Government, ongoing insecurity and conflict, political, ethnic and religious tensions, a weak economy fuelled by narco-dollars and a rapidly increasing population characterise the development environment today. Furthermore, Afghanistan is seen internationally as a rehabilitation project that cannot fail, adding further pressure to the Government to succeed in an exceedingly difficult situation. Successes are needed, not so much to satisfy international donors and Governments, but to meet the needs of the people, and to maintain hope and faith in the nascent Government and its efforts to restore

the country. It was within this context that the KASS project was initiated.

The KASS project was designed to assist at least 3,500 vulnerable households in planned and unplanned districts 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 13 and 16 of Kabul City, through complete or partial shelter construction. The project aimed to benefit two major groups of beneficiaries: one group being homeowners who need support to repair or rehabilitate their dwellings to avoid overcrowding; and the other group being without shelters, that is, those who were renting or squatting.

In addition, KASS was to provide water and sanitation facilities, health and hygiene education for households receiving shelter assistance, ditch drainage construction and road graveling for the communities. To ensure community

ownership and to improve service delivery, the project established new Community Councils where needed, and also worked to build capacity of existing Community Councils.

In order to mitigate seismic risk, KASS ensured that shelter design, materials, and the construction process were all of a standard that would reduce earthquake vulnerability. Communities were also educated in hazard mitigation and actions to be taken in the event of an earthquake. The communities were trained on the job during house construction by CARE field engineers on construction of safe houses by using of the local materials.

State of the Target Districts, Pre-intervention

Houses in the target areas had originally been constructed by the owner/ occupier. Materials were generally of locally available materials such as mud, brick, stone and wooden planks.

The majority of houses in the seven targeted districts were moderately–seriously damaged, and many were uninhabitable. Many buildings had been minimally repaired following cessation of conflict, but most of the infrastructure in those districts was totally destroyed and there had been no rehabilitation at all. Water supply and sanitation provisions were non-existent, unserviceable or inadequate.

The main livelihoods of the residents in the target districts were characterised by low income and instability: day labouring, cartage, and small scale gardening.

Project Outputs

After the completion of project activities, specific outputs included the following:

- 3,774 shelters were built, exceeding the initial target of 3,500,
- 2,800 latrines were constructed,
- 62 shallow wells with hand pumps were installed for community usage,
- Repair and improvement of 640 family wells within the compounds of the beneficiaries,
- 15.5 kilometers (9.7 miles) of drainage ditches were constructed,
- 10.18 kilometers (6.3 miles) of road was gravelled,
- Community mobilization resulted in the involvement of 100 new and existing elected Community Development Councils in the targeted districts,
- A total of 6,625 shelter and non-shelter households benefited directly from the project,
- An additional 8,225 household were impacted on indirectly by the project from receiving training on hazard mitigation and health education as well as improvements in communal services such as road graveling, side ditches and community wells.

KASS was implemented directly by CARE and two national NGOs, ADA (Afghan Development Association) and SDO (Sanayee Development Organization).

3. Best Practices from KASS Experience

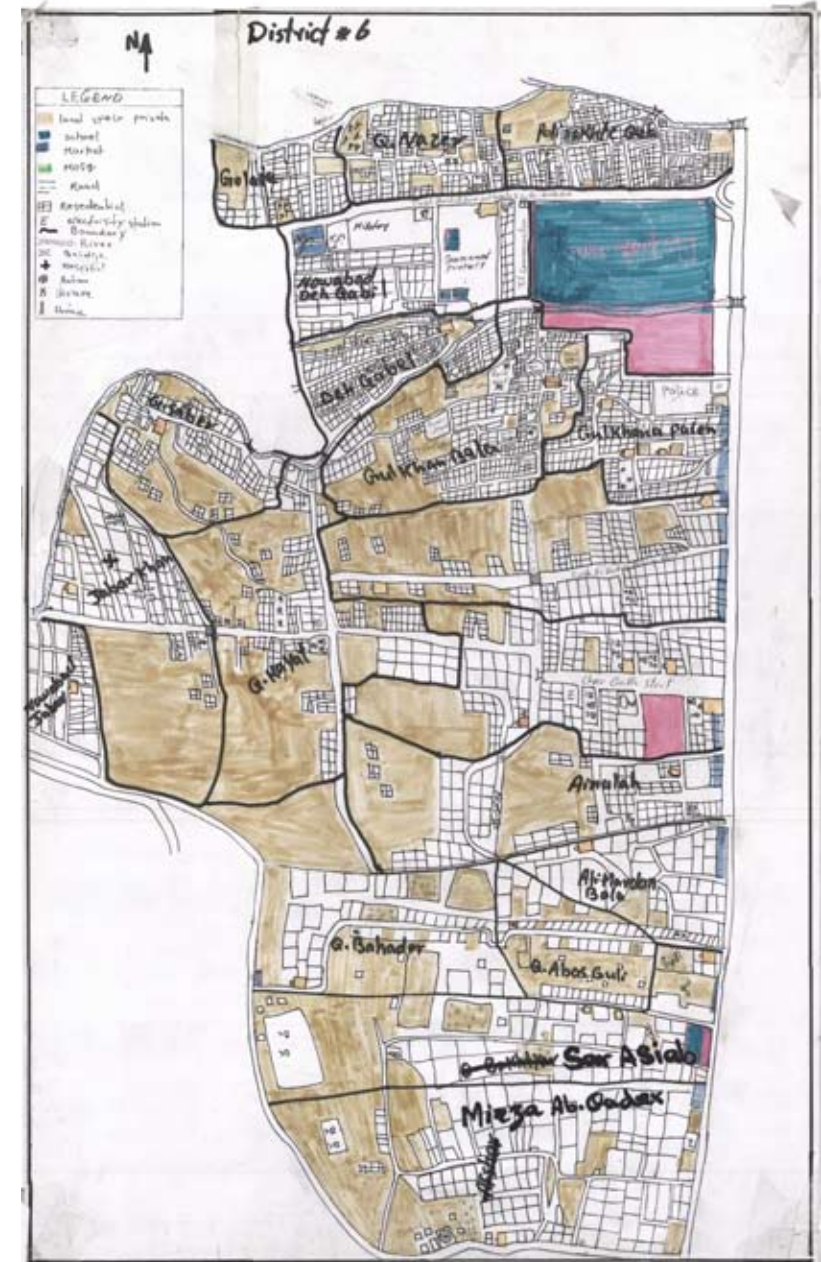
Shelter Opportunity/ Land Usage Survey

Identifying the availability of vacant or underutilized lands was considered a necessary step prior to deciding the locations where shelters could be built as potential conflicts that could emerge due to unclear land status. The shelter opportunity/ land usage survey was undertaken to serve that purpose.

The survey uniformly documented the different types of structures, including the repairs needed in the residential areas, unoccupied and underutilized land. Additionally, information on the issues of ownership, such as the status of land - government planned or unplanned areas or private owners was collected. The survey was undertaken by a group of trained surveyors who blanketed the targeted districts and documented different types of structures and land availability. The results of land usage survey also quantified the total amount of land available for the beneficiaries who needed land space to build their shelters and estimated the numbers of shelter assistance needed.

The reference basis of the survey was the official maps produced by AIMS (Afghanistan Information Management Service) – a branch of United Nations which has the mandate to produce maps in Afghanistan, and official maps available at the district offices of the municipality. Through physical observations by walking through the communities in the targeted districts, without the use of technology such as GPS devices or scales, data were recorded and documented on hand-drawn maps. The hand-drawn maps presented different location of communities and random indications of residential areas, government and public structures, agriculture and vacant lands. Eventually the information collected and presented on the hand-drawn maps acted as examples for the format of the digitized maps.

The hand-drawn maps served as a starting point to advocate land ownership issue with the Kabul Municipality who could not guarantee issuance of land certificates but only agreed to provide a letter of approval on the occupancy rights.



A map of district 6 hand-drawn as a result of Shelter Opportunity/
Land Usage Survey.

Establishment of Community Councils

Many project interventions in rural areas are able to build on the existing community relationships. In urban areas however, it is a mistake to think the same degree of community commitment and coherence exists, and in the past, many projects have neglected to build local community capacities. The end result has been poor ownership and weakened outcome sustainability. To achieve long-term sustainability of urban development, it is critical to foster community buy-in. Involving elected representatives of community members in the decision making process is one way to promote the engagement of the community in the development process, and to increase the chance of project sustainability.

In the KASS project, Community Councils were established through participatory election process. The Councils served as quality control mechanism in monitoring project implementation and mediating conflicts as they arose, and also were to represent particular needs (that were outside the remit of KASS) to the higher authorities.

Engaging community leaders in the assessment of needs and identifying available resources was a primary step in fostering ownership of the development process. Training and capacity building of the Councils continued throughout the project to strengthen their capability

to identify and prioritize problems and to exercise participatory decision making process in advocating community needs.

“Clustering”

In Kabul, there have been previous shelter projects implemented by various organizations. The KASS project adopted a unique approach into the urban settings in that it sought to elevate living standards of all individuals in the target areas, while direct assistance was provided to a number of identified vulnerable households. To maximize impact of the project on the wider community, KASS adopted a clustering approach. This worked by identifying, through consultation and through the Community Councils, groups of vulnerable families, which formed a geographical cluster. In this cluster area, adjacent side ditches, community wells and road gravelling were also rehabilitated and upgraded. Through this approach, clusters of families benefited, rather than single families. Group ownership and higher levels of participation and engagement were the direct result of this approach. The integrated assistance to a cluster of families presents larger coverage areas and inevitably sees more visible impacts comparing to impacts of assistance to individual family. In a culture that highly values equity, spreading benefits throughout the community increases general community participation and support as well as good will rather than being seen to benefit only a few.

Beneficiaries: IDPs and Vulnerable Groups

In the project design the targeted districts were selected based on the overall condition of the districts, and numbers of individuals in need of shelter assistance. The main target groups to benefit from the shelter interventions in those districts were returnees from Pakistan and Iran, and IDPs. Some of the most vulnerable returned and displaced households lived in abandoned houses, damaged public buildings, or in crowded conditions with relatives.

The original criteria to be selected to receive shelter assistance were registered families (either returned refugees or IDPs) with no land and with no economically productive head of household due to gender, age, chronic illness or other proven cause.

However, following the shelter opportunity survey in those targeted districts, it became clear that the need for shelter was not only among returnees and IDPs but also among the pre-existing vulnerable groups within the communities. In selecting beneficiaries, it was important not to only focus on the IDPs and returnees but all vulnerable groups which were in great need of shelters.

In order to provide adequate, appropriate assistance, the criteria were then redefined to include:

- Widow/female headed household with children under 17 years of age and no male relative, and living in damaged

shelter or with relatives in overcrowded conditions or squatting in public buildings;

- Elderly household with no able-bodied breadwinner in the household, living in damaged shelter, with relative in overcrowded conditions, or squatting in public buildings;
- Disabled household with no able-bodied breadwinner in the household and or with children of under 17 years of age, living in damaged shelter, or with relatives in overcrowded conditions, or squatting in public buildings;
- Single man with no able bodied breadwinner in the household and children under 17 years of age, living in damaged shelter, or with relatives in overcrowded situations, or squatting in public buildings.
- Whole family with no breadwinner in the household or breadwinner earning less than \$100/month, living in damaged shelter, with relatives in overcrowded conditions, or squatting in public buildings.

These criteria also conformed to the Government of Afghanistan's vulnerability criteria.

Participatory Beneficiary Selection.

In consultation with the Kabul Municipality, and with the participation of Community Councils, KASS reviewed the lists of identified eligible households. Community Mobilizers then conducted door-to-door surveys to assess the actual needs of each household against

the vulnerability categories. This process ensured that families were selected based on actual needs and not because they were related to the community leader or prominent members of the community.

Using the results of assessment, recommendations were then reviewed by the Beneficiary Selection Committee, who employed priority ranking table to determine which families were considered vulnerable and eligible to receive assistance. This ensured maximum effectiveness in the allocation of resources and the minimum degree of corruption and error.

Involving community members and local government representatives in the process of selection and decision making built a solid foundation for good governance and established trust. This then formed the base for further engagement in advocating and solving community issues.

Beneficiary Selection Committees

In coordination with representatives from Community Councils, Shuras, the Municipality and CARE, the committees were established to select beneficiaries in each targeted district. Emphasis was placed on ensuring that women, minorities and other marginalized groups took part in the selection process.

This process included:

- a. Lists of eligible households for shelter assistance were obtained from Com-

munity Councils and district Municipality and reviewed by the Beneficiary Selection Committee. Eligible households were those identified as needing assistance and had a household head who was elderly, disabled, widowed, unemployed, landless, or met other vulnerability criteria. Special considerations were given to those with no household member able-bodied enough to undertake construction work.

- b. The Beneficiary Selection Committees cross-checked the household list while CARE community mobilizers met with residents in the targeted area to determine the appropriate intervention methodology for the selected beneficiaries. Based on the outcome of this cross-checking, the location and types of beneficiaries were determined and documented. At this point, prior to the implementation of a comprehensive (as opposed to a rapid assessment) survey, 3.6% of the households in the targeted areas in need of shelter were women or disabled-headed households.
- c. After the list of beneficiaries were developed, the Beneficiary Selection Committees employed a priority ranking table to determine the selection of possible beneficiaries: Households with the highest total points were considered for shelter interventions under the project, however, the final decision was based on these ranking factors as well as the type of assistance needed (i.e. full or partial shelter) and their relation to other benefi-

ciaries for clustering purposes.

- d. After joint cross-checking of the beneficiaries by Beneficiary Selection Committees, CARE signed household letters of agreements with selected beneficiaries. The letters of agreement, among other things, explained the roles and responsibilities of CARE and the beneficiaries, the type and quantity of materials and the amount of cash allotted to cover labor wages for each individual beneficiary. Each letter was then signed by the beneficiary and representatives from the District Municipality and Community Council. Also, CARE's experience in the area and community's trust and respect for CARE facilitated women's involvement in this decision-making process.

Consolidating the Impacts to Beneficiaries

The main consideration in selecting beneficiaries for KASS was the degree of vulnerability and needs of shelter assistance based on the established criteria. However over the past decade, CARE had implemented various interventions in the seven districts of the KASS project. Strong ties existed between CARE and the communities and beneficiaries in some of those districts.

In order to minimise potentially destructive community disharmony, those people who had benefited from previous interventions were not excluded from also benefiting from the KASS project, as long as they met all of the criteria.

This comprehensive approach consolidated the benefits, not only for the individual beneficiary, but for the overall neighbourhood.

Memorandum of Understanding with Kabul Municipality

To reinforce long-term sustainability in urban development, it is imperative to develop relationships between authorities and the community they serve. However, this major aspect of coordination is often overlooked in the urban context. Prior to the implementation of KASS, mechanisms for regular communication and interaction between community representatives and authorities did not exist in a systematic manner. This resulted in community needs often not being recognized, and thus overlooked by the Municipality.

One major aim of KASS was to build capacity in the local authorities in order that they better respond to residents' needs for shelter and basic services. An outcome of the relationship building and advocacy efforts was that KASS signed a memorandum of understanding with the Kabul Municipality. The MOU especially significant in that it details explicit permission from the Government of Afghanistan for individuals residing in unplanned areas to build and occupy the structures on the land they own. Previously, the Municipality had been unwilling to make concessions for residents in unplanned areas. The Municipality expressed further commitment to the KASS project and process by assigning

one staff member per targeted district to assist in overseeing the project implementation and to attend to issues and challenges at district levels.

Meeting project objectives in shelter reconstruction and rehabilitation is closely linked to the question of land tenure, occupancy rights, and all aspects of land use and other public infrastructure. The agreement of the Kabul Municipality to guarantee the right to occupy the land and built houses for a minimum of five years is a key step in this process: without such a guarantee, it would be almost impossible to gain community enthusiasm for the task of rebuilding. Occupancy rights and ownership of structure thus became a driving factor in beneficiaries increasing their levels of contribution for shelter construction. And beyond KASS, the MOU has established precedent, and thus remains a mechanism for continuous advocacy for land tenure into the future.

At the community level, once the households were identified for housing assistance, a tripartite agreement was signed between the beneficiary and CARE and counter signed by the Community Council representative and Municipality district representative. The agreement outlined the location and type of shelter being delivered, other assistance, as well as roles and responsibilities of all parties during the construction stage and after its completion (see also subsection, Categories of Shelter, and section 4, 'GIS Mapping).

Collaboration with the Kabul Municipality and District Officials

In addition to the MOU, it was understood as essential to maintain close coordination and cooperation with the Kabul Municipality and district officials. Continuous dialogue between the project and the authorities ensured that KASS plans and implementation met the expectations and requirements of the national and district level authorities and further, elicited support for reforms in land tenures and ownership rules. A conscious approach to be highly consultative was employed and was key to the success of the project.

Beneficiary Participation and Contribution.

For the long-term sustainability of interventions, it is critical to have buy-in from the community. Community participation and involvement in all stages is deeply embedded in the concepts, approaches and strategies of implementation.

Shelter designs used in KASS were adapted to fit the environment of Kabul and Afghanistan in general. Rather than relying on one type of intervention as the solution to address all shelter needs, there were a range of options from the provision of full shelter and latrine to additional rooms for families who were living in cramped conditions.

A principle of the KASS project was to work directly with community leaders and beneficiaries from the outset, to strengthen the sense of ownership and

build their capacities to carry on development work after the construction period concluded. Through KASS, local residents had the opportunity to elect their representatives to the Community Councils that would then represent their needs to the Municipality and other actors. The Councils were, and remain an important mechanism to ensure that services were delivered to the residents. That is, they fulfilled both an advocacy and an accountability role.

This approach is a standard for CARE for its development interventions and creates realistic chance of community development processes being continued on by the community after CARE completes its intervention. Such an approach also promotes project accountability – to the beneficiaries. Traditionally, agencies see themselves as being accountable to their donors and headquarters. However, accountability should be directed both ways – to donors, but also, and perhaps more importantly, towards project participants and beneficiaries. An absolute minimum degree of beneficiary accountability would be sharing of information on the planning, strategies and execution of the project with community leaders and beneficiaries; better practice would be genuine consultation on the design, planning and implementation strategy.

Ensuring beneficiary contributions also minimizes dependency, and dignifies participants. An expectation that all people will contribute communicates respect

for the ability of all people to give to a project. It also builds a sense of ownership and pride in their new homes.

Implementing Partners

In addition to strengthening civil society through community mobilization and community councils' establishment, another important aspect to KASS was to promote local capacity through partnership with local organizations. Following a thorough assessment, two local organizations were selected as implementing partners to carry out parts of the interventions. These NGOs were selected on the basis of their capacity, reputation, familiarity and experience in working with selected communities, and history of collaboration with CARE and other NGOs on previous projects.

Practical training and technical support were provided to these implementing partners to ensure successful implementation of the project activities. The provision of training guaranteed adequate financial and project management of the project and proper reporting. Throughout the project implementation, partners received mentoring in community mobilization, seismic mitigation, information sharing, and assistance to vulnerable groups.

These efforts underlined CARE's commitment to strengthen the institutional capacity of local organizations to be more effective in development activities in their country.

Women's Participation

Gender inequity is entrenched and endemic in Afghanistan, and public life is dominated almost absolutely by men, both formally and informally. Women's contributions and roles are not seen and rarely valued.

Understanding this context, KASS sought to promote gender equality in governance and access to resources, in order that women would have comparable economic, social and political opportunities, and be advocates for their own development.

Women were incorporated from the outset in training and awareness raising for communities and for the Councils, and were employed in community mobilization. Women were also integrated into the governance process through being equal members of mixed Community Councils. This ensured that Community Councils from the start, developed an understanding of women's needs and priorities, and consequently, represented these. The election of women to the Councils was facilitated by their raised profile through community mobilization.

Case Study

In Abas Quli and Qalai Pakhchak communities of district 6, there were 2 mixed community councils established by KASS. Though prior to the project, there was a traditional shura, its members were not elected by the community. Under the project, community members selected their representatives and elected them to be Council members. Approximately half the members of these Community Councils were women who were active in their communities. Some of those women were school teachers while others were community health workers.

Nearby those communities, there was a private international hospital offering a variety of services with high standards.

Realizing that the health of community members, especially women and children, was very poor and there was no public health clinic in the vicinity, the Council initiated a discussion with the hospital with the intent of improving the health condition of the local population. The hospital responded positively. They agreed to train 12 women from those 2 communities for one year to be community health educators. These women went for 3 days in a week to the hospital to receive training and be apprentices in that hospital. Additionally, at the end of the training period, the hospital committed to assist the community to build a community health clinic.

Health Education

The final test of the success of the project is whether the overall standard of living of the target groups is improved. The KASS project understood that health promotion was central to success of the project, and therefore employed health educators to deliver health messages to men and women of the target communities. These house-to-house visits were complemented by outreach programs into schools and mosques in order to share the messages as widely as possible.

The health syllabus focused on personal hygiene, food safety, safe drinking water and water storage at home, good housekeeping practices, mother and child health, general health habits (including cholera and malaria mitigation), insect and rodent control, and safe refuse disposal. Behaviour change was measured by KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) survey.

Disaster Awareness and Mitigation

Community Mobilizers also conducted education sessions with each household on action during an earthquake, earthquake survival and preferred building practices. Community leaders including elders, teachers, and religious leaders were identified as key people during disasters and in disaster mitigation and they were trained to ensure that the health and hazard mitigation messages were spread as widely as possible.

Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Survey

The impacts on behaviour as a result of the health education and provision of potable water supply were measured by KAP surveys. The survey covered health and hygiene indicators such as hand washing, bathing, boiling water, cleaning toilets and the incidence of water-borne diseases. The survey was conducted both pre- and post- the KASS project.

It was evident the health and hygiene education had a significant impact among the beneficiaries in improving hygienic living and in disease reduction. Knowledge of safe water use rose by 50% as a result of the education work, and at the end of the project 70% of beneficiaries boiled their water prior to drinking. Latrine construction was also a significant step in improving the living conditions of the beneficiaries.

It was also reported that the incidence of water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea fell from 71 cases at the beginning of the project to seven cases at the end, and likewise dysentery fell from 24 cases to two. Clearly, we cannot attribute these results solely to the KASS intervention but it is possible to say that the project contributed in some way to the improvement of these indicators.

Models and Materials for Shelter Constructions.

Recognizing the diversity of climatic conditions and cultural preferences, KASS

provided a basic model for shelter design suitable to the Afghan context. This design met the SPHERE minimum standard of 3.5 square meters person, and was based on the UN-HABITAT shelter guidelines, which describe the essential construction materials that will achieve minimum standards of climatic protection. The shelter's size and configuration also has seismic-reducing properties. The design also allowed for men and women to occupy separate spaces, being based around two rooms and a hall way. This was culturally appropriate.

All new and expanded shelters were built from the foundation up to ensure structural integrity and adherence to seismic standards. The land was prepared according to the technical requirements for shock-reduction, and all corners at four sides were built in the traditional style (Katiba from wooden poles) for stability during earthquakes.

Latrine construction was essential to meet sanitation standards and for environmental protection. The latrines were built in the same manner as the shelters, using community members for the unskilled labour. Cash-for-work labourers were provided for households without able-bodied members.

As much as possible locally available building materials were used, in order to support the local economies and allow for cheap and easy local repairs in the future. Traditional styles of building (mud brick and adobe) were promoted,

as again, this would encourage home owners to undertake their own maintenance.

Categories of Shelter

Five categories of shelter assistance package were determined, and were provided to beneficiaries based on individual needs. Each assistance package category met the minimum standard of 3.5 square meters per person and followed seismic effect-minimizing construction.

The categories are:

- **Category A:** Widows, disabled and/or elderly headed family with children under 17 and no male relatives who are living in damaged shelter, living in overcrowded conditions or squatting in public buildings. Residents falling into this category are very poor with no resources and no able-bodied person in the family to work. For this category, a full construction of two rooms, a corridor and a latrine with no contribution from the beneficiary will be provided. A total of 49 families were assisted under this category.
- **Category B:** Single man with children under 17 with no able-bodied wage earner who is living in damaged shelter, in overcrowded conditions or squatting in a public building. The residents who fall into this category are very poor with no resources with which to build or reconstruct shelter. A full construction of two rooms, a corridor plus a latrine with 30% contribution from the beneficiary will be

provided. A total of 88 families were assisted under this category.

- **Category C:** An entire family with no wage earner or household breadwinner earning less than \$100 per month, living in overcrowded conditions, in a damaged shelter or squatting in a public building. A full construction of two rooms, a corridor plus a latrine with 44% contributions from the beneficiaries will be provided. A total of 1813 families were assisted under this category.
- **Category D:** This category is for expansion of existing shelters, for poor families who live in overcrowded situations and who match eligibility criteria for category C will be considered for only an one-room shelter materials package with up to 43% contribution from the beneficiary. Eligibility for a latrine will be determined based on the needs of the household. A total of 1663 families were assisted under this category.

4. GIS mapping

Data was collected using Global Position System (GPS) devices, and then maps updated with accurate references of all five types of shelters constructed, the location of latrines, all water points of family and community wells, all length of drainage ditches and road gravelled. The intent of this was to identify the exact location of the land parcels where KASS shelters were constructed in order to clarify and advocate for land tenure.

- **Category E:** Poor families who do not have resources to improve their existing latrines that are substandard and do not need other construction assistance will be provided a latrine with at least a 20% contribution from the house owner. A total of 161 families were assisted under this category.

The contribution of beneficiaries was to provide in-kind and unskilled labour for the construction of the houses, except where households did not have able-bodied members. In those cases, labourers were provided as a part of cash-for-work activities. Beneficiaries could alternatively pay the equivalent required amount, if there were in a position to do so, or make up some combination of labour plus cash.

GIS maps produced under KASS now serve as a planning, management and advocacy tool, and also assist in generating the legal basis for land ownership.

KASS utilized Geographic Information System (GIS) digitized maps to inform reference points for all the shelters, community and family wells, ditch drainage and distance of road gravelled. Collect-

ing data using GPS devices, the maps established accurate points of five categories of shelters constructed as well as attached latrines, all water points of family and community wells, all length of drainage ditches and road graveled.

Using the integrated data of the existing housing, population topography, zoning, surrounding infrastructure, the GIS maps also captured the spatial analysis and details of beneficiaries, project beneficiaries, and associated surrounding. More importantly, GIS maps produced under KASS serve as a planning and management tool. Sharing the maps with Kabul Municipality facilitates the starting point to advocate land tenure and ownership for the beneficiaries in the future. The occupied land with shelter constructed under KASS is clearly identified on the map.

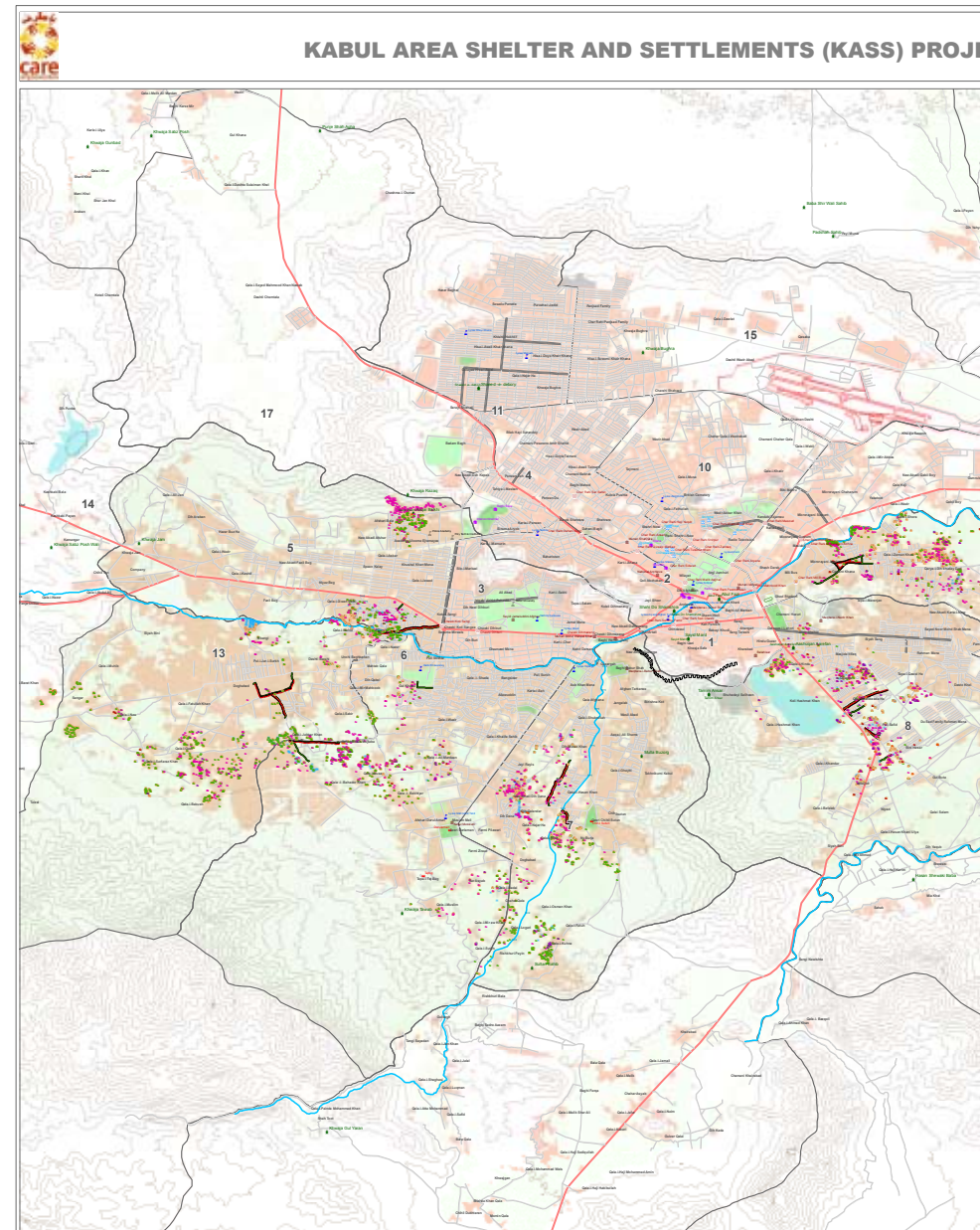
The protocol signed by the Kabul Municipality and CARE indicates that landless beneficiaries are allowed to occupy the land on which the shelters were built as well as having the ownership of the structure for five-year period. Most of these lands are on the unplanned area of Kabul city. The occupancy rights for five years for the beneficiaries have been significant step in giving the beneficiary some level of security to be able to live in the present shelter. This was would not be possible unless it was facilitated by KASS. The locations on the

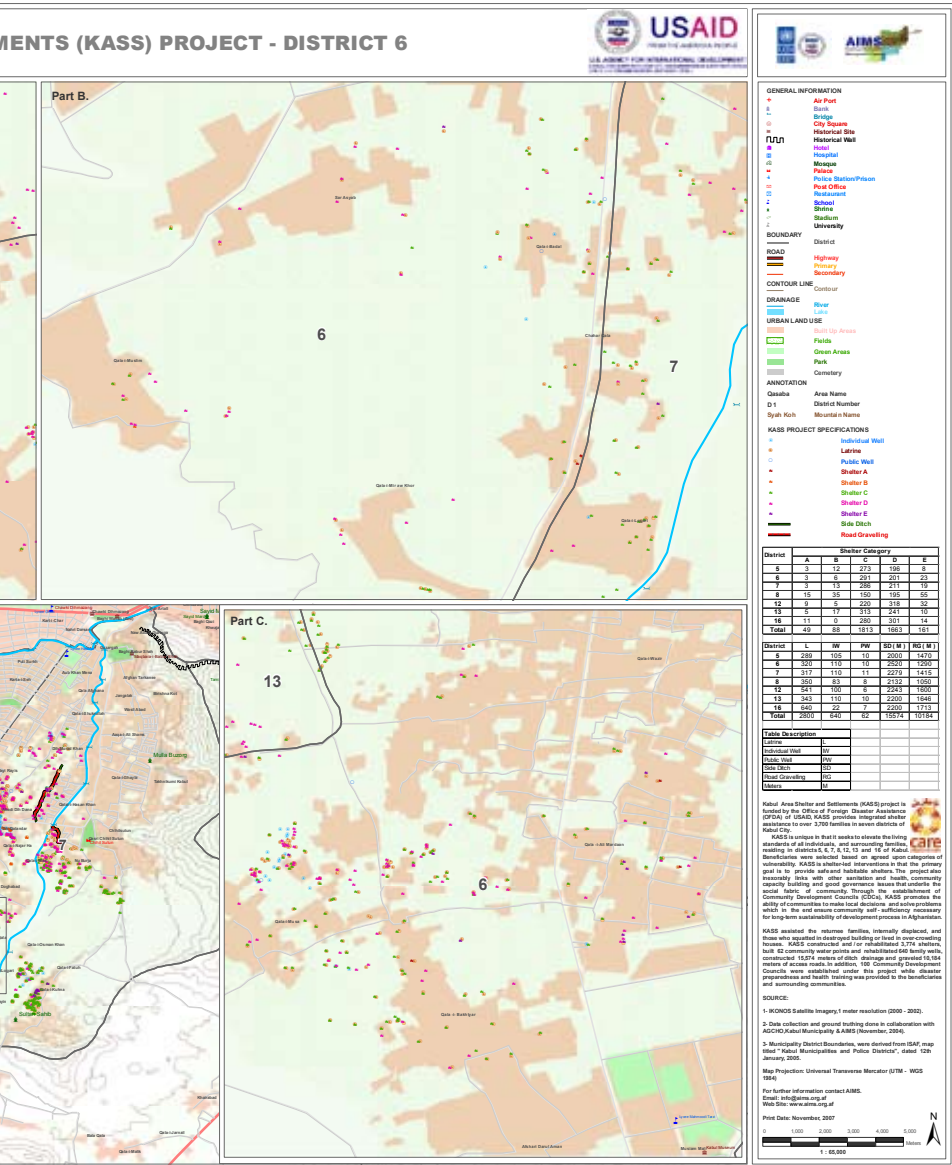
GIS maps inform the government about which land parcels are occupied by the KASS beneficiaries.

At the community level, once the households were selected through a rigorous and transparent process, a tri-partied agreement was signed among the beneficiary, CARE and CDC. The agreement outlined details of locations, type of shelter assistance as well as roles and responsibilities of the beneficiaries during the construction stage and after its completion.

The MOU with the Municipality, in addition to giving beneficiaries the right of occupancy for 5 years, signified the recognition by the government that those land parcels were occupied by the KASS beneficiaries.

The beneficiary agreement, supported by the Municipality memorandum of understanding, clarified by the visual allocation of land parcels occupied by the beneficiaries from the GIS maps, are stepping stones to boost the process of advocating land tenure in the future. It is recognized that obtaining land titles will be arduous process since all stakeholders have to be involved, this triangulation is a step in the right direction that provides solid foundation for the assisting the beneficiaries to obtain land tenures.





5. Stimulating the Local Economy

One indicator of the project's success was its contribution to the local economy. Economic impacts included the hiring of local unskilled laborers, the purchase of materials locally, and the use of local staff in skilled roles. For example, by the end of the project, more than 75% of the 3774 households had members participate in cash-for-work activities. This coupled with more than 3,000 other individuals who were not project beneficiaries, meant a large number of families benefited from increased income through project activities. They were mainly involved in the making of mud bricks, foundation excavation, working with masons during house construction and ditches drainage construction, and public well construction

The laborers were selected in consultation with Community Councils and

beneficiaries. In case of high demand for employment, skilled and unskilled workers were allowed to work only for a reasonable period on the project so that more individuals had the opportunity to take part.

Overall, approximately 76% of the project budget was spent on project materials and labourers directly. KASS signed 30 contracts with local suppliers for the supply of materials such as stone, sand, gravel, mud bricks, clay, iron beams, steel doors and windows, window glasses, wooden pole, and wooden planks, PVC pipes and latrine materials, hand pumps and cement that created hundreds of jobs for individuals within the targeted areas and over all parts of the city. Employees of those suppliers also benefited directly from those opportunities.

Case Study

Mr. Naqibullah, 19 years old, lived in Qala-e-Wazir in District # 8 of Kabul City. His father died when he was six years old, and as there was no income to pay rent, he, his mother and three siblings took refuge in a destroyed house belonging to a neighbour. At the age of 13, he and his siblings were orphaned when their mother died, and he took the role as the household head. The family continued to illegally occupy his neighbour's destroyed house.

In mid 2006, he came to know of the KASS project and met some of the CARE community mobilizers. With assistance from the local shura, who were identifying households as potential KASS beneficiaries, he obtained a small plot of land, and was registered as an eligible family. KASS then constructed a full house with two rooms, one corridor and a latrine for him, his younger brother and two sisters. He now has his own home and peace of mind not to worry about his younger siblings when he goes to work.

6. Constraints and Limitations

Overwhelming Needs

At the commencement of the project, during the shelter opportunity survey, it was evident that the need for shelter construction and rehabilitation was overwhelming.

This situation was the result of the influx of returnees from Pakistan and Iran, urban population growth as well as economic migration and long term poverty, which left thousands of families without suitable housing. The survey results indicated that thousands of households in the targeted districts were in urgent need of housing and those needs surged annually as the winter season approached. It was not possible for the KASS project to meet the needs of all the vulnerable people, and this was an ongoing constraint.

Construction versus Occupancy

At the end of first phase of the project, a concern surfaced regarding low occupancy rates in the shelters, especially those fully constructed. It emerged that the reason for the low occupancy was that the construction had commenced at the beginning of winter, and as the weather started to get cold, the walls failed to completely dry. Beneficiaries, especially those with young children and elderly, could not bring their families to move in without risking their health.

Following winter and into the spring, the houses dried, and at the end of the project, the occupancy rate of the newly constructed and renovated shelters reached 100%.

Challenge in Mapping Land Parcels

One unique element of KASS was the digitizing of project interventions through the use of GIS mapping. This was to provide reference points of all infrastructures constructed under this project. Ideally, the maps would also note the location of land parcels and boundaries.

However, reconciling the official, but outdated maps; the hand drawn maps assembled by the Community Mobilizers and the residents; and the changing district divisions as the Kabul Municipality updated its boundaries proved an impossible task. Available maps did not represent reality on the ground, being outdated and inaccurate. Hand drawn maps, were accurate, but not to scale, and incomplete. And landowners and authorities often were not sure of land boundaries were since supporting documents were non-existence, and boundaries were in the process of being changed.

An agency entered a contract with the KASS project to produce the digitized maps that presented all points of all the infrastructures built under the project.

However, due to the uncertainties of the boundaries, and bureaucratic limitations, the final maps generated did not

indicate all community boundaries and all land parcels in every target district.

7. Conclusions

Several principles and practices stand out as essential and important lessons from the KASS project.

- The history and context of a community or group of communities must be considered in the design and implementation of a project.
- Structural and external issues play a fundamental role in the long term sustainability and success of an intervention, and a project must pay attention to these. Even where authorities and governance structures are weak, they should not be ignored; rather the opportunity should be taken to engage, motivate and train them, exposing them to the organisation's agenda and priorities. This will both build the capacity of officials, but also stimulate them to different ways of working. Working towards an MOU with the Kabul Municipality and engaging their staff from an early stage won their support and enhanced the opportunity for successful advocacy.
- Flexibility of design is important: preconceived ideas, even if superlative, may need to be changed in real circumstances of the project. The KASS project design allowed for both the intended beneficiaries to change, and for the intervention design to be flexible. This contributed to the cohesion and ultimate success of the project.
- Integrating men and women from the outset (where culturally possible) is an essential step in gaining a fair outcome for all members of a community. In some cases, especially urban settings, the opportunity for integration may be significantly higher than expected, especially where there are high numbers of returned refugees – they bring with them the experiences and expectations formed in often more liberal countries. Such experiences should be capitalised on. This is particularly pertinent in an urban environment where women often have fewer restrictions on their participation in comparison to women in rural areas.

- In GIS mapping, ideally parcelled and vacant lands would be included but major undertaking outside the scope of this project.

Integrated projects such as the KASS project can have substantial, long term benefits across a range of issues and needs, if properly designed and executed. People operate within communities and systems, not in isolation, and where possible, projects should also seek to provide systemic, holistic interventions.

In addition to these principles, there are a number of key learnings that deserve particular attention:

1. The benefits of the highly consultative process used cannot be understated – this was the key to the success of this project. The process matters. How projects are designed and implemented, and who is involved in project design and implementation, contribute directly to project outcomes.
2. Difference in the perception of needs by key stakeholders such as government, donor and implementing agency. Depending on perspective, the balance between shelters and services may differ. For example, the housing needs generated by the high rate of returnees to Afghanistan (estimated at 3.5million)– of which an estimated 30% choose to settle in Kabul are immense. Despite this, the priority of the Kabul Municipality has been more on the development of services and infrastructure.
3. Short timelines mean that not all relevant issues can be dealt with. Some of the key issues such as land tenure and other reform issues cannot be tackled in a short term project, but need to be given more time for networking, advocacy, and real relationship and capacity building to take place. Having said this, initiatives such as the MoU are important first steps in this process.
4. Advocacy needs to be clearly built into project design particularly when dealing with difficult issues such as land tenure. In this way, additional strategies are employed to provide a greater more lasting impact for beneficiaries.
5. Coordination –Similarly to advocacy, this needs more time, needs to be consolidated in order to maximise gains. It is important that time is taken to build relationships with government departments/ministries/NGOs/other stakeholders so that activities of all are consolidated and build on each other.
6. Good governance – the promotion of good governance is a key to the success of such projects. The creation and promotion of representative community councils

serves to increase the participation and relationships between authorities and citizens and means better, more appropriately designed outcomes and impacts.

7. The “infill” approach builds shelters and allows consolidation of resources. It means that full occupancy is obtained rather than wasting resources because shelters and services are provided where people want to live rather than forcing the poor and vulnerable to satellite cities where they may be further “displaced”.

As urbanisation increases in developing countries, it becomes increasingly important to focus on the needs of vulnerable and poor people living on the economic and social fringes. Often, their needs are overlooked as governments focus on strategies to minimise rural-urban migration. However, the desire to move to the city for perceived improved livelihood opportunities will always exist and it would be remiss not to look at strategies and interventions that assist the most poor and vulnerable. We must be careful that the strategies we employ do not displace these people to physical fringes as well, thereby further marginalising them and diminishing their opportunities. Development-driven displacement will not help the poor.

CARE has been proud to work with OFDA and the Kabul Municipality in the successful implementation of this project and we hope that this guide provides some useful insights into those involved in urban humanitarian shelter delivery.

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