

Solomon Islands Shelter Sub-Committee

December 2016 Earthquake/Tsunami Response Lessons Learned Workshop Report



Shelter Sub-Committee Solomon Islands (Infrastructure Committee)

Supported by



Shelter Cluster Pacific
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Shelter Sub-Committee (as a part of the Infrastructure Committee) in Solomon Islands is chaired by the Ministry of Infrastructure Development (MID) and co-chaired by Solomon Islands Red Cross Society (SIRC) for preparedness, and supported by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) as convener of the Pacific Regional Shelter Cluster. The cluster (now Committee under proposed revised DRM arrangements) system was adopted in 2009 during the earthquake/tsunami response in Western Province. Since then it has become the primary preparedness and response coordination mechanism at National and Provincial levels.

The December 2016 earthquake/tsunami response lessons learned workshop was held on the 24th May 2017, facilitated by the Solomon Islands Shelter Sub-Committee, supported by the Pacific Shelter Cluster. The purpose of this workshop was to capture best practices and key lessons of the shelter response to inform the future development of the Solomon Islands Shelter Sub-Committee, and to enhance effectiveness of future responses.

Eleven (11) representatives from six (6) organisations attended the workshop which consisted of group work and plenary sessions on successes, challenges, and recommendations going forward. A total of 15 recommendations were identified, and are listed in order of priority.

2. BACKGROUND TO DECEMBER 2016 EARTHQUAKE/Tsunami

A large shallow 7.8 magnitude earthquake at a depth of 41 kilometres impacted the Solomon Islands at 0439 hours on Friday 09 December 2016. The earthquake epicenter was located 62 kilometres west-south west of Kirakira, Makira Ulawa Province.

In the aftermath of the earthquake/tsunami, the government activated the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) and the Provincial Emergency Operations Centres (PEOC) in Makira, Malaita, and Guadalcanal Provinces.

240 homes and a total population of 11,595 people were affected by this event, the majority in the Makira and Malaita provinces. Sadly, one death was recorded at Guadalcanal when a house collapsed.

Initial damage data received by NDMO from the community representatives in the affected provinces suggested that a detailed sectoral assessment would be required to determine the needs of the affected population. NDMO therefore mobilised a multi sectoral assessment team.

The Shelter Sub-Committee was deployed as part of this multi-sectoral assessment team together with Health, Livelihoods and Education Committee members within 48 hours of the impact of the disaster to conduct the Detailed Sectoral Assessment. Prior to carrying out the assessment, the Sub-Committee met to agree on the contents of the Detailed Sectoral Assessment form to be used for this response.

The detailed sectoral assessment revealed the major impact of the disaster was on semi-permanent and permanent structures resulting in partial damage and complete destruction of houses in small village communities especially in Central and West Makira and Malaita. It also indicated that most of the affected houses were built on tribal land and some built on steeply sloping terrain and at high risk of further collapse due to aftershocks. The main livelihood activity in the affected areas is subsistence farming and production of cash crops (Cocoa and Copra).

Shelter Sub-Committee members including Solomon Islands Red Cross and World Vision mobilised prepositioned emergency shelter Non-Food Items (NFIs) for distribution to the affected communities after analysis of detailed sectoral assessment data.

3. SUCCESSES

- The Shelter Coordination Training conducted in the Solomon Islands by Pacific Shelter Cluster with support of Global Shelter Cluster in November 2016 was a timely capacity building exercise to prepare in-country partners to more effectively coordinate this response.
- The National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) was activated in a timely manner by the Government, enhancing the coordination of the response.
- The Shelter Sub-Committee Chair's participation at NEOC meetings and provision of updates to the Sub-Committee members supported their participation in the response.
- The aerial reconnaissance assessment was done within 6 hours of the disaster by National Disaster Management Office to provide initial survey overview information.
- A multi-sectoral assessment team was deployed within 48 hours of the disaster by the Solomon Islands Government, in which the shelter team took part.
- The Shelter Detailed Sectoral Assessment findings were analysed and compiled by the Shelter Sub-Committee Chair and shared with Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PEOC), National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) and partners.
- The response was well coordinated amongst the Shelter Sub-Committee to mobilise Shelter Non-food items (NFIs) to the assessed households on the first trip. Approximately 95% of the affected population was reached with standard Shelter NFI's (1 shelter tool kit and 2 tarpaulins per household).

4. CHALLENGES

- Understanding the communication structure from the National level down to the Provincial level and visa-versa during times of emergency. There is a confusion in the lines of reporting: Provincial Emergency Operation Centre (PEOC) reports to the NDMO (NDOC) and Shelter Sub-Committee reports to the NDMO (NDOC) as well through Infrastructure Chair. The two reports vary in quantitative data particularly on damaged and destroyed houses, hence complicate decision making.
- Lack of communication and coordination between Shelter Sub-Committee and Provincial authorities. This was evident during this response and the Shelter Sub-Committee and Provincial Government were working parallel to each other, or in 'silo'.
- There has been lack of population baseline information to inform the secondary data review prior to assessment teams reaching the ground. Having this information would inform the assessment, and dispatch of a proportionate number of pre-positioned shelter NFIs with the first assessment teams in anticipation of timely distribution to affected communities. As inter-island travel is time consuming and costly in the Solomon Islands, it is advantageous to combine the assessment and distribution in this way.
- The Sub-Committee do not currently have a standardised Detailed Sectoral Assessment form for shelter, so a form was quickly developed for this response the day before. This did not allow time to train assessment teams in its use or to give it a trial run beforehand.
- The Shelter Sub-Committee did not have Terms of Reference (TOR) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in place to guide the response.
- The Shelter Sub-Committee operationalised through telecommunications. The partners first met at the wharf/jetty before deployed to conduct the multi-sectoral assessment. This is

noted as a challenge as a brief, formal meeting with all Sub-Committee partners might have provided the opportunity for the team to better prepare for the assessment.

- Lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) for the team deployed. There is a high risk in travelling maritime areas without life jackets.
- The continuous aftershocks from the earthquake presented a safety risk to the team deployed, with the possibility of damaged structures collapsing during the assessment. This also had a psychological impact on the affected communities still residing in the damaged structures.
- Shelter agencies and partners do not have a dedicated shelter focal point during peace times and in emergency for continuous engagement of humanitarian partners in country.
- Lack of knowledge on location of access points to the remote Islands e.g. jetties, boats and runways delayed planning and decision making.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are divided in 3 categories:

1. **Coordination**
2. **Information Management and Communication**
3. **Technical and Programmatic Guidance**

Priority	Recommendations	Responsible Person	Support
Coordination			
1	Finalise Shelter Sub-Committee Terms of Reference (TOR).	Chair & Co-chair	IFRC/Partners
2	Develop Shelter Sub-Committee Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	Chair & Working Group	IFRC
5	Shelter Sub-Committee to conduct preparedness meetings. Quarterly meeting during 'peace times' and monthly during cyclone season.	Chair & Co-chair	IFRC/Partners
7	Private Sector engagement through Solomon Islands Chamber of Commerce for Pre-arrangement on shelter NFIs suppliers.	Chair & Co-chair	
12	Establish communication and coordination network at Provincial Level with Provincial Disaster Officers, Provincial Executives, NGOs and Local Agencies for effective preparedness and response intervention.	Chair & Co-chair	
13	Map out best logistics options with Provincial Disaster Officers and local authorities on islands infrastructure to mobilise shelter NFI response.	Chair & Co-chair	Provincial Disaster Officers, NDMO
14	To identify and establish communication network with agencies providing National, Provincial and Community-level Psychosocial support services to assist family's aftermath of disasters.	Chair & Co-chair	Protection Committee

Information Management and Communication			
3	Review Shelter Detailed Sectoral Assessment form used for the Earthquake/Tsunami December 2016	Chair & Co-chair	IFRC/Partners
4	The need to better understand National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) communication structure during disasters, especially receiving and sharing of Information between NEOC, Infrastructure Chair and Shelter Sub-committee chair. The NDMO representative to be invited in Shelter Sub-Committee meeting to clarify the structure.	Chair	NDMO
8	The Sub-Committee to ask shelter agencies to provide dedicated shelter focal point with contact details for correspondence and sharing of information.	Chair	Partners
9	The Sub-committee to share mapping of Prepositioned Shelter NFIs Stocks in-country to all shelter partners on a regular basis to inform contingency planning and preparedness.	Chair	IFRC (sharing information, publishing to website) www.sheltercluster.org/pacific
11	National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) to provide Initial Situation Overview and analysed IDA information before Multi Sectoral Assessment team is deployed. This will help teams better understand the initial situation so that they can be better prepared to respond to outstanding needs of affected communities during their visit.	Chair	NDMO
Technical and Programmatic Guidance			
6	Standardisation of Shelter NFIs.	Chair & Co-chair	IFRC/Partners
10	Development, consolidation, and translation of Building Back Safer Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials	Chair & Co-chair	IFRC/Partners
15	Address minimum safety requirements (Personal Protective Equipment) in times of deployment. This is a cross cutting issue best addressed at an inter-sectoral N-DOC meeting.	Chair and co-chair	NDMO