



IFRC Shelter Research Unit
International Federation of Red Cross and
Red Crescent Societies
Benelux Red Cross Societies

Establishment of the IFRC Shelter Research Unit

Increasing need for shelter

In the past two decades the number of natural disasters has doubled. If we add war and other conflict-related emergencies, there are 100 million homeless people across the globe and around 1.6 billion individuals living in slums and inappropriate housing.*

The vastness of these numbers, coupled with geographic, economic and cultural differences, poses an important and complex challenge for organisations involved in 'sheltering'. Sheltering does not just mean the immediate provision of a roof; it is associated with reconstruction

of livelihoods and assisting individuals and families to resume ordinary life and establish resilient communities.

Unfortunately a complex mix of global challenges threatens to cause even more displacement in the future. The vulnerability of populations continues to increase in many parts of the world due to climate change, conflict, growing urban population and precarious living conditions.

*Gould, Ch, 'The Right to Housing Recovery After Natural Disasters' Harvard Human Rights Journal / Vol. 22, Retrieved from <<http://harvardhrj.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/gould.pdf>

Cyclone Sidr, South of Bangladesh, 2007



Diversity of make-shift shelter solutions



House swept away completely

CROIX-ROUGE 
de Belgique

croix-rouge 
luxembourgeoise


Belgian Red Cross
Flanders

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The Netherlands  **Red Cross**

Innovation of shelter solutions

Confronted with these challenges the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has scaled up its sheltering activities in terms of both quality and quantity. In close cooperation with the IFRC, the Benelux Red Cross Societies, in 2010, set up the Shelter Research Unit (SRU). The SRU is a research centre responsible for the development of innovative material and technical shelter solutions, and the gathering and sharing of shelter resources. Its main objectives are:

- to document and develop shelter solutions adapted to specific climate

zones, local environments and socio-economic settings,

- to conduct research that links traditional and modern building material and techniques to develop innovative shelter,
- to offer relevant and easy-to-access information to respond to sheltering emergencies,
- to bring together shelter practitioners from different backgrounds, relief workers from the field, universities and the private sector.

The SRU works outside of the urgency of disaster. Through documenting shelter projects, the SRU unlocks a vast body of experience and knowledge, and identifies gaps and innovation opportunities. The results are shared with the whole Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and the larger humanitarian shelter sector, via:

- An electronic database of shelter solutions
- Testing, improvement and evaluation of shelter solutions
- Publication, discussion and funding of research projects
- Exchange of shelter experiences and knowledge

We are interested in receiving your comments on the project. For all questions and comments please contact: Kaat Boon | SRU Coordinator | kaat.boon@croix-rouge.lu | Tel.: +352 27 55 8902



This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Community. The views expressed herein should not be taken, in any way, to reflect the official opinion of the European Community.

The SRU is also sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Luxembourg and the Foundation Veuve Emile Metz-Tesch.