



## BUILDING FOR SAFETY II Notes

23 November 2012, Save the Children Offices, London

### Introduction

This was the second workshop of the Building for Safety initiative, started by the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice at Oxford Brookes University (CENDEP) and Practical Action Publishing. At an initial workshop in July 2012, discussion focussed around the challenge of providing a range of different kinds of information, basic and technical, for a wide target audience.

The second meeting was directed towards consolidating ideas and defining an end-product. These notes are the summary of a wide-ranging discussion in which participants identified the need for an authoritative book, backed by a consortium of institutions, plus a website providing a toolkit of additional resources.

### Participants

Bill Flinn (CENDEP)

Megan Passey (CENDEP)

Theo Schilderman (Independent)

Jamie Richardson (Shelter Consultants)

Jean-Christoph Adrain (UN-HABITAT)

Tom Newby (Independent)

Hayley Gryc (Arup)

Mayra Hartman (Save the Children)

Charles Parrack (CENDEP)

Julien Mulliez (Save the Children)

Sonia Molina Metzger (British Red Cross)

Gabriel Fernandez (CARE)

Joseph Ashmore (Independent)

Graham Saunders (IFRC)

Shona McKenna (Save the Children)

Apologies were received from:

Ian Davis, Maggie Stevenson, Jason Armistead, John Norton, Jake Zarins, Phillip Barrit, Neil Garvie, Ian Pearce, Robin Spence, Toby Milner, Claire Tawney, Victoria Maynard, Kate Crawford and David Sanderson.

Other organisations wishing to be kept informed of progress include:

Medair, NRC, Habitat for Humanity, Christian Aid, Pro Act, Development Workshop, Practical Action Publishing, Oxfam GB, Build Change.

## 1. Background

Practical Action Publishing's Building for Safety<sup>1</sup> series is now 20 years old. There is still demand for these books, especially *Technical Principles*.

Theo Schilderman explained that Practical Action Publishing have some money to publish a new series, although no budget to cover the (re)writing. They are exploring ways in which this information could be delivered as an online version.

### 1.1. Key Questions

A summary of findings from the previous workshop highlighted that the majority of rebuilding post-disaster (90%) has very little international input. Key questions arising from this included:

- How do we address the problem of the 90% (those who rebuild without assistance) rebuilding with the same vulnerability to disaster?
- If the international community's work is limited to only covering approximately 10% of the need then how do we ensure that this sends out significant ripples to the other 90%?
- How do we ensure that information produced is accessible, practical and adaptable?

### 1.2. Project Aims

The group defined the following aims for the project:

- Sell safety and promote why safer housing is a good thing
- Create a common and reliable pool for technical resources
- Relate to domestic-scale construction
- Promote preparedness in development, especially difficult where disasters are less frequent
- Convey a coherent message across a variety of channels of information
- Include evidence-based research on where messages have been effectively transmitted and why

## 2. Communication

Participants discussed a range of different methods of communicating information on building for safety. Of particular interest was the potential for new media. The Info As Aid website was identified as a useful resource explaining the use of different communication methods.

### 2.1. Media Precedents

Discussion of precedents included the following examples of good communication in post-disaster situations:

- Radio and TV broadcasts: used very effectively in Haiti to communicate WASH information
- Video: IFRC's hurricane resistant house on YouTube
- Games: Expedition Workshed's "Catastrophe" and Push-me-pull-me" online games demonstrate what happens to a building when forces are applied

**Action:** Tom Newby to ask whether natural hazards and walls could be added to the model

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<sup>1</sup> The Building for Safety Series refers to four volumes: Technical Principles of Building for Safety; Communicating Building for Safety; Building for Safety Compendium; & Developing Building for Safety Programmes. London: Practical Action Publishing (1995).

- Scale models: pocket-sized models used to explain concrete reinforcement in Pakistan
- Colour: used effectively by Arup to coordinate between plans and building elements
- Everyday objects: eg. a matchbox, can be used to demonstrate building principles
- Workshops, drama and music
- Demonstration houses
- Pictorial information

## 2.2. Summary of Key Considerations

The following ideas were seen as particularly important:

- Accessibility and avoidance of technical jargon
- Inclusion of practical tools so that information can be manipulated and adapted
- Emphasis on WHY it is important to build for safety
- Thematic break-down of information (by building element/ location/ disaster)
- Reliability and trustworthiness of information
- Level of detail: information must be detailed enough to be useful, but not so detailed that it can be taken straight off the page

## 3. Target Audience

Discussion initially focussed on reaching the 90%, but concluded that the most practical approach would be to produce a publication for practitioners, accompanied by an additional resource 'toolkit' aimed at beneficiaries.

It was suggested that an authoritative guide would be an attractive product for donors.

## 4. Definition of Output

Participants agreed that the output should be a rigorous and authoritative **book**, backed by a consortium of institutions, plus a **website** providing a toolkit of additional resources that can be manipulated.

The output of this initiative provides a vital opportunity for promotion as well as communication. The product should frame the importance of shelter in relation to resilience and DRR.

### 4.1. Output Aspirations

The product should:

- Consist of a single volume book (instead of 4 parts) telling a consistent story
- Include online material that can be manipulated by practitioners
- Provide both communication (raising awareness and creating demand) and training (teaching the skills)
- Include case studies of good practice
- Provide a consistent message across both book and website

## 4.2. Other Considerations

Similar publications were discussed, with *The Sphere Project*, *The Good Enough Guide* and *Where there is no doctor* identified as good precedents.

The successful combination of promotional material and technical guidance used by WASH in hygiene promotion was cited as a good example. There was discussion around whether there was a corresponding initiative in shelter. More information needs to be gathered about distribution and the number of copies that might be required. It was noted that IFRC handbooks are typically printed out in a first run of 2000.

**Action:** Theo Schilderman to ask Practical Action Publishing about the distribution of the original Building for Safety series.

The view was expressed that for maximum impact the content of the website should be freely available but that this might conflict with the need of the publisher to sell copies of the book.

The issues below were also discussed:

- Programme design should not be the main focus, but should be discussed through case studies.
- The issue of finance for shelter programmes needs to be discussed further, especially in relation to incentivising change.
- The rigour of the content needs reliable oversight
- Backing by a consortium of institutions would add authority, but further discussion is needed around the display of institutional logos. It was noted that working as a consortium can be slow and must be managed carefully.

## 5. Key Messages

The new book and accompanying website should:

- Address *why* building for safety is important: for the end-user, practitioner, NGO and donor
- Provide core content of 10 or so key points, rather than focus on everything
- Include examples in the form of best practice case studies to illustrate both results and means of transmission of information in context
- Signpost where to find further information

Changes to the existing Building for Safety Series were also discussed.

## 6. Funding

Practical Action Publishing has some funding available for a second edition of the Building for Safety series although no budget for writing. There may be copyright issues around releasing material for free online.

**Action:** Charles Parrack to ask Toby about access to pdf copies.

No funding has yet been identified for an entirely new initiative, but it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a single organisation to head discussions in order to secure funding. CENDEP agreed to continue taking this role.

Significant investment will be required in the long term. Next steps for securing this funding are as follows:

- Write a concept note
- Gain letters of support
- Present the proposal—this should be done by one of the working group members

**Action:** Bill Flinn and Charles Parrack to draft a concept note

Possible funding sources suggested include: DfID, ECHO, USAID/OFDA & Scandinavian governments.

Financial buy-in from stakeholders was also tabled. This should be pursued further once a concept note has been produced. Graham Saunders suggested that IFRC could consider some support.

## 7. Partnerships

Participants identified the following organisations to be consulted in the future:

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| EERI - Earthquake Engineering Research Institute | SEEDS India               |
| NSET - Nepalese Society of Earthquake Technology | World Bank                |
| IITK- Institute of Tech                          | Development Alternatives  |
| WHE - World Housing Encyclopaedia                | Build Change              |
| SDC - Sustainable Development Commission         | Architecture for Humanity |
| GFDR- Global Forum for Disaster Reduction        | IOM                       |
| GVSS - Peruvian Health and Housing Group         | World Vision              |
| GTZ - Germany                                    |                           |

A small project team (steering group) should be consolidated over the next few weeks to take the initiative forward. This should be a small group of stakeholder institutions with a time commitment to be associated with the project, input and disseminate information. The steering group should be supported by a wider group with a peer review role.

It was noted that private sector involvement would add weight to proposals.

An initial 'wishlist' of steering group member institutions included: IFRC, CENDEP, CARE, Save the Children, UN-Habitat.

## 8. Coordination

There was general consensus that CENDEP should continue to lead the initiative for the time being. The neutrality of CENDEP sends a good message but costs need to be explored further.

**Action:** Bill Flinn and Charles Parrack to investigate overheads.

Practical Action was not considered a viable option.

In the long term, the project may need to sit with a lead agency. IFRC was suggested as a future possibility.

## 9. Next Steps

The following actions are required to move forward with the initiative:

- Form a steering group
- Write a concept note and produce a rough and ready analysis of the project including time and cost.

**Action:** CENDEP to lead both of these.