



Better
Shelter
.org

Year in review 2019

After their homes had been destroyed by coastal erosion, 42 families from Saint-Louis, Senegal, moved in to Better Shelter units further inland. Today, the families reach the sea by bus and can thereby continue working in the fishing industry. Eventually, the families will relocate to new permanent housing.

Message from our Managing Director

In May 2019, I revisited Kawergosk – a camp for Syrian refugees near Erbil in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. I had not been back since 2014 when I was here to evaluate our first shelter prototypes. Now, five years later, the families had moved into more durable housing in the camp. The shelter prototypes were still here but they served other purposes now. Some families used them as living rooms, other as garden sheds, and some had disassembled them completely and used the panels and pipes as fencing. I was glad to reunite with Ahmed, a boy who was born in one of the shelters while I was here the first time. The Syrian war has now entered its tenth year and Ahmed is six years old today. He has lived his whole life in the camp.

Since we tested the first prototypes in Iraq, we have delivered 50,000 units to benefit hundreds of thousands of people in almost 50 countries. But no child should have to experience war or have to spend their childhood in a temporary settlement. A safe place to call home is a human right, but yet many people are without one. Everything begins with shelter. It is impossible to feel safe and stay healthy without somewhere to live. One's safety and health, but also one's possibility to earn a living or get through an education depends on it. We all need a safe space to leave when we want and need to, and that is still there when we choose to return.

With this in mind, knowing that people are able to move back home with the help of our shelters makes me particularly happy. During 2019, more than 600 shelters were distributed to families in the Nineveh Governorate in northern Iraq, an area which saw violent clashes between Isis and Government forces during the Iraqi Civil War. The shelters have been installed near the destroyed homes of families, who have left the camps and now live close to home while rebuilding their houses. The journey towards a normal life is long, but this is a beginning for them.

Looking ahead, Better Shelter develops and continues to adapt to the world around us. In 2019 we rolled out a version of our shelter that will be able to respond to emergencies and protracted situations and make use of local building material. Updates about this exciting project will be available on our website: www.bettershelter.org.

Finally, I would like to thank the humanitarians we partner with, who dedicate their lives to others. They carry an enormous responsibility to not only save lives, but also make peoples' lives bearable. The needs are huge, and we must all continue allow solidarity and compassion dictate how we treat one another.

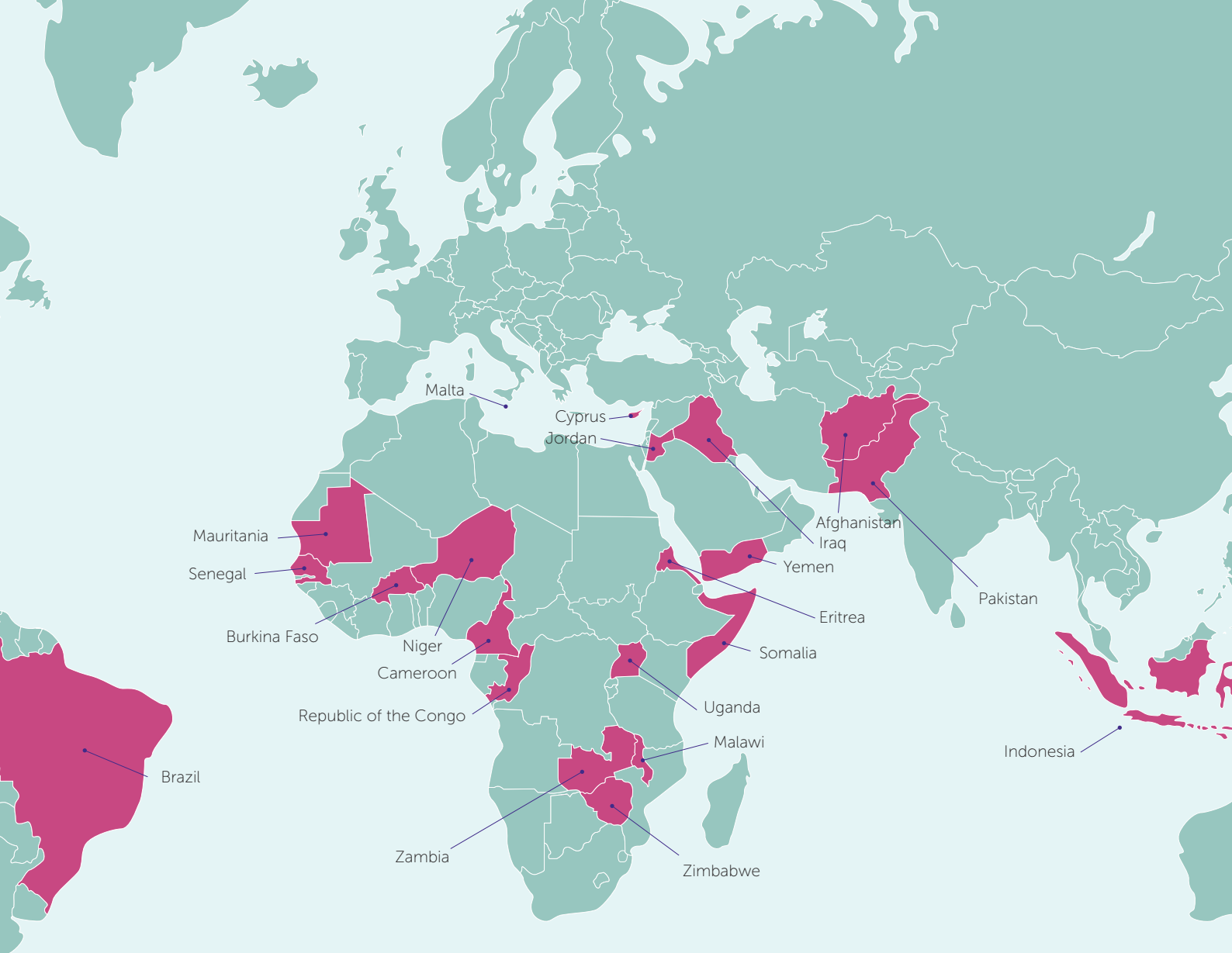


Thank you!

Johan Karlsson
Managing Director,
Better Shelter



Key achievements in 2019



- **15,625 shelters** delivered to **23 countries** in five continents
- **81%** of female users **feel safer** in the Better Shelter (read more on p. 16–17)
- **6** new partners
- **175,450 individuals** benefit from the shelters in Afghanistan
- **620** Iraqi families were able to return home



© IKEA Indonesia

“Playing is a very important activity that promotes children’s psychosocial well-being and safety. It also develops skills such as relationship building and coping with emotions”

Saras Fitriyana, IKEA Indonesia



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Highlights Indonesia

181 children recover from earthquake in Better Shelters

Partner: IKEA Indonesia, World Vision and Aksi Cepat Tanggap

People of concern: Children affected by the 2018 earthquake

Location: Lombok island, Indonesia

Number of units: 34

Application: Child-friendly space

Outcome: 181 children can learn and play in a calm environment

In July, August and September 2018, a series of earthquakes and several aftershocks off the Indonesian island of Lombok caused severe damage. Several hundred people were confirmed killed, and more than 1,000 were injured, around 80 percent of the buildings in the northern parts of the island were damaged or destroyed, and almost 700,000 people were displaced.

A year later, infrastructure and buildings were restored with support from the Government and NGOs, but people remain highly affected by the catastrophe. Many schools were destroyed, and children risk losing crucial education.

IKEA Indonesia responded to the emergency by teaming up with two humanitarian NGOs: Wahana Visi Indonesia and Aksi Cepat Tanggap. They installed learning centres for children in three locations across North Lombok, namely:

- Dusun Pengembuk, Desa Sokong Kec. Tanjung Kab. Lombok Utara
- Dusun Muara Putat, Desa Pamenang Timur Kec. Pamenang Kab Lombok Utara
- Dusun Sumur Pande Tengah, Desa Sasait Kec. Kayangan Kab. Lombok Utara.

“Playing is a very important activity that promotes children’s psychosocial well-being and safety. It also develops skills such as relationship building and coping with emotions”, says Saras Fitriyana, IKEA Indonesia.

There are two structures at the centre in the Pengembuk sub district. Each is made up of two Better Shelter units connected at their short ends

to offer enough space for children of different ages to enjoy a wide range of activities. Since the centre opened in August 2019, 181 affected children – ranging from toddlers to Senior High School students – have been able to play, learn and make new, happy memories with IKEA children's products in an environment designed with their specific needs in mind. Children can choose between activities including reading, painting, drawing and playing with soft toys, building blocks and games. The centre, run by teachers and leaders from the community, aims to help children express their thoughts and emotions, build up their empathy and self-esteem, and allow them to release the tension and trauma they have internalized.

Another structure located at Pamenang district is used as a children's play centre and early childhood education facility. The centre, which opened in November 2019, is expected to trigger other organizations to join the effort to provide support for children in the region.

"As part of the people and planet positive IKEA Sustainability program, IKEA Indonesia is acting as a good neighbour. We hope the program will inspire and support the Government to build permanent preschool buildings as part of the recovery effort," says Saras Fitriyana about the centre, which is planned to run for one to two years.

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Saras Fitriyana, IKEA Indonesia



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Highlights Senegal

Relocation of displaced populations in the Langue de Barbarie, Saint-Louis, Senegal

Partners: L'Agence de Développement municipal (ADM), the World Bank and the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

People of concern: Fishing families

Location: Saint-Louis, Senegal

Number of units: 660 ordered by UNOPS (226 were installed in 2019, and 150 will be installed in 2020)

Application: Temporary homes, offices, meeting rooms and classrooms

Outcome: The project aims to relocate more than 3,000 displaced people. In 2019, 42 families (578 people) have relocated to safer homes. More families will be relocated in 2020.

As part of the Saint-Louis Emergency Recovery and Resilience Project (SERRP) financed by the World Bank, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in cooperation with the national agency in Saint-Louis (L'Agence de Développement municipal, ADM), supports the Government of Senegal to relocate fishing families who lost their seaside homes due to coastal erosion.

Approximately two thirds of Senegal's population live along the country's 700 km shallow coastline. Due to its exposed location, the country is vulnerable to coastal hazards and erosion. Human interference includes sand mining and ineffective urban planning, as well as climate change related changes with rising sea levels and changing storm patterns, are also changing natural coastal dynamics.

These factors are already affecting the people of Senegal, where seaside tourism, fishing and other socioeconomic activities represent 80 percent of the country's economy.

The speed of coastal erosion is increasing. 80,000 people live along the Langue de Barbarie peninsula in the historical city of Saint-Louis, where five to six meters of beach recede every year. In recent years hundreds of families have been forced to leave their destroyed homes. Many were relocated to a temporary relief camp, Khar Yalla.

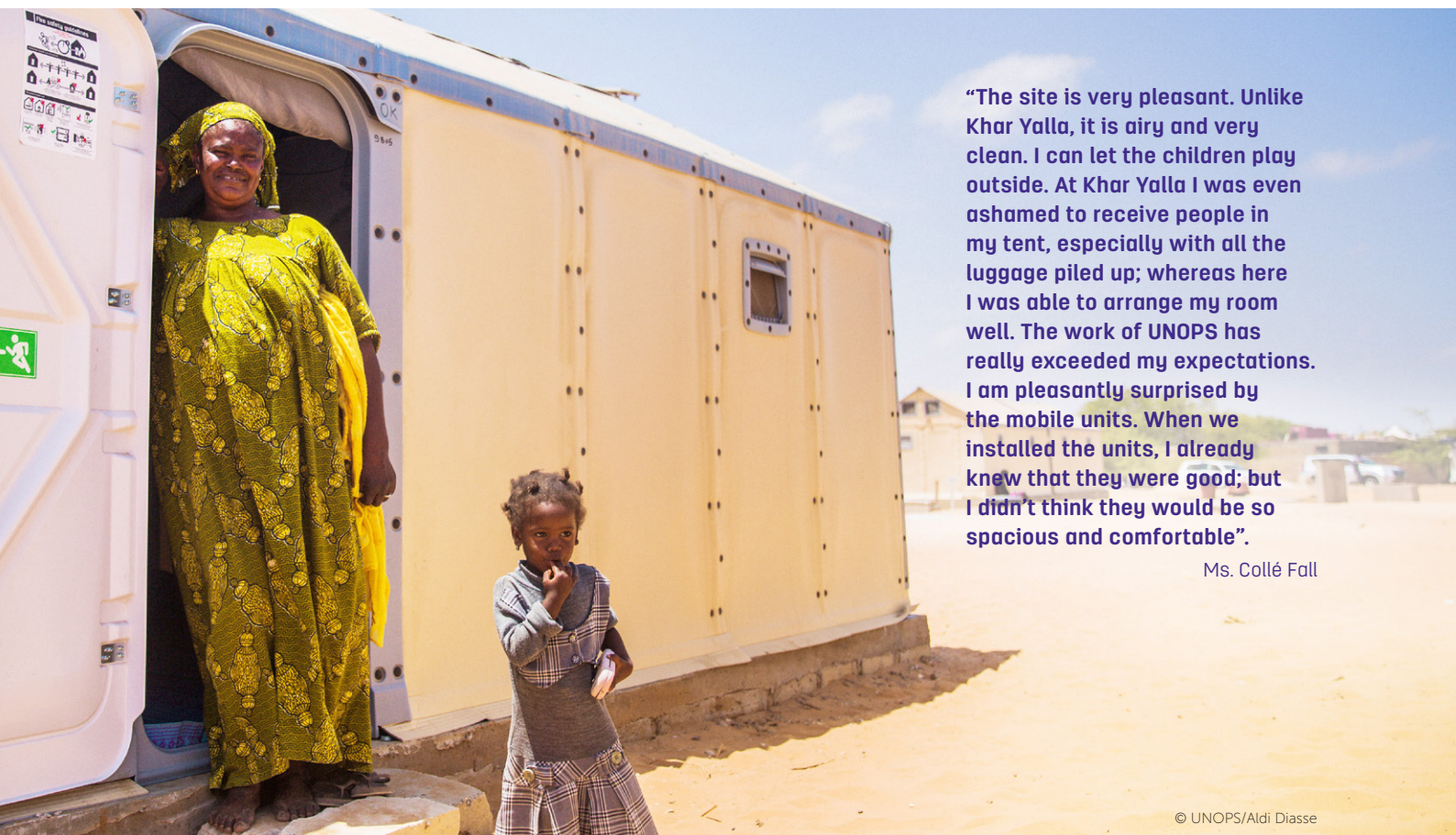
Living conditions in Khar Yalla were dire. Families had to live in makeshift tents and had no access to water or sanitary infrastructure. As part of the SERRP, and with funding from the World Bank, UNOPS and ADM prepared a site in Diougop, ten kilometres from the sea, and installed 226 Better Shelter units in 2019. So far 42 families have moved to the site. Their children can go to a school, which was temporarily constructed using Better Shelter units. And while these families are now living further from the coast, they can still reach the sea from Diougop by public transportation so they can continue to make a living from the fishing industry. The families in Diougop will eventually relocate to permanent housing.

"The site is very pleasant. Unlike Khar Yalla, it is airy and very clean. I can let the children play outside. At Khar Yalla I was even ashamed to receive people in my tent, especially with all the luggage piled up; whereas here I was able to arrange my room well. The work of UNOPS has really exceeded my expectations. I am pleasantly surprised by the mobile units. When we installed the units, I already knew that they were good; but I didn't think they would be so spacious and comfortable", says Ms. Collé Fall.

Selected teams of beneficiaries installed 160 shelters in 15 days. Better Shelter supported with shelter installation training.



© UNOPS/Aldi Diasse



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Ms. Collé Fall

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Highlights Iraq

Iraqi families return home to rebuild their lives

Partner: HEKS/EPER

People of concern: Returnees

Location: al-Ayadia, Nineveh

Number of units: 113

Application: Temporary homes

Outcome: 120 families have returned home

8 million Iraqis have been displaced and much of the country is destroyed after several years of conflict before the collapse of the Islamic State. Urban areas in Nineveh and Western Anbar governorates are particularly badly damaged. 1.9 million people remain internally displaced, and the pace and scale of ongoing displacement, in combination with lack of support for returning families, has made the Iraq crisis one of the world's largest and most volatile. A place to call home is crucial for people trying to restore a level of autonomy and dignity after years of displacement.

The Swiss NGO HEKS/EPER teamed up with Better Shelter to give displaced families the opportunity to return to the village of al-Ayadia. Located 15 kilometres north of Tal Afar, the town was the site of Islamic State's last stand during the Mosul Offensive of 2017. As a result, more than half the buildings in the village were destroyed.

120 vulnerable families were selected for the program based on specific criteria. Each shelter was installed on concrete with a personal latrine and shower connected. Water waste is directed into a cesspool below the surface. Each shelter has an adjacent 3m² patch of green space, which can be used as a vegetable garden or for flowers. Mohammad Abdul Khadir, 57, is a former shopkeeper. He and his family are among the 120 that moved into a Better Shelter:

"I used to own a little shop selling sweets and other items on the street. It was good: the children would come in after school and greet me, while the men would hang out for the evening and chat. It was a simple life, but a good one.



One shelter serves as a play area for children.

© Better Shelter

"When the Islamic State came, not much changed at first. But when they started to control our lives, my wife and I decided to leave. We had to leave in the night with little more than the clothes on our backs so as not to raise suspicion," he continues.

"When we got out we moved into a camp outside



Mohammad Abdul Khadir to the right.

Mosul, which was not great. We were dependant on support from other organisations, but we were always fearful it would stop. When Mosul was retaken, we moved into a house in Mosul with four other families. We were paying 175,000 Iraqi dinars (147 US dollars) per month for a four by five metre room for five people. It was not comfortable, but we were independent."

"In February 2019, a friend called and told me that HEKS/EPER were inviting people to return to al-Ayadia – I signed up immediately. Today my son is completing his final exam: he has been wanting to return to al-Ayadia for some time. I decided with my wife not to tell our children that we had been accepted for a shelter until I had the keys in my hand. This is Iraq, so things can change quickly. I was excited to go home, tell the family to pack their bags and that tomorrow we will be living in our new home," Mohammad said.

"The shelter is not perfect, but we are among friends and family. This is our home, and having this shelter is the next best thing. I will now try to reopen my business and save money to rebuild my house. It will cost between 14-15 million Iraqi dinars (12,000–13,000 US dollars) to make it liveable, and I hope to be able to rebuild our lives again."

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Mohammad Abdul Khadir



Highlights Mexico

Medical assistance for asylum seekers in Matamoros, Mexico

Partner: Global Response Management (GRM) and Team Brownsville

People of concern: Asylum seekers

Location: Matamoros, Mexico

Number of units: 4

Application: Clinic, child friendly space, pharmacy and storage

Outcome: 3000 consultations Sep–Dec 2019

In Matamoros in Mexico, on the banks of the Rio Grande river, lies a camp with around 2500 asylum seekers from different parts of Central America. They are all waiting for their asylum cases to be processed by US authorities. The city of Brownsville, Texas, lies just across the river.

The camp is served by a coalition of grassroots groups and volunteers, with infrastructure funded in part by the Mexican government. The NGO Global Response Management (GRM) has provided medical assistance in the camp since September 2019.

Right after delivery to the camp, a group of American volunteers walked up and asked if they could help out in our clinic. This was an all female group consisting of a nurse and a College professor, plus some undergraduate and graduate students from a university in Ohio,” says Blake Davis, Paramedic and Director of Operations at Global Response Management in Matamoros.

He continues:

“We do not allow medical providers to treat patients before they have passed proper vetting and background checks. I asked them if they would like to build a house? They immediately went to work, and as the day went by a few asylum seekers came over and quietly started to help. We ended up with a group of 12 asylum seekers who went to work building the other three structures. As the day began to close and I, and the other Americans, needed to walk back to the US before sunset. I asked the asylum



seekers if they were going to finish construction tomorrow. They very humbly shook their heads and said they would finish tonight. They completed three structures before I was back in the camp at 8:00 the next morning! The fourth was built a few weeks later, delayed by a stretch of bad weather.”

The Obstetrics and Gynaecology (OBGYN)/ private exam room was the first to be completed. Two days a week this Better Shelter is used for OBGYN exams. GRM’s team performs private exams here the rest of the week.

Living right next to the clinic, and unknown to GRM medical staff for their first month of operations, was a Nicaraguan asylum seeker who is a pharmacist. Now she manages GRM’s medications to ensure proper distribution to patients. This has taken the burden off of GRM’s medical staff, and the increased space allows GRM to store all of their medications and medical equipment safely next to the clinic. Another asylum seeker, who began nursing school before leaving her country, assists in the pharmacy as well.

The third shelter functions as a child-friendly space for children to wait while their parents are being seen by the doctors. It is a welcoming, safe area for them to play, practise reading and get away from the living conditions they are forced to endure.

The fourth shelter is operated by the humanitarian non-profit Team Brownsville, which uses it as a warehouse to store tents, cooking supplies and cots.



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Exhibitions and talks

Better Shelter was invited to participate in many exhibitions and conferences during 2019. These events do not just give us the opportunity to talk about our work; we can also raise awareness of the vital work our partners do to improve the lives of people who are displaced.



IKEA Museum, Älmhult, Sweden

Human Shelter, 21 March – 3 May 2019

This exhibition explored the different chapters of the documentary film "Human Shelter" by Boris B. Bertram. The film explores the question of home and belonging. As well as screening the film, the exhibition presented background material from the filmmaker's two-year long project, which took him to four continents. One of the places Bertram visited was Arbat IDP Camp in Iraqi Kurdistan, where he captured the lives and dreams of people living in Better Shelters.

Museum of Humanity, Zaandam, the Netherlands

Opened in May 2019

A dream was the inspiration for the photographer and former humanitarian worker Robert Timman's Museum of Humanity, which opened in 2019. The museum displays intimate, large scale portraits of people from all walks of life. In this old factory building, visitors can attend events and step into the Better Shelter on permanent display.



Almedalen Week, Visby, Sweden

30 June – 7 July 2019

Together with Sweden for UNHCR, Better Shelter exhibited a shelter during the Almedalen Week in Visby, Sweden. Almedalen Week is a democratic event for all and a place for dialogue and exchange with the aim to develop our society. Better Shelter's Managing Director Johan Karlsson participated in panel discussions arranged by Sweden for UNHCR, the Folke Bernadotte Academy and Uppsala University.



Better Shelter Workshop, Erbil, Kurdistan Region of Iraq

Erbil, 24 October 2019

In partnership with the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCC) and supported by UNHCR Iraq, Better Shelter ran a series of presentations about the current situation for refugees and internally displaced people in Iraqi Kurdistan. The presentation included a number of case studies of the Better Shelter being used in different contexts in the region.



Design for Humanity Summit II, Fordham University, New York City, USA

From camps to communities: How design can contribute to more prepared and resilient communities in displacement settings, 19 June 2019

Humanitarians, academics and designers gathered for the second time at this event to address the role of design in humanitarian interventions and strategies. Better Shelter's Johan Karlsson participated in a panel that discussed the role design can play in contributing to better prepared and more resilient communities in displacement settings.



Venice Art Factory, Venice, Italy

Rothko in Lampedusa, 11 May – 24 November 2019

"Rothko in Lampedusa", an independent exhibition that ran in parallel with the 58th Venice Biennale, reflected on the inherent and individual value of refugees. Through the works of internationally acclaimed artists, plus six emerging artists who also happen to be refugees, the aim of the exhibition was to remind us of the fact refugees are individuals with creative ambitions, and the will and ability to contribute. The exhibition featured a Better Shelter unit to let visitors see what home looks like for many refugees today.

One shelter – thousands of stories

Tanzania



© UNHCR/Clemence Eliah

Brazil



© Francesco Pirelli

Zambia



© UNHCR/Will Swanson

Rwanda



© UNHCR/Tonia Jones

Angola



© UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Bangladesh



© UNHCR/Jordi Matas

Niger



© UNHCR/John Wendle

Democratic Republic of the Congo



© UNHCR/Siegfried Modola

Sustainability



A temporary home favoured by its residents

We designed the Better Shelter, in partnership with experts at UNHCR and several academic institutions, with the wellbeing of displaced people at heart. We consulted refugees and considered their ideas and experiences throughout the design process, which had a significant impact on the result. But since we attempted to design a scalable solution suitable for use in different contexts and locations, we know the users and their view of the shelter will differ too. On behalf of UNHCR, Impact Initiatives carried out an independent assessment of 4,995 shelter units in six different countries across three continents during 2018 and 2019.

The respondents were women and men living as refugees or internally displaced, using the shelters either as family shelters or communal infrastructure in formal camps, transit centres or outside of camps. 43% of the respondents were women. 81% of them reported feeling safer in the shelter. It was also the second most preferred shelter option, second only to durable solutions.

Source: UNHCR, 2019: RHU Project Monitoring Overview: 4 955 units assessed from October 2018 to June 2019, Shelter and Settlement Section Division of Programme Support and Management.

43 %

**Female
respondents**

57 %

**Male
respondents**

A shelter that adapts to its surroundings and its users

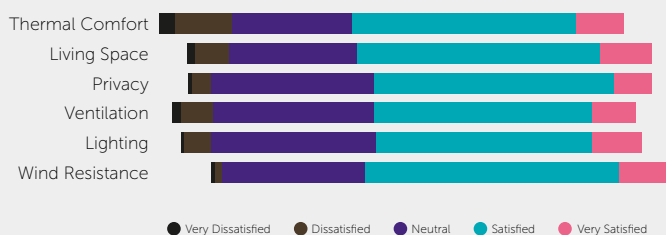
The Better Shelter is an all-in-one shelter solution designed to offer rapid protection in relief operations where local shelter materials are difficult to obtain. The design allows field staff and beneficiaries to replace panels with locally sourced roof, walls and floor materials should they become available at a later stage. Upgrading a shelter can extend its life span, make it more durable and improve its cultural suitability.

User driven shelter upgrade

Yet in many contexts, the local market recovers fast, allowing organisations and beneficiaries to access building materials short after an emergency. We want to enable user driven shelter upgrade and offer a solution in situations where it makes little sense to transport unnecessary wall and roof material.

Therefore, we are piloting a new research and development project: "Structure". Structure employs the load-bearing frame structure of the Better Shelter and can swiftly be turned into a safe emergency shelter by draping it in standard sized tarpaulin sheets. It can be made more durable by covering the frame in locally available material. This design means we can reduce cost and make shelters available for humanitarian partners with smaller budgets. We can also better align with local strategies and enable residents to build shelters which correspond to their cultures and norms.

Be sure not to miss any news about this project – we will post regular updates on our website: bettershelter.org.

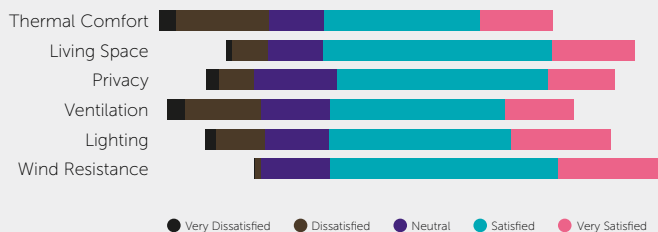


71%

reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the shelter

81%

reported feeling safer in the shelter



55%

reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the shelter

72%

reported feeling safer in the shelter

Safe shelters for users and the environment

The world is facing enormous environmental challenges. States, corporations and individuals alike will have to address these challenges if we are to secure a safe world for future generations. As a manufacturing company we bear a responsibility to make sure we operate in a sustainable manner.

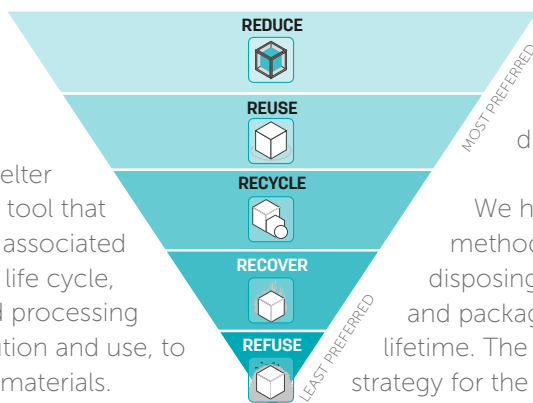
We have evaluated the Better Shelter using Life Cycle Analysis (LCA), a tool that assesses environmental impacts associated with all the stages of a product's life cycle, from raw material extraction and processing through its manufacture, distribution and use, to the recycling or final disposal of materials.

LCA has allowed us to integrate the CO₂ production for every component in our design process, which means we can easily determine how the product's footprint would change, if we were to change the design.

Environmental responsibility is embedded in social entrepreneurship. For us, this means integrating environmental thinking at the earliest stages of the design process and producing our shelters without

putting unnecessary strains on the environment. Through continuous research and development efforts we make sure we continue to improve.

We inform our partners about the environmental impact of the shelter and provide guidelines that informs users and staff about the maintenance and decommissioning of the shelter.



We have mapped out the available methods for reusing, recycling and disposing of the shelter, its components and packaging material at the end of its lifetime. The result is a decommissioning strategy for the shelter designed to help our humanitarian partners make informed decisions about disposal. In the guidelines we apply the waste hierarchy, a tool which prioritizes different means available to minimize waste. This helps our partners utilize the shelter in the best possible way.

Contact our product team for more information about the decommissioning of Better Shelter at product@bettershelter.org.

Responsible production and shipping

Providing humanitarian aid often involves shipping lifesaving goods long distances via sea, road and air. We pack our shelters in Poland and ship them across the world. Improving the environmental footprint of our supply chain is, therefore, a key priority in our sustainability efforts.



We apply the IWAY standard – the IKEA company code of conduct – to our transport network for all inbound transport. All haulage companies are thereby obliged to comply with high environmental and social standards.

Over the last year, we have implemented planned deliveries with our largest supplier, which has significantly improved the fill rate in our inbound shipments. This means we ship the same number of components in fewer shipments, thereby reducing the carbon footprint of our transport. In 2020, we began monitoring CO₂ emissions on all inbound transports, which will be reported and compared with previous figures starting in 2021.

Better Shelter at a glance

A social enterprise headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. We aim to change the lives of those who have been forced to flee, by providing a safer and more dignified temporary home. The shelters are used in humanitarian operations in the Middle East, Africa, Europe, South East Asia and Central and South America. Our supply chain is located in northern Europe and we supply our shelters from our warehouse in Gdansk, Poland to humanitarian operations worldwide.



Current and previous partners

IKEA Foundation


 **UNHCR**
 The UN Refugee Agency



Access To Water
 Foundation



 **UNOPS**



unicef  دهر ماشوم لپاره
 برای هر طفل

