

Kelman, I., J. Ashmore, E. Leon, and S. D'Urzo. 2011. "From Research to Practice (and Vice Versa) for Post-disaster Settlement and Shelter". Environmental Hazards, vol. 10, no. 3, pp. 262-278.

Abstract:

Shelter Projects (2008 – IFRC/UN-Habitat/UNHCR and 2009 – IFRC/UN-Habitat) are two books aiming to consolidate some of the lessons from post-disaster settlement and shelter case studies, spanning over 60 projects from 1945 to the present. This paper analyses many of these case studies in order to reflect on how research and practice could be better connected for post-disaster settlement and shelter. The analysis reveals that challenges exist in compiling comparative and credible data, especially due to research needs diverging from operational needs. Methodological reflections on post-disaster settlement and shelter research are provided, using occupancy rates as a key indicator and example of the challenges faced. The main lessons provided relate to timelines. Emergency shelter programmes usually take many months, or in some cases years, to implement fully, meaning that their time frame tends to exceed that of media and donor interest. Meanwhile, research needs more longitudinal studies to provide long-term policy and practice lessons. Overall, providing disaster-affected populations with support so that they can identify and meet their own post-disaster settlement and shelter needs is the main lesson that emerges from both research and operational experience.