

BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE



Shelter and Settlements

OVERVIEW

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) remains at the forefront of the global humanitarian community's shelter and settlements (S&S) activities, providing S&S support to populations displaced by climatic shocks, complex emergencies, livelihood disruptions, and natural disasters around the world. USAID/BHA continues to champion the sector's best practices by providing experienced and dedicated staff with technical expertise related to S&S programming, operational support, and research. Effective S&S programming provides more than four walls and a roof to displaced households, as it is critical to facilitating access to multi-sector needs of crisis-affected populations, such as health, protection, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

USAID/BHA
Shelter and Settlements
Funding in FY 2023

\$346,887,216

Humanitarian S&S assistance plays a critical role in bolstering positive outcomes across humanitarian sectors that support community preparedness, response, and recovery to crises. Effective S&S assistance enables climate protection and immediate safety for communities, as well as dignity, privacy, and security for affected populations. In FY 2023, USAID/BHA supported 46 partners, including nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies, to implement S&S activities in 38 countries, such as Malawi, Sudan, Türkiye, and Ukraine.

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) delivers USAID/BHA-funded relief commodities to storm-affected communities in the Philippines. Photo courtesy of IOM.

Responding to the Türkiye Earthquake Through Innovative Partnerships

The devastating earthquakes that struck central-southern Türkiye in February 2023 resulted in 50,783 deaths, injury to more than 107,000 people, and the displacement of approximately 3 million people, with the cost of infrastructural damage estimated at \$104 billion, according to the Government of Türkiye. Following the earthquakes, many people residing in concentrated urban areas with high seismic activity remained at risk of sustaining additional damage to their homes. Moreover, people displaced by the earthquakes continued to sleep outside—even if their homes incurred little to no damage—due to fears of reentering potentially unstable buildings. In response, USAID/BHA partner Miyamoto International conducted baseline evaluations of overall earthquake-related damage, assessed more than 24,000 structures, and assisted in building repairs in Türkiye’s Osmaniye Province, fostering trust with affected populations and facilitating household return to safe structures. Miyamoto International also implemented a communication campaign to promote the reoccupation of safe structures, reaching more than 150,000 earthquake-affected people. Furthermore, the partner created online tools and resources—including estimated costs for light structural repairs, technical drawings and guidelines, and instructional videos—to support Osmaniye’s earthquake-affected population in repairing their homes.

Restoring Shelters, Empowering Women Through ER4 Programming in Malawi

In FY 2023, communities in Malawi continued to recover from the aftermath of Tropical Cyclone Ana, which generated severe flooding that displaced populations and destroyed cropland and infrastructure after making landfall over the country’s southern districts in January 2022. In response to the impacts of the Cyclone Ana, USAID/BHA partner Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and its local NGO partner Churches Action in Relief (CARD) and Development launched an 18-month early recovery, risk reduction, and resilience (ER4) Shelter and Recovery project aimed at supporting rebuilding of shelters in affected communities and empowering women through construction training and leadership opportunities. Through this project, women gained the necessary knowledge and skills to actively engage in shelter construction, helping them access employment opportunities in the construction industry. Additionally, women took on leadership roles in project activities, including overseeing construction teams and managing resources. The women-led construction teams played a pivotal role in rebuilding their communities and became a catalyst for promoting gender equality in Malawi’s Chikwawa and Nsanje districts, underscoring the transformative impact of community-driven initiatives that empower women to assume leadership roles, achieve financial independence, and contribute to the overall recovery and development of their communities.

Meanwhile, CRS and local NGO partner CARD also responded to increased shelter needs following the devastating Tropical Cyclone Freddy, which impacted Malawi’s Southern Region in March 2023, resulting in heavy rains and flooding, and the displacement of more than 659,200 people. Many displaced households sought refuge in camps, and in and around churches, schools, tents, and other structures, where they faced overcrowding living conditions and inadequate access to basic services. Through CRS’ project, vulnerable flood-affected households in southern Malawi districts of Chikwawa, Nsanje, and Mulanje received temporary shelter materials—including nails, rope, tarps, and wood preservation fluid—to allow them to move out of overcrowded shelters and return to their prior areas of residence. In addition, CRS and CARD provided training



As part of CRS’s ER4 program in Chikwawa, participants engaged in environmental protection measures by planting trees throughout their neighborhoods. Photo courtesy of CRS

to local artisans in the two districts to ensure continuous support for the construction of temporary shelters in their communities.

Cultivating S&S Leaders Through Global Outreach and Regional Shelter Forums

USAID/BHA's S&S team works to raise awareness of humanitarian S&S activities at educational institutions around the world and increase American participation in the sector through support for academic study and research. Since 2012, USAID/BHA has provided fellowships to U.S. graduate students to gain firsthand experience in the S&S sector and lay the groundwork for their career development. As part of the 2023 Habitat–USAID/BHA Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements fellowship program, three graduate students undertook thesis fieldwork in S&S programming and innovation and produced research on the impact of displacement in formal and informal settlements along the U.S.–Mexico border, the role of humanitarian shelter assistance in promoting longer-term habitability in Kiribati, and the shelter outcomes of people internally displaced to Karachi, Pakistan after extensive flooding in 2022.

USAID/BHA also raises awareness of humanitarian S&S activities at universities and other institutions through in-person and virtual lectures, presentations, and training courses. During FY 2023, USAID/BHA technical advisors presented on S&S topics to faculty and students at the Harvard University School of Public Health and Humanitarian Response Intensive Course, Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health, University of Washington Public Health and Public Policy Schools, and Washington Public Health School. S&S team members also led presentations for the Asia Shelter Forum in Dhaka, Bangladesh; the City of Portland, Oregon; the Ethiopia Shelter Cluster in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; and the Global Shelter Cluster and Shelter Centre in Geneva, among others. USAID/BHA also supported the launch of the Wider Impacts of Shelter & Settlements Assistance online training course, available for free via DisasterReady. Finally, the S&S team convened technical forums for shelter practitioners representing NGOs, private sector stakeholders, and regional governments from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East during FY 2023. Discussions and engagement in these regional forums included cross-cutting S&S topics ranging from assistance in urban contexts to localization and climate change adaptation, with an overarching emphasis on accessibility in global sectoral programming.

More information on USAID/BHA sectors can be found at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/what-we-do/humanitarian-sectors)