SHELTER POST ASSISTANCE MONITORING

Southern Highlands Province, Papua New Guinea
BACKGROUND

Papua New Guinea was on 26th February 2018 hit by a 7.5M earthquake that displaced 58,292 people (11,761 households) in Southern Highlands, Hela and Western provinces. Fourteen per cent of the displaced households sought refuge in care centres while the remaining 86 per cent continued to live within their own affected communities supported by neighbours, relatives and friends prior to receiving assistance from the government and humanitarian actors.

Co-leading the shelter, non-food items and camp coordination camp management cluster, IOM worked closely with the government at national and sub-national levels in delivering build back safer trainings prior to distributing shelter kits to enable the affected population rebuild their homes. IOM conducted a shelter Post-Assistance Monitoring (PAM) survey (October—November 2018) in beneficiary communities in Southern Highlands Province namely Hol, Inte, Kopa, Lil, Merep, Semin, Tindom and Urila-Wasu located in Nipa-Kutubu district, and Map, Puinz and Wasipa in Mendi Munihu district. The overall objective of the PAM was to verify that the correct recipients received the correct shelter items, determine effectiveness of the shelter assistance in relation to addressing the needs of the affected population and improve on future distributions to meet the needs of the most vulnerable persons.

The PAM collected quantitative and qualitative data using structured questionnaires administered to 108 households (Nipa Kutubu, 74% and Mendi-Munihu, 26%), and a focus group discussion targeting women, men and youth. Findings from the PAM show that the shelter kits were distributed to the affected and vulnerable households who many of them completed rebuilding their homes. It is clear from the PAM findings that provision of shelter kits facilitated the transition of the affected population from living in makeshift shelters into new, safe and resilient houses. The privacy and protection of the affected population especially from weather elements has also improved. The community shared shelter kits distributed by IOM strengthened social cohesion among beneficiaries and community members (men, women, boys and girls) worked together in rebuilding their homes. Engaging community members in beneficiary targeting and selection as well as improving the knowledge of beneficiaries through capacity development is noted as a good practice and recommended for future interventions. This report present findings from the PAM survey and highlight key recommendations related to community level shelter interventions.

\[1\] IOM Papua New Guinea Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), Data as of 10 May 2018.

\[2\] These include carpenter’s tools (hand saw, bush knife, claw hammer, garden spade and an axe) and other items (tarpaulins, rope, wire and different kinds of nails). Some beneficiaries also received solar lanterns they can use for lighting and charging mobile phones.
POST ASSISTANCE MONITORING FINDINGS

Demographics

The household survey collected data from 108 households and majority of them were headed by men (85%) while the remaining 15 per cent were headed by women. The PAM applied random sampling in selecting participants to the household survey and data gathered shows that there were more male (56%) compared to female (44%) participants. Survey data also show that majority of household heads were married (75%) and this implies the shelter kits benefited several families in rebuilding their homes. It was noted that some of the surveyed households hosted old persons, orphans, chronically ill persons and people living with disabilities and this shows that IOM assistance benefited also the particularly groups.

Household welfare

A few households hosted a member who was formally employed and receiving formal or wage labour (11%). Overall, majority of surveyed households relied on subsistence farming (crop production) for their livelihood in the past month before the survey (90%). Crops mainly grown for subsistence farming include sweet potatoes (kaukau), corn, groundnuts and vegetables. Reliance on informal trading (18%), formal employment (7%), commercial farming (5%), hunting of wild animals (3%), fishing (2%), casual labour (1%) and remittances (1%) were also reported.

Based on past assessments such as displacement tracking surveys and profiling displaced persons by IOM, the sources of household livelihood can be linked to sources of household income. Applying the same lens of relating livelihood and income sources, and the feedback gathered during the survey, the PAM can conclude that most beneficiaries earn very low income, and this could be the reason why several people were unable to purchase tools to rebuild their houses. A community leader from Urila highlighted, “Plenti man meri long dispela peles em ol turangu lain usait i nogat inap moni long baim ol tools long wokim haus. Yupela i givim mipela tu ol wara kontena na mipela i tok tenk yu long ogeniseision bilong yupela (IOM) long helpim mipela. Mi wanpela lida hia na long makim maus bilong komuniti, mi tok tenk yu IOM.” (“Many people in this area are poor and did not have money to buy tools to rebuild our houses. You also gave us water containers and we thank your organization (IOM) for helping us. I am leader here and on behalf of the community, I would like to say thank you, IOM.”)

Shelter and Settlement

Survey findings show that the earthquake resulted in a
change in the type of shelter owned though no change was recorded in terms of land ownership among the surveyed population before and after the earthquake (Table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shelter Type</th>
<th>Before (%)</th>
<th>After (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traditional house with kunai/sago roof/ bamboo walls.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-permanent house with iron roof.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent house with iron roof.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeshift structure (made of all kinds of material).</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 1: Type of shelter owned before and after the earthquake

The earthquake resulted in a six per cent drop in the proportion of households owning semi-permanent houses (combination of bush material and iron roof), and an increase in the proportion of households living in traditional (+5%) and makeshift shelters (+1%). The increased use of traditional houses is due to bush materials being less expensive and more readily available. While communities are interested in upgrading to man-made supplies such as corrugated iron roofing, the return to bush materials and improved building practices helps to reduce the risks of damage during high winds or other disasters.

It was reported during the survey that people living in makeshift houses were still gathering local bush materials to rebuild their houses. A few households reported that kunai grass used for roofing is scarce and were using tarpaulins (received from IOM) as a short term measure for covering the roofs.

When asked about the items received from IOM, participants mentioned hammers, saws, tarpaulins, spades, nails, ropes, bush knives and solar lights which they found very useful in rebuilding their homes.

Majority of participants highlighted the most vulnerable households received IOM assistance and a few other highlighted that the kits were inadequate to cater for the entire affected population.

A survey participant teaching at a local school in Merep noted, “I gained knowledge on safe shelter construction including the careful selection of a site to build a house and I am passing this knowledge to my students.”

IOM equipped local communities with the Build Back Safer (BBS) training prior to distributing the shelter kits. Delivered to a total of 242 Training of Trainers (ToT) participants (203 males, 39 females) from Southern Highlands province, the training raised community awareness on building safe and resilient shelters better able to withstand extreme weather conditions and disaster shocks.

“I am very happy that IOM came to my village in Soi. Although I am not educated and do not possess special skills in building, IOM taught me new skills and techniques. Also, IOM gave us tools which I am now using to build a house for my mother in-law.”
— Cathy, a 32 years old woman from Soi.

Observations and feedback from the field show that BBS training beneficiaries are applying the knowledge gained by building their houses using safer building techniques.

IOM Assistance

The majority of participants mentioned they received assistance from IOM to rebuild their houses (95%), and this includes shelter construction tools, tarpaulins as well as training.

Beneficiaries of IOM shelter interventions pose for a photo at their house under construction. Photo: IOM/ Peter Murorera

IOM meeting community members during a shelter PAM mission in Merep. Photo: IOM/ Peter Murorera
The PAM found out that survey participants were satisfied with IOM assistance and the selection of beneficiaries. “IOM did a very good job in selecting the names of the vulnerable,” said a survey participant. Another participant highlighted, “I am satisfied with the beneficiary selection criteria.”

Regarding why they were selected to receive assistance from IOM, survey participants highlighted that they are poor, host particularly vulnerable persons including orphans and pregnant women and old persons, and had their houses damaged by the earthquake. The responses given implies the community members were made aware and understand the assistance targeted the affected and most vulnerable households.

Beneficiaries contacted during the PAM acknowledged they received also shelter related support from other organizations such as Red Cross. Regarding improving the selection of beneficiaries by IOM and other actors, participants mentioned the following; Community leaders and members should participate in the selection and verification of beneficiaries as well as involve clan leaders to help identify the most vulnerable persons in the clans.

Participants from the women focus group discussion mentioned that stakeholders providing assistance should mobilize community members and raise awareness on the beneficiary selection criteria. Feedback was given by a few participants regarding improving the quality of tools considering the extensive work they are used for especially in gathering local bush materials, clearing the land and constructing the houses.

As part of its support, IOM also distributed 5,000 solar lanterns with 1,800 shelter kits to reduce vulnerability and enhance security after sunset, especially for women and children. The solar lanterns provide lighting and power to charge mobile phones. It was noted during the PAM that the use torches with batteries was replaced by solar lanterns from IOM among the beneficiaries who also recorded reduced household expenses as they no longer buy torch batteries. In summary, the PAM found that IOM’s shelter interventions benefited recipients in the following ways:

- Improved knowledge on safe shelter construction.
- Land preparation (for shelter construction) made easy.
- Safe shelter construction and repair of damaged houses.
- Improved protection — lighting, emergency shelter (tarpaulins) and safer houses.
- Reduced spending (through use of alternative source of lighting—solar)
- Improved social cohesion — sharing of tools and the working together in rebuilding the houses.

‘Men and boys collect materials including bamboo from the bush and do the construction work. Women and girls collect grass for the roof, and help with cooking food for the builders.’

— Feedback from a youth (female) focus group discussion.
A finding from the PAM show that beneficiaries gained the following additional benefits from using items in shelter kits:

- Rope: Used as washing/ clothes line.
- Tying wire: Used in reinforcing homestead’s fencing.
- Tools: Used to rebuild latrines.
- Spade and bush knife: Used for gardening.

Protection

At least 60 per cent of interviewed households reported they feel safe to live in their communities though others reported feeling unsafe to live in the surveyed communities largely due to the fears of aftershocks from the earthquake.

The concern over safety is almost the same among males and females (Figure 2), and several people reported tribal fighting as one of the main issues threatening the safety of community members in addition to domestic violence, and physical violence caused especially by intoxicated persons.

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‘Community leaders do mediation and at most times include the payment of compensation.’

— Feedback from a youth (female) focus group discussion

Some of the youth who participated in a focus group discussion mentioned they did not feel comfortable living with relatives during the displacement and highlighted they are happy to be back living in their parents’ houses following the shelter reconstruction work supported by IOM in their community.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It can be noted from the PAM survey findings that IOM assistance benefited the recipients of shelter tools and training in various ways including building safe and resilient houses that can better withstand extreme weather conditions and disaster shocks.

The assistance by IOM facilitated safe return of the internally displaced persons back to their homes. It also helped strengthen social cohesion as community members worked in unity to rebuild their houses.

Capacity development is important towards promoting sustainability and this was noted from the houses built by beneficiaries applying the safer building techniques.

This PAM survey report recommends mainstreaming gender, protection and communicating with communities in shelter responses, recovery and development interventions. Gathering beneficiary feedback, for example through PAM is also recommended for future interventions. This creates the opportunity for continued improvements in providing assistance to vulnerable populations in need.