GUIDELINES FOR ~~HUMANITARIAN~~ ARCHITECTURAL SHIFTING PRIORITIES

Evolution & limitations of UNHR guidelines for improved refugee shelter following the 1993 FIWISRER.

Keywords: UNHCR; FIWISRER; performance standards; refugee shelter; guidelines; Rwanda; Shigeru Ban.

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ABSTRACT

In the 1990s in the field of philanthropy by design there is a rise of two intertwined desires. First, a desire by architects to manifest their socio-political commitment in the problem-solving potential of architecture. Second, a desire by the humanitarian field to manifest its abstract ideal into architectural action by establishing new international rules. Besides attracting the efforts of leading architects like Shigeru Ban, this results in the implementation of humanitarian architecture practitioners in the constitution of official guidelines by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Resulting in the institutionalisation of standards that guarantee improved quality in the practice of refugee shelter design. This implies the recognition for a need for official measures to dignify the user and guarantee essential comfort beyond basic survivalism. Through the case study of 1994 UNHR Shigeru Ban's Paper Emergency Shelters for Rwanda, the thesis explores how the UNHR guidelines that resulted from the 1993 UNHR First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees (FIWISRER) begun to increase performative standards of refugee shelter design specifically in the context of post-civil war Rwanda. It concludes with a reflection on the limitations of this practice and how it has evolved since the Workshop.

INTRODUCTION

> There is now a considerable body of literature for this sector (…). However, in comparison with other critical sectors of refugee assistance (…) and despite the fact that refugee (shelter is) the focal point of most refugee assistance, the literature is much less well documented (…). Equally, professional experience, evident in a number of (…) evaluations, is (…) is generally of insufficient quality (…) to provide an effective body of replicable experience for policy makers and field staff. Lacking an institutional memory, the knowledge and experiences gained from previous responses are inadequately transferred to new refugee crises (…).[1]

This atmosphere which Roger Zetter, Founding Editor of the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Oxford, describes in 1995 regrettably remains actual to the current date. The quote highlights that there is a strong barrier in the possibility of sourcing United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) historical data from the official UNHCR archives. Especially on the events and projects that shaped current UNHCR praxis. Awareness of the presented events should inform more viable responses to tackle the deficiency of preparedness that persist in current humanitarian practice by facilitating UNHCR policymakers and practitioners.

The course of this thesis investigated the work of the UNHCR establishing as critical the need to reconstruct historiography that testify its commitment in the 1990s to integrate experienced humanitarian technicians in policymaking to facilitate better refugee shelter design. In other words, the design of provisional structures to house individuals forced to flee their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. While current UNHCR refugee praxis remains largely ignorant of the following events[2], research appointed them as two benchmarks in the field. First, the 1993 UNHCR First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees (FIWISRER). Second, the subsequent 1994 intervention by Shigeru Ban commissioned by the UNHCR in response to the Rwanda genocide.

Accordingly, the research sets out to answer three fundamental questions, in their nature historiographic and architectural case-study related. How did the First International Workshop affect UNHR methods of integration of humanitarian technicians in policy making for performative refugee shelter to provide comfort beyond basic survivalism? How does Shigeru Ban's intervention for Rwanda embody these new standards of performance? What limitations did the project present and what can contemporary practice learn from that?

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[1] Roger Zetter, "Shelter Provision and Settlement Policies for Refugees. A state of the art review," in *Studies on Emergencies and Disaster Relief No. 2,* (Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 31-32.

[2] Ibid, 32-33.

To answer such questions, this research provides a critical examination of secondary sources. Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, historian of architecture at Columbia University, NY, focused on practices of support of marginalized figures, in the article *Architecture Culture, Humanitarian Expertise: From the Tropics to Shelter, 1953–93* reconstructs the efforts by UNHR to establish regulations for higher standard shelter design in post-war refugee contexts, as a result of the FIWISRER[3]. Scrutiny of the latter was possible via Roger Zetter's *First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees, Summary of Proceedings*. Namely the official FIWISRER report commissioned by the UNHCR in 1993 today only retrievable from the Oxford Academic Archives[4], rather than the UNHCR Archives. Yet, the UNHCR Archives assisted the research process offering access to relevant reports dating to the end of 1990s[5]. Andrew Herscher, Associate Professor at the University of Michigan expert in architecture of political violence, in the book *The Routledge Companion to Critical Approaches to Contemporary Architecture* establishes Shigeru Ban's project for 1994 UNHCR Paper Emergency Shelters for Rwanda as the direct outcome of the regulative efforts enounced by Siddiqi[6]. Shigeru Ban Architects, Japanese architecture firm recognised for innovative humanitarian intervention, in the book *Humanitarian Architecture* provides the original architectural drawings and pictures of such project[7].

Furthermore, three interviews conducted in March 2021 with UNHCR experts provided first-hand insights to answer the research questions. Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi[8] offered insights of academic nature. Additionally, Ronald van Warmerdam, engineer who collaborated for two years as representative of the UNHCR with the Jordan Government for the improvement of Za'atari refugee Camp[9] and Martine van der Does, Senior Humanitarian Policy Advisor within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and the Sub-Saharan Africa Department[10], offered insights in relation to their on-site experience.

The refinement of the subject resulted from a small to large scale method of investigation because of the difficulty of withdrawing material on historical humanitarian case-studies (as expressed at the end on this introduction). Accordingly, the initial step was to select as case-study 1994 Shigeru Ban's project for UNHCR Paper

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[3] Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture, Humanitarian Expertise: From the Tropics to Shelter, 1953–93," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 76, no. 3 (2017): 376-381.

[4] Roger Zetter, *First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees, Summary of Proceedings, Geneve: UNHCR Headquarters,* 1995.

[5] UNHCR, "UNHCR Archives: A Repository of the Past," UNHCR Archives and Records Online, accessed: January, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/archives-and-records.html.

[6] Andrew Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," in *The Routledge Companion to Critical Approaches to Contemporary Architecture*, ed. Swati Chattopadhyay, Jeremy White (London: Routledge, 2014), 25-33.

[7] Shigeru Ban, "Paper Emergency Shelter for UNHCR," in *Humanitarian Architecture*, ed. Mary Christian (Aspen, CO: Aspen Art Press, 2014), 112-123.

[8] Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi interviewed by the author on Zoom on March 8th, 2021 (USA – The Netherlands).

[9] Ronald van Warmerdam interview by the author on Zoom on March 3rd, 2021 (The Netherlands).

[10] Martine van der Does interview by the author on Zoom on March 16th, 2021 (The Netherlands).

Emergency Shelters for Byumba, Rwanda[11]. Second, an exploration of UNHCR historical events that contributed to developing guidelines on refugee shelter design in the 20th century appointed the FIWISRER as a pivotal event. The sought critical discourse analysis[12] seeks to highlight a historical narrative that accompanies the reader to discover a new understanding of the topic according to contemporary perspective[13].

The structure of this thesis consists of three chapters. Chapter one presents the 20th century historiography that led to the unfolding of the FIWISRER. Chapter two demonstrates how in 1993 the FIWISRER opened the way for interdisciplinary collaboration and witnessed early attempts to environmentally performative shelter. Chapter three narrates how in 1994 this consolidated the operational procedures put in place by the UNHCR reflected in the case study of Ban's Paper Shelter for Rwanda. The conclusion draws a comparative reflection between 1990s' and today' practice. Although the FIWISRER is a meaningful punctuation mark in this half-century map of humanitarian and architectural discourse. The understanding of state of the art of contemporary UNHCR operational approaches needs to further develop via a deeper historical awareness of the topic.

Evidence collected via pictures, drawings, books, online catalogues, UNHCR archives and interviews amounts to a strong ensemble of information and COVID pandemic induced restrictions did not limit the investigation. The interviews conducted testify interest from UNHCR architects and researchers towards understanding the FIWISRER and frustration towards the challenge that accessing such information presents. Indeed, research proved that material in the UNHR archives on case-studies antecedent to the 21st century and relevant to the topic of improved standards of technical performance for refugees is scarce and of difficult retrieval. As systematic collection of archival material by UNHCR begun only in 1996 with the establishment of the official Archives. The archives' goal today is "to bring more material back from the field and to expand the preservation of electronic materials to make them more accessible to a broad range of users.[14]" The collected material contributes to such goal.

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[11] Linda Groat and David Wang, "Part II: Seven Research Strategies," in *Architectural Research Methods*, ed. Linda Groat (New Jersey: Wiley, 2013), 418.
[12] Lucas Ray, "Chapter 2: Defining Your Research Methodology" in *Research Methods for Architecture*, ed. Lucas Ray (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2016), 40.
[13] Groat, and Wang, "Part II," 418.
[14] UNHCR, "UNHCR Archives."

20th CENTURY ORIGIN OF THE UNHCR: RESPONSE OF THE INERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

1.1 1950s-1960s - The making of a Geneva-based agency for administering world refugee shelter

Referring to the 42.2 million people that in 1993 became refugees (fig.1-2), the UNHCR, at the time already recognised as the largest designated agency administering refugee shelter, estimated that "[I]n a world population of 5.5 billion, roughly one in every 130 people on earth has been forced into flight."[15] The UNHCR followed to recognise that "Problems of refugees have not changed, but the refugee problem has."[16] Nonetheless, after about half a century of providing shelter for displaced war refugees, the UNHCR in 1993 still lacked to integrate specialised professionals within its policy-making division due to its politicised origins. The agency staff was radically non-technical as its mandate was to provide shelter through legal channels[17]. The following historiographical reconstruction appoints the events that led to gaps in the structure of the UNHCR and the resulting FIWISRER in 1993.

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[15] UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "Introduction," in *The State of the World's Refugees 1993: The Challenge of Protection*, (New York: Penguin Books, 1994), 1.
[16] Ibid, 2.
[17] UNHCR, "A Repository of the Past."

1960: 1.4	1963: 1.3	1969: –	1975: –	1981: 9.8	1987: 13.3
1961: 1.3	1964: –	1970: 2.5	1976: 2.8	1982: 10.4	1988: 14.8
1962: 1.3	1965: –	1971: –	1977: 3.3	1983: 10.9	1989: 14.9
	1966: –	1972: –	1978: 4.6	1984: 10.5	1990: 17.2
	1967: –	1973: –	1979: 5.7	1985: 11.6	1991: 17.0
	1968: –	1974: 2.4	1980: 8.2	1986: 12.4	1992: 18.2
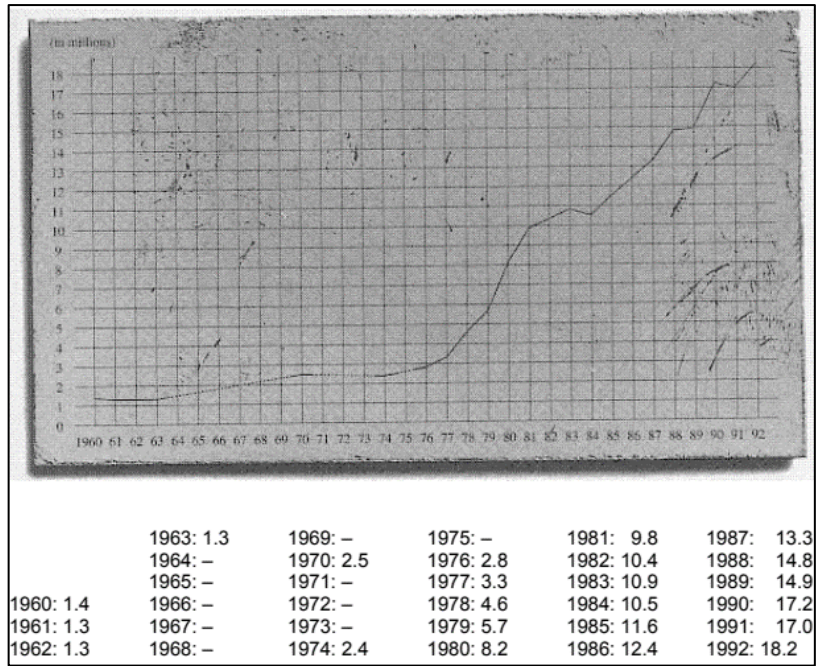
Figure 1. Global Number of Refugees: 1960-1992. Source: UN High Commissioner for Refugees, "Introduction," 1-5, 3.
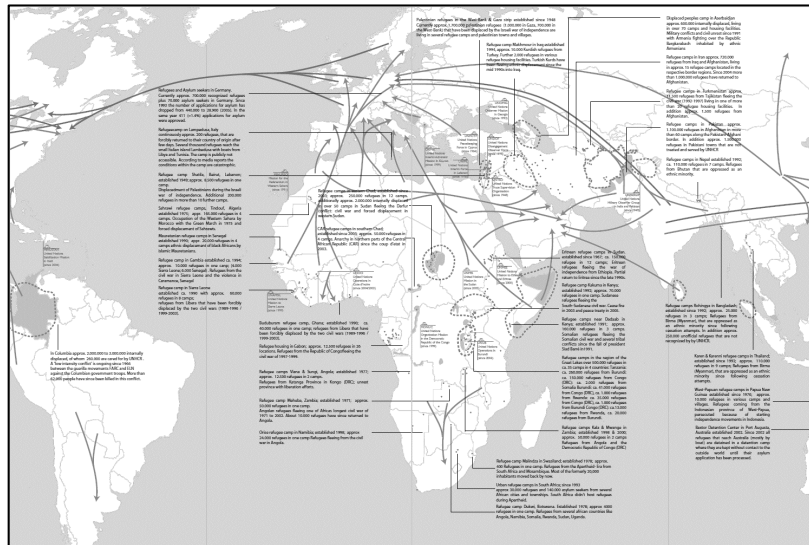
Figure 2. Historiographic Map of Ever-Existed Camps to 2021. Source: Manuel Herz, "Refugee Camps or Ideal Cities in Dust and Dirt," in *Urban Transformation*, ed. Ilka and Andreas Ruby (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2008), 284-5, 278-9.

According to Karen Kubey, co-founder of *Open Architecture NY*, philanthropic investment (i.e., investment that promotes the welfare of others) in quality shelter for the disadvantaged generally does not derive from an attitude of benevolence.

But rather from a spirit of self-preservation perpetrated by the wealthier to preserve their distance from the ill poor[18].

Differently from the enounced principle of common philanthropic motivation, traditional historiography attributes the beginning of contemporary humanitarianism to Henry Dunant, Swiss humanitarian and social activist. His effort to provide aid on the battlefield resulted in the creation of the Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in 1863 and the Geneva Convention in 1949[19]. The latter prompted, on the 14th of December 1950, the establishment of the UNHCR to provide aid for the millions of European refugees who had lost their homes during WWII (fig. 3). Four years later, the UNHCR won its first Nobel Peace Prize[20].

This demonstrates a shifting target in philanthropic housing from the working-class communities in industrializing cities to communities displaced by catastrophes like conflict and natural disaster. Making the twentieth century a "century of camps"[21]. Accordingly in 1981, after assisting African, Asian and American refugees (fig. 4), the UNHCR won its second Nobel Prize for its worldwide provision of assistance.
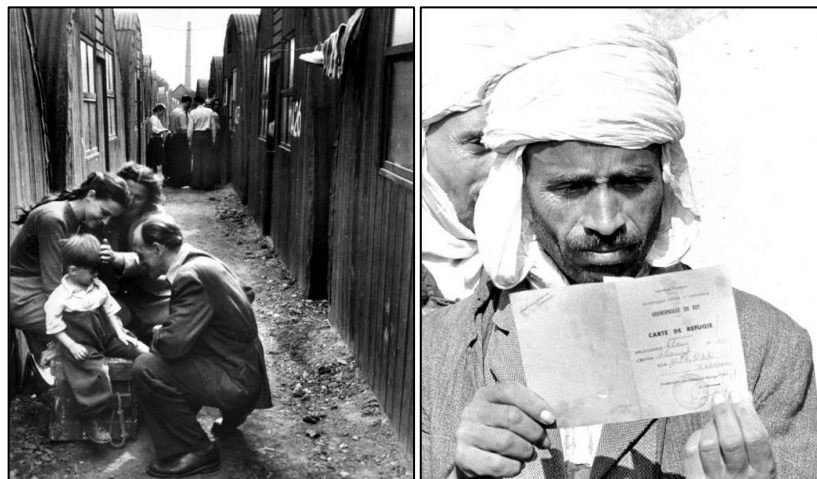
Figure 3 (left). UNHCR's first task in 1951 was to help an estimated 1 million mainly European civilians still uprooted in the aftermath of World War Two. Source: UNHCR, "History of UNHCR."

Figure 4 (right). Africa's first modern refugee crisis occurred in the late 1950s during Algeria's independence struggle against France. UNHCR, during its first intervention on the African continent, provided assistance for 200,000 refugees who fled to surrounding countries. Source: UNHCR, "History of UNHCR."

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[18] Karen Kubey, "Housing for the Common Good," *Housing as Intervention: Architecture Towards Social Equality* 88, no. 4 (August 2018): 6-13.

[19] Miriam Ticktin, "Humanitarianism's History of the Singular," *Grey Room*, no. 61 (January 2015): 81-85.

[20] UNHCR, "A Repository of the Past."

[21] Andrew Herscher, "Humanitarianism's Housing Question: From Slum Reform to Digital Shelter," *e-flux*, no. 66, (October 2015), accessed: January, 2021, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/66/60745/humanitarianism-s-housing-question-from-slum-reform-to-digital-shelter/.

However, philanthropic provision of refugee shelter presented shortcomings from its origins. Already in the aftermath of WWII, Hannah Arendt, distinguished political theorist of the 20th century, affirmed that "the trouble arose when it appeared that the new categories of persecuted were far too numerous to be handled by an unofficial practice destined for exceptional cases"[22] and thus the camp became "the only 'country' the world had to offer the stateless"[23].

Then a wave of criticism invested the established authoritarian Cold War Modernism. Common style of manifestation of philanthropic dwelling, it presented dehumanizing effects generated by its preoccupation to produce monumental forms of social dwellings[24].

Similarly, Miriam Ticktin, Associate Professor of Anthropology at The New School for Social Research, NY, argues that in providing shelter, humanitarianism exercises its own form of government of the social, the mass, humanity. So humanity in the field of humanitarian intervention becomes a dehumanised *"set of singular individuals facing exceptional circumstances"* that do not comply with the ordinary definition of civilian[25].

1.2 1970s-1990s - New international streams for refugee shelter provision: a rising need for the FIWISRER

The French civil protests of May 1968 suggested to architecture the potential of the involvement of the latent creativity of communities. Consequently, in the 1970s Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) promoted a 'new humanitarianism', prevailing to the current date, focused on emotive responses rather than institutionalised ones. To support such view, Bertrand Monk, Chair in Peace and Conflict Studies at Colgate University, NY, and Herscher, advocate that should be by mission apolitical and a-governmental. Supported by the fact that it is predominantly executed by non-governmental organisations[26]. Thus, humanitarianism should be preoccupied with the question of shelter to protect not the social but rather what is understood as a universal humanity[27]. As a result, in the second half of the 20th century, architects

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[22] Hannah Arendt, "Chapter Nine: The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man," in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (New York : Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973), 294.
[23] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 30.
[24] Kim De Raedt, "Tracing the History of Socially Engaged Architecture: School Building as Development Aid in Postcolonial Sub-Saharan Africa," in *The Routledge Companion to Architecture and Social Engagement*, ed. Farhan Karim (London: Routledge, 2015), 71-86.
[25] Ticktin, "Humanitarianism's History," 81-83.
[26] Bertrand Monk and Andrew Herscher, "The New Universalism: Refuges and Refugees between Global History and Voucher Humanitarianism," *Grey Room,* no. 61 (January 2015): 70-79.
[27] Ticktin, "Humanitarianism's History," 83-85.

expanded their presence in the humanitarian field producing more responsible architectural outcomes by means of collaboration with NGOs like the UNHCR.

On the one hand, this new philanthropic attitude manifested in the form of small pro-bono innovative design-build structures. Like in the case of Shigeru Ban Architects' collaboration with the UNHCR for Paper Shelters for Rwanda[28]. This commitment then grew to establish independent architectural practices entirely dedicated to the question of humanitarianism and shelter provision for displaced refugees[29]. Such as the Voluntary Architects' Network (VAN) established by Shigeru Ban in 1995[30] and The Global Shelter Cluster (IASC) established in 2005 within the UNHCR itself as "(…) inter-agency that coordinates shelter (…) to meet the shelter needs of affected populations more effectively (…)"[31]. This network of independent humanitarian architecture action continues to grow today, with approximately 5 thousand operational aid agencies[32] for the 80 million people forcibly displaced worldwide[33].

On the other hand, the presence of architectural professionals grew in the domain of non-governmental organisations that aim to provide humanitarian assistance for displaced refugees. The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol on the definition of 'refugee' proclaimed the legal obligations to protect refugees with non-refoulement as core principle of humanitarian practice. Meaning that a refugee should not be returned to a country where they face serious threats to their life or freedom[34]. As a result, in the 1990s established humanitarian NGOs like the UNHCR began to involve practicing architects and engineers in the redaction of international guidelines for the provision of better quality and innovative shelter. A milestone in this direction is the FIWISRER.

Seen through the lens of innovation, the FIWISRER was charged with meaning for the practice of humanitarian architecture as it aimed for higher performative standards in shelter design to humanise the condition of the refugees. It achieved this by prompting an internal transformation of the structures of authority within the UNHCR. With a transdisciplinary body of experienced architects, designers, engineers and urban planners becoming officially constituent of the UNHCR

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[28] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 26.

[29] Julie Behrens and Kaja Kuhl, "Spaces of Migration: Architecture for Refugees," *Architectural Design* 88, no. 4 (August 2018): 86-93.

[30] Shigeru Ban, "Temporary Disaster Housing: An interview with Shigeru Ban on his architectural works and humanitarian activities," interview by Clare Farrow, *RocaGallery*, June 11th, 2019 (London), http://www.rocagallery.com/temporary-disaster-housing.

[31] UNHCR, "Shelter Cluster (IASC)," UNHCR Emergency Handbook, accessed: January, 2021, https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/31038/shelter-cluster-iasc.

[32] UNOCHA, "World Humanitarian Data and Trends 2016," OCHA, (2015) 8. https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/World%20Humanitarian%20Data%20and%20Trends%202016_0.pdf.

[33] UNHCR, "UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency," UNHCR, accessed: January, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/afr/.

[34] UNHCR, "UNHCR, The 1951 Refugee Convention," UNHCR, accessed: January, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html.

Commission. But how did the FIWISRER set the roots for the establishment of a new collaborative discipline in which humanitarian architecture finds its roots today? Although an official archival system was not in place at the time of the FIWISRER, precious recovered reports, pictures and drawings of the event allow a fair analysis of the key moments and outcomes of the Workshop[35]. Chapter Two uses this material to reflect on the latter question.

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[35] UNHCR, "A Repository of the Past."

TWO

1990s FIRST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP ON IMPROVED SHELTER RESPONSE AND ENVIRONMENT FOR REFUGEES, GENEVE

2.1 1993 - The making of a new collaborative model: integrating professionals in the policymaking division of UNHCR

Major refugee crisis at the beginning of the 1990s like the one cause by the Rwanda Genocide accentuated the UNHCR's insufficient capacity in emergency response. The situation prompted the Agency to implement technical expertise in shelter design related practices. In 1993, such expertise was limited to exterior consultations with the academic sector. Accordingly, in February of that year, a meeting across humanitarian technicians in the UNHCR headquarters in Geneva identified the need for a comprehensive shelter strategy, planting the idea for the Workshop. That summer, Wolfgang Neumann, senior physical architect in the UNHCR Programme and Technical Support Section and the first professional architect in a UNHCR Committee, convoked the FIWISRER. The proposition of the three-day Workshop was to facilitate improved shelter in refugee contexts with a focus on climate driven response and to resolve the agency need for a new institutional plan of action (fig. 5-6).

Physical Planners for refugees and displaced people
are able to contribute much more to assist in creating the
conditions of dignity which all human beings have the right
to receive, in whatever circumstances.
Moreover, there are other elements at stake : physical planning
can f.i.concretely assist in developing healthy environments.

Shelter & environmental programmes have probably lacked imagination
in the development of adequate solutions and in
promoting this cause for the beneficiaries at the right levels.

But, whereas it is universally recognised that food and health care
are basic requirements of physical survival,
shelter and environment should be recognised - as are protection,
food and health care - as a fundamental right of
physical and dignified survival.
As of now this may have been said and written, but unfortunately
this sector of assistance meets a lot of political and
operational constraints. Shelter & environment are investment
oriented and project an image of long term, as well as
developing these activities requires more lead time then in the
other assistance sectors.

With the concern of all present at this workshop we can surely
find more adequate answers.

Figure 5. Issue Statement, FIWISRER Report. Source: Roger Zetter, "An Overview of Shelter Provision and Settlement Policy," in *First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees*, (Geneve: UNHCR Headquarters, 1995), 1-27, 2.

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                PROPOSAL OF KEY ISSUES, CRITICS, QUESTIONS
             to be addressed by this FIRST SHELTER WORKSHOP FOR REFUGEES
                             AND DISPLACED PEOPLE

(P)74.   This is just a recapitulation of the key questions, issues and
critics pointed out in this paper so as to serve as a draft "checklist" of
subjects to be handled by the working group #2.

(P)75.   The formulation of a global shelter for refugees and displaced
people policy and strategy and the format and arguments which make that
the issue is understood by the policy institutions, the donor community
and the broad public as a fundamental contribution to the physical
environment, the health and the socio-psychological ("dignity") condition
of the beneficiaries. [re:#15]

(P)76.   The formulation of the basic standards and specifications which
relate to the social, climatic and physical contexts. A two-room family
unit which provides minimum 3.5m2 floor surface per person (excl.
sanitation) is proposed as the general approach. [re:#(1)25, (1)34, (1)36,
(1)37]

(P)77.   The formulation of more detailed standards and specifications
which can be related to more specific situations as are temporary or
transit situations versus longer term, specific climatic conditions as
winter and/or heavy rainy and tropical storm conditions, etc.. [re:#(1)39]
         It should be noted in that respect that some assistance in Bosnia
and Croatia has f.i. provided far more sophisticated standards but for
only a limited number of beneficiaries. [re:#(1)40]

(P)78.   The formulation of a policy on shelter for returnees and the
conflictual situation whereby returnees may not always want to return to
their original home area but prefer settling in the bigger towns of their
home country. [#(2)41->44]

(P)79.   The formulation to which extend refugees and displaced people are
to be assisted in relation with the standards of living of the host
populations. [#(2)44->46]

(P)80.   The formulation of the functions and the functioning of the
STANDING FORUM OF EXPERTS ON SHELTER AND PHYSICAL PLANNING FOR REFUGEES
AND DISPLACED PEOPLE. [#(3)49->50]

(P)81.   The formulation of recommendations concerning shelter prototype
development with respect of basic and respectful rules and regulations of
contract. A number of guidelines are proposed. [#(3)51->56]

(P)82.   The formulation of recommendations on shelter performance
assessment. It is proposed that training of physical planners should be
organised and that these training institutions could be the best placed to
undertake such assessments through case studies and more systematic
research. [#(4)57->62]

(P)83.   The formulation of a policy and strategy which would dissolve the
confusion regarding the conflict between local and international shelter
provision. [#(5)63->69]
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Figure 6. Proposal of Key Issues, Critics, Questions, FIWISRER Report. Source: Zetter, "An Overview," 1-27, 26-27.

The first day of the Workshop started with a general introduction followed by an early brainstorming meeting (fig. 7). Meeting that divided in groups the participants that flew in from across the world. A total of sixty architects, logisticians, manufacturers, and diplomats brought professional expertise external to the UNHCR. The stakeholders collaborated in teams challenged to "develop an emergency shelter concept, a policy framework, and a means for implementation that would consider emergency response protocols, standards, and technology, and establish a standing forum for the dissemination of information and knowledge"[36]. The concluding event was an exhibition of shelter products and prototypes that aimed at providing "a comprehensive shelter strategy with appropriately developed standards, supply

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[36] Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture," 379.

methods, [and] specifications and production capabilities related to local needs and circumstances"[37].

Figure 7. Brainstorming session of the FIWISRER. Source: Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture," 376-381, 379.

The Workshop fundamental outcome was a primitive systematic consolidation within UNHCR of technical expertise concretised to guarantee better refugee shelter. Shelter that now was considerate of "politics, society, and human need, aesthetic orientations". Furthermore, a redaction of a set of standards for higher-performative refugee shelter became officially recognised by the international community (i.e., the countries of the world considered collectively). These requirements were recorded for future demonstration by catalogue pictures of the prototype tents (fig. 8)[38]. This responded to the issue that UNHCR shelter design typically demonstrated a lack of climatically appropriate and durable solutions. Hence, the higher-performative standards included structural soundness from reliance on local technologies, thermal insulation, dampness isolation, natural lighting and ventilation for indoor sanity and comfort, basic hygiene (fig 9)[39].

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[37] UNHCR, *First International Workshop,* 1995.
[38] UNHCR, "UNHCR: The UN Refugee Agency," UNHCR, accessed: January, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/afr/.
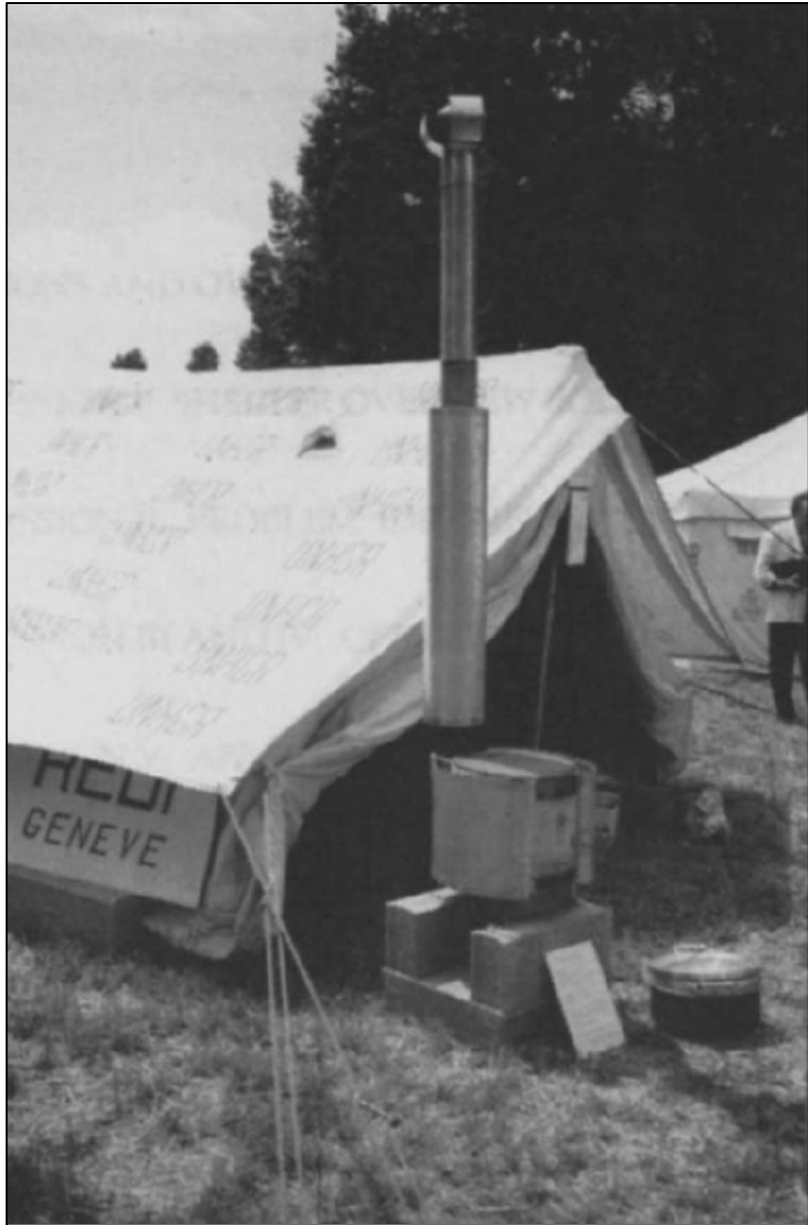[39] UNHCR, *First International Workshop,* 1995.

Figure 8. UNHCR Shelter Protype at the FIWISRER. Source: Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture," 376-381, 368.

The main objective of this overview, however, is to investigate guidelines for a new concept of shelter provision and settlement policies for future responses. It parallels a fundamental reconceptualisation of refugee policy making and assistance which is evident in the literature and which defines the context for new directions in shelter and settlement policy formulation and for tackling familiar operational constraints in the sector. The reconceptualisation is predicted on a number of contentions, these underpin this paper.

The paper contends that

1. The relief and development models are complementary. Planning methodologies, policies and interventions at different spatial scales play an enabling role the transition from relief to development in refugee assistance.

2. Refugee impacts and assistance should be evaluated in terms of the costs and benefits for all interest groups - refugees, hosts, governments, donors and agencies; spatial and economic planning processes provide one framework for mediating these interests and for formulating integrated policy making for hosts and refugees.

3. Locational considerations - especially at a regional scale - are critically significant for refugee survival and wellbeing and the impact on host communities; these considerations should be at the crux of planning and settlement policies formulated in refugee situations.

... /4 cont

4. Refugees contribute development resources to a host country; but current policies for assistance inhibit this contribution from being achieved; proactive responses designed to capitalise on these resources - eg through self help, market expansion - are a necessary part of a planned approach to refugee influxes.

5. Sector policies must be diversified to draw on a wider range of development project experience; in retooling planning systems for refugees this should be evaluated for its appropriateness and technological replicability in the context of refugees.

6. In-country capacity - professional, material, logistical - should be the starting point for drawing up shelter and settlement policies.

7. Dissemination is the key to the new praxis; it is dependent on effective data bases and networks of information/experience exchange.

Figure 9. Workshop Brief Review, FIWISRER Report. Source: Zetter, "An Overview," 34-37, 34-35.

2.2 Post-1993 - New framework, new collaboration, new progress & failure

In the official report of the Workshop Zetter provides insights into the Workshop that he addresses as a conceptual and historiographical landmark in the linking of the discourse of humanitarian relief with that of architecture[40]. In fact, as a result of the Workshop, the UNHCR formed in 1993 a new section to handle emergency

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[40] Zetter, "Shelter Provision and Settlement Policies for Refugees. A state of the art review," 57.

coordination of operations, which proceeded to plan various large refugee settlements[41] as unfolds in the Chapter Three.

Moreover, the Workshop stimulated the creation of the Sphere Project Consortium in 1996, "the first attempt to produce globally applicable minimum standards for humanitarian response services."[42] The same year, theshelterproject, today called the Shelter Centre, started as an initiative to develop a manual for transitional refugee shelter[43]. Besides, in 1999 the UNHCR revised its *Handbook for Emergencies*, originally published in 1982, to reflect the idea that basic human needs are equal universally. The primary goal to enable fundamental hygiene and comfort strategies set the tone for the *Handbook.* And principles for site selection that arise from climatic and geographical considerations set the context for a plan of action focused on a standardised master plan. Where tents are the primary module of shelter unit[44].

The implementation of technical expertise in the production of such early revised operative framework by the UNHCR presented drawbacks. According to Manuel Herz, swiss architect experienced in sub-Saharan Africa architecture of refugee camps, the framework showed "a binary split between a civilised *Us* of the First World and a perceived primitive *Other*". Hence perpetuating the mechanisms of 19th century colonialism by imposing the Western World rationale of modular development. This implies that the model set-up in post-Workshop framework answers to the fundamental life-saving function of humanitarian action considerate of better-quality shelter. While still calling for deeper reflection dictated by consideration of geographical and cultural peculiarities of the affected society [45].

Since then, the Agency has continued to develop sources of guidance to address shelter and settlement. Remarkably, *Policy on Alternatives to Camps* (updated 2014)[46] and the *Shelter Design Catalogue* (updated 2016) recognise that:

> Shelter is contextual and there exists no 'one-size-fits-all' solution (…). Whilst emergency phase responses often involve the provision of tents or emergency shelter (…) shelter assistance programmes can evolve toward more durable and sustainable solutions maximizing (…) the use of local material, skills and building techniques.[47](fig.10-11)

[41] Siddiqi, interview.
[42] Siddiqi, "Architecture Culture," 381.
[43] Siddiqi, interview.
[44] UNHCR, "UNHCR's Mission Statement," in *UNHCR Handbook for Emergencies*, (Geneve: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 1999), 139.
[45] Manuel Herz, "Refugee Camps or Ideal Cities in Dust and Dirt," *in Urban Transformation*, ed. Ilka and Andreas Ruby (Berlin: Ruby Press, 2008), 284-5.
[46] UNHCR, *UNHCR Policy on Alternatives to Camps* (Geneve: UNHCR Publications, 2014), 139.
[47] UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Section, *Shelter Design Catalogue* (Geneve: UNHCR Publications, 2016), 3-5.
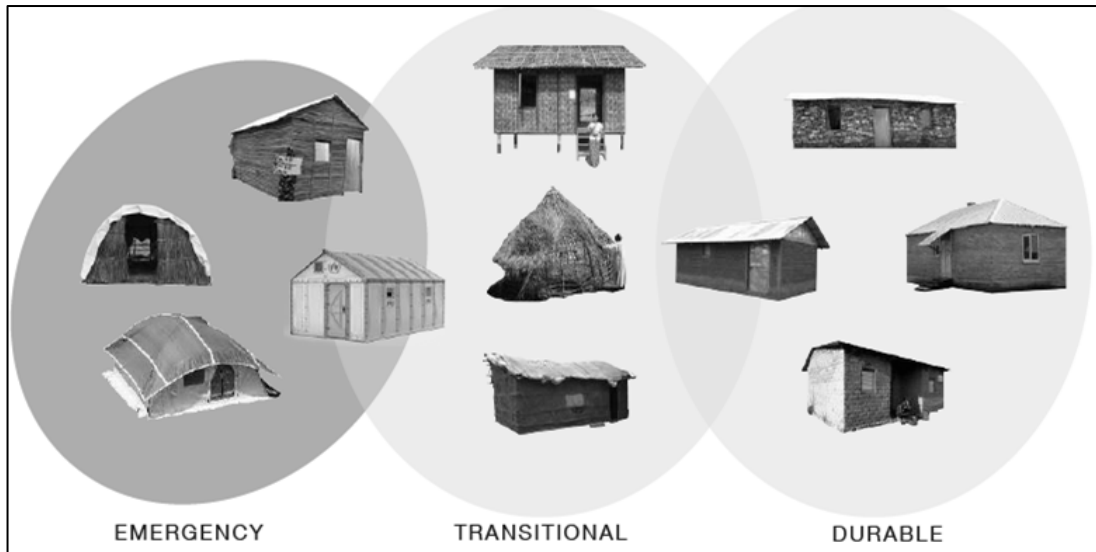
Figure 10. The four sections of shelter structures typologies established by the UNHCR Shelter Design Division: Global Shelter Designs; Emergency Shelter Designs; Transitional Shelter Designs; Durable Shelter Designs. The typology is implemented depending on the nature and duration of the refugee status and depending on the resources that derive from such status. Source: UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Section, *Shelter Design Catalogue*, 5-7, 6.
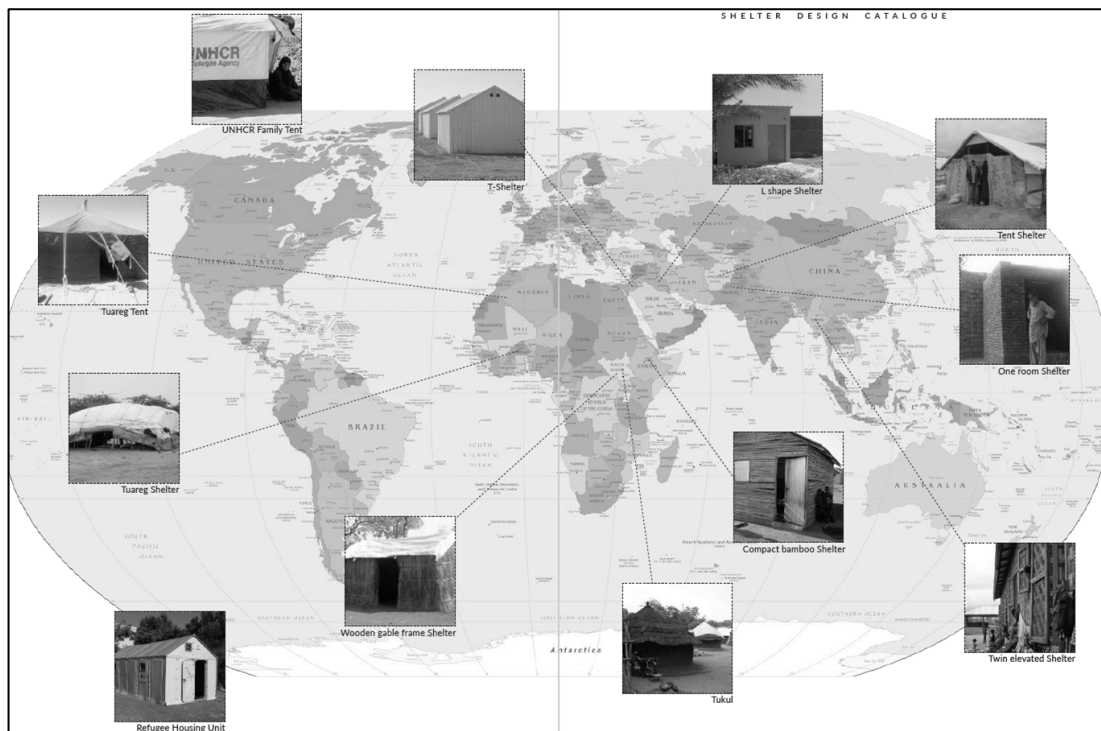
Figure 11. Different UNHCR Shelter typologies implemented according the location to allow higher environmentally performative standards. Source: UNHCR Shelter and Settlement Section, *Shelter Design Catalogue*, 8-67, 66-67.

Arguably, the FIWISRER prompted several UNHCR guidelines on international and regional principles of refugee shelter design that affect the nature of official protocols to current date[48] . The current position of refugee practices results from different conventions on a regional, national, and international scale established in the three decades post-1993. However, refugees' complaints on institutional violence, regardless of the stated intentions of the operation, accusing insufficient heating, lighting overcrowding, dampness, fire hazards, poor sanitation continue[49]. How has the UNHCR attempted and perhaps failed to tackle framework shortfalls? Chapter Three reflects on this question with considerations both on historical and contemporary practice.

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[48] van der Does, interview.
[49] Alexis Bushnell and Justine Nakase, "Military Aid: The Spatial Performances and Performativity of Contemporary Refugee Camps," in *Performance in a Militarised Culture*, ed. Sara Brady (London: Routledge, 2017), 22-24.

1990s-2020s UNHR EVOLVING APPROACH TO SHELTER DESIGN

3.1 1994-1999 - Desire to strive against economic limitations: the case-study of Paper Shelter for Rwanda by Shigeru Ban

The project Paper Emergency Shelter for Rwanda is a key case-study in exposing how the new guidelines on higher performative standards materialised in the aftermath of the FIWISRER. Though a 'Second' Workshop never took place, the Workshop initiated a collaborative attitude within the UNHCR just before the outburst of crisis of unforeseen scale (fig. 12) like the Rwanda genocide that began in 1994[50]. The unprecedented number of refugees fleeing *en masse* from one country (fig. 13) resulted in a radical humanitarian self-reflection. This prompted international reforms for new scales of emergency that benefitted from the 1993 systematisation of cooperative humanitarianism. These coinciding events became a catalyst of production from world recognised architects like Japanese Shigeru Ban.

Figure 12. The 1994 genocide in Rwanda triggered a massive exodus into neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo and Tanzania. Source: UNHCR, "History of UNHCR."

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[50] "Rwandan Genocide," Wikipedia, accessed: December, 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Rwandan_genocide&oldid=1008189519.
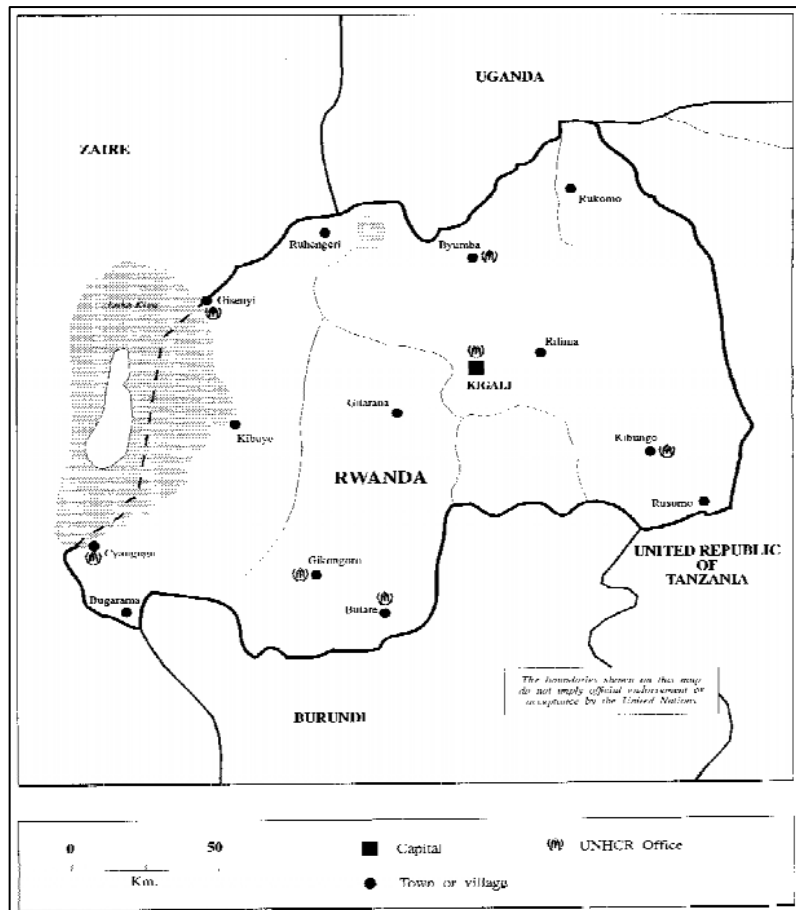
Figure 13. Allocation of the displacement of the Rwanda Genocide refugees. Source: UNHCR Executive Committee of the High Commissioner's Programme, "Part I, Africa Section 15 – Rwanda," in *UNHCR Activities Financed by Voluntary Funds: Report for 1994-1995 and Proposed Programmes and Budget For 1996,* (UN Digital Library, 1995), 2-8, 2.

In 1995, Ban signed a contract with the UNHCR as a consultant for Rwanda shelters at the Gihembe refugee camp. Ban remembers:

> I was shocked when I saw the UN-supplied camps in Rwanda. They were so messy. The shelters were just not good enough; people were freezing-cold during the rainy season. So, I suggested that the paper-tube design replace the use of local wood.[51]

Makeshift aluminium-pole-and-plastic-sheet contraptions was the original structure provided to Rwanda refugees. They learned to sell it to remedy to their lack of income. To then resort to the cutting down of trees to build their shelters. The resulting uncontrolled use of timber started causing deforestation of the area surrounding the refugee camps, making Ban's idea even more relevant[52]. Ban responded with an easy

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[51] Sandra Hofmeister, "Paper To The Rescue: Shigeru Ban's Personal Toolbox," *DAMN° Magazine* 57, (July 2016), accessed: February, 2021, https://www.damnmagazine.net/2016/07/07/paper-to-the-rescue/.
[52] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 27.

to assemble and well weather proofed tent-like shelter, made of material easily available, inexpensive and practically unsalable: paper.

Shigeru Ban Architects original detail drawings for product development (fig. 14) demonstrate the innovative thinking of the materials' performance to achieve structural lightness and durability using the cheapest material available. Bans' office also drafted an assembly leaflet (fig. 15) dispensed to each user that would be easily comprehensible for the refugees to ensure that they would be able to build sturdily their provisional emergency shelters[53]. Therefore, Ban's project testifies three of the most salient dynamics of contemporary humanitarian architecture initiated by the Workshop. To begin with, the interdependency between the UNHCR and experts in the field of performative design. On top of that, the application of digital technology to the problem of improved refugee accommodation that stemmed from this radical period for the UNHCR [54]. Last but not least, the new culture of sensibility towards the affected community of refugees.
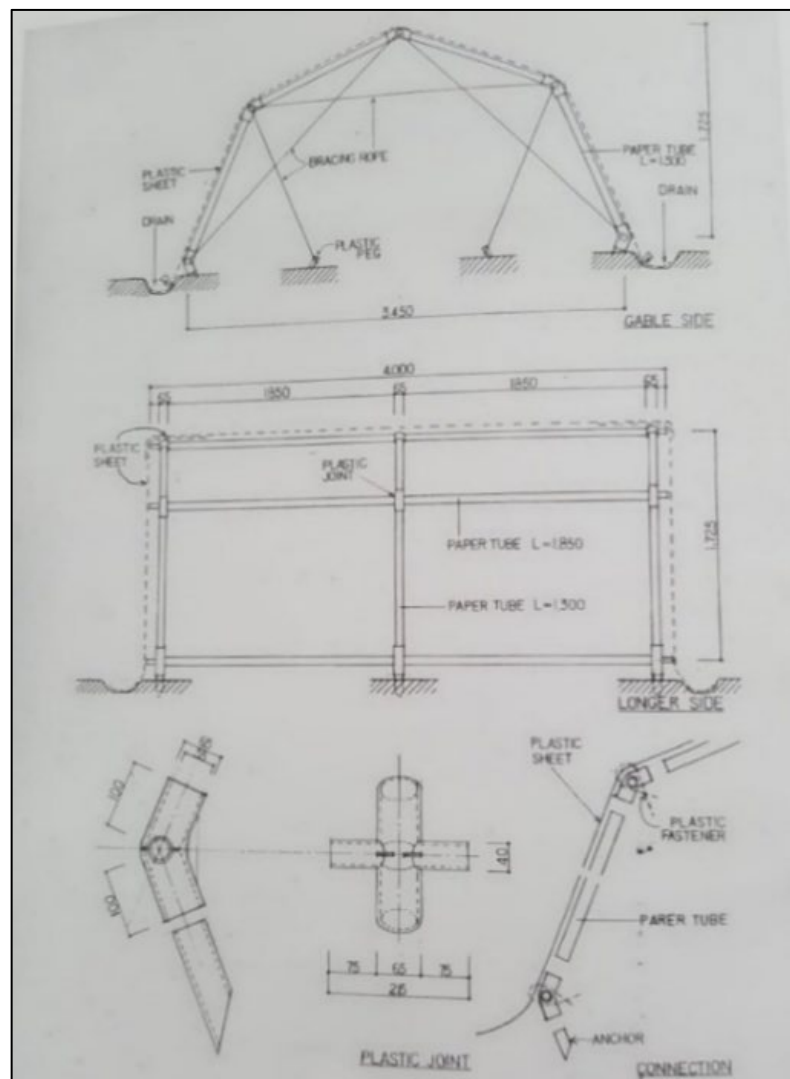
[53] Ban, "Paper Emergency Shelter," 119-123.
[54] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 26.
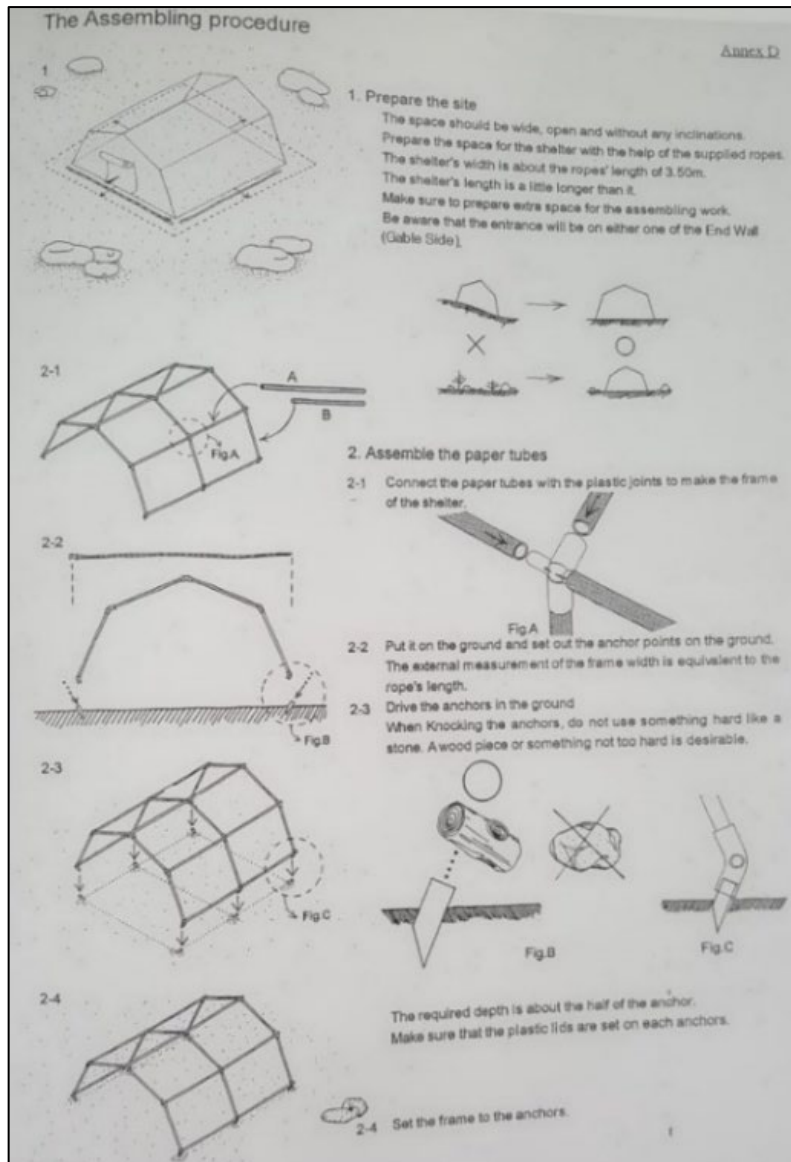
Figure 14-15. Original detail drawings (left) & UNHCR assembly leaflet (right), Paper Emergency Shelters at Gihembe Refugee Camp, Rwanda, 1994. Source: Ban, "Paper Emergency Shelter," 112-123, 116-117.

Due to economic constraints, the project approved by the UNHCR produced less than fifty units, but it continues to be used extensively in refugee camps today, because of its ease of installation (fig. 16-17), low cost and ease of transport[55]. The last Rwanda paper tents were produced in 1999 but they sowed the seed for Bans ingenious humanitarian projects based on paper structures. The Voluntary Architects' Network established by Ban in 1995 continues to implement such structures in humanitarian crisis across the world [56].

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[55] Violaine Eggermont, "L'architecte et l'hébergement temporaire d'urgence: Le camp et le shelter sont-ils une question d'architecture?," (Master's thesis, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville, 2018), 148.
[56] Ban, interview.

Figure 16-17. Rwanda Refugees assembling the Paper emergency shelters at Gihembe Refugee Camp, Rwanda, 1994 Source: Ban, "Paper Emergency Shelter," 112-123, 121-122.

Paper Shelter for Rwanda presented other limitations. The foremost is that the tent as form of long-term accommodation intrinsically fails to accommodate for the specific climate of sub-Saharan Africa characterised by a fluctuating climate. The Rwanda weather is warm all year round but with a cold night. Water is scarce during the dry season but during the rainy season tents fail to prevent dampness[57]. Ban himself reflected on this aspect in 2012 asserting:

> We cannot make a universal prototype for temporary shelter like the universal solutions that the medical profession has for different diseases. That's why (…) in architecture there is no universal solution. You must have the local people working with local architects.[58]

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[57] "Rwanda Climate: Average Weather, Temperature, Precipitation, Best Time," accessed December, 2020, https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/rwanda.
[58] Charlesworth, "The Rise," 267-271.

Accordingly, in response to Ban winning the Pritzker Prize in 2014 with the claim that he "uses the same inventive and resourceful design approach for his extensive humanitarian efforts" as he does in his "elegant, innovative work for private clients." Hersher pleases for a more cynical claim "the architect's invention and resourcefulness replaced the invention and resourcefulness of refugees." Hersher thus highlights that it was precisely the aforesaid minimalistic approach that restricted the opportunity for refugees to build their own spaces and their own lives. And Gihembe refugee camp consecutively exists to current date as a permanently temporary space where the threshold conditions of bare life extend indefinitely into the future[59].

What is more, in Zetter proposes that the UNHCR should have sought closer collaboration with the Nairobi division of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (UNCHS). As UNCHS Nairobi retained technical information on local proceedings that could inform a more sensible intervention for the Rwanda refugee crisis. Interestingly, Zetter also appoints that UNCHS Nairobi after the genocide convoked a workshop to facilitate the continuum from relief to development. Although this workshop failed to investigate different needs of shelter provision, Zetter claims it was the closest follow-up to the FIWISRER organised by the United Nations (UN)[60].

3.2   2020s – How has practice progressed? The heritage of the FIWISRER in contemporary practice

While the figures presented document a new degree of innovation and a new model of cooperation within the UNHCR that resulted from the FIWISRER, they also expose the fundamental limitations of refugee shelter provision. Foremost, Refugee camps are built for emergencies which means that they must be designed and erected in emergency time frames[61]. Furthermore, the fundamental tool of shelter is the tent, which is inherently limited in providing performative standards and is set to lasts between six months and one year[62]. Such limitations largely depend on economic limitations still in place today. Indeed, refugee crisis embed the need for shelter provision for thousands of displaced people while being supported by extremely limited funding[63]. Despite the number of donors booming from the 1990s stimulated by unseen humanitarian crises like the Rwanda Genocide[64]. With the UNHCR budget

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[59] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 28.
[60] Zetter, "Shelter Provision and Settlement Policies for Refugees. A state of the art review", 57.
[61] Esther Charlesworth, "The Rise of Humanitarian Architecture," *theory* 18, no. 3 (September 2014): 267-271.
[62] Herscher, "Designs on Disaster," 31.
[63] van Warmerdam, interview.
[64] Kennedy, "Structures for the Displaced," 115.

growing from $1.2 billion, $1.07 of which from donors, in 1993[65] to $8.6 billion in 2019[66].

Nonetheless, the events that encompass the Workshop demonstrate that the implementation of technical expertise in the regulative front of NGOs like the UNHCR can result in concrete betterment of humanitarian practice. For this reason, contemporary UNHCR practice undergoes a moral quest to expand guidance for architectural intervention that seeks solutions durable in the short and long-term through collaboration with the community that shelter is provided for. Yet, deficiency of budget and of building materials are major constraints to providing quality shelter. Even when self-build and artisanal experience is accessible amongst refugees. Moreover, where the UNHCR sources alternative materials, supply constraints and environmental degradation caused by disproportionate demand can be extreme[67].

Nevertheless, contemporary creative thinkers continue to bring inventive and subversive ideas into the narrative of humanitarian architecture. For instance, Alejandro Aravena, socially engaged architect and director of the Chilean firm Elemental and Pritzker Prize winner in 2016, advocates for an incremental approach to refugee housing. Based on the claim that "the problem with a tent is that when you use it you throw it away, so it's money that melts". Similarly, Kilian Kleinschmidt, German humanitarian aid expert and former UNHCR official, believes that governments must stop conceiving refugee camps as temporary places and consider them as future cities[68]. Kleinschmidt quotes Bauhaus director Hannes Meyer's words from 1929 saying that "As designers we are the servants of this community: whatever we do should serve the people." On a similar line of thought, Castillo et all., board members of the open-source online platform *Architecture for Refugees,* Zurich, reflect on the need for humanitarian technicians to engage with the climatic conditions dictated by the site and foremost with the refugees[69]. That second *with* is key: the refugee becomes the client that services must be provided to, and the key contributor to the design process for his potential to inform the project with his/her cultural understanding of place making[70] (fig. 18).

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[65] UN Department of Public Information, "Chapter XV: Refugees and Displaced Persons," in *Yearbook of the United Nations: Economic and Social Questions*, (Geneve: United Nations DAG Repository, 1994), 1220.

[66] UNHCR, "History of UNHCR," UNHCR, accessed: January, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/history-of-unhcr.html.

[67] Zetter, "Shelter Provision and Settlement Policies for Refugees. A state of the art review", 39-40.

[68] Jessica Mairs, "Refugee Tents Are a Waste of Money, Says Alejandro Aravena," Dezeen, published November, 2015, accessed March, 2021, https://www.dezeen.com/2015/11/30/alejandro-aravena-humanitarian-architecture-refugee-tents-waste-money-emergency-shelter-disaster-relief/.

[69] Dennise Castillo, Nasr Chamma and Benche Komlósi*, Improving Refugee Settlements: Collaboration between Refugees, Architects, and Volunteers* (Switzerland: Architecture for Refugees, 2016), 3.

[70] Lauren Parater, "7 Essential Resources for a Design Thinker," UNHCR Innovation Service, published December, 2015, accessed February, 2021, https://www.unhcr.org/innovation/7-essential-resources-for-a-design-thinker/.

Figure 18. Refugees, volunteers and NGOs cooperating on construction of camp facilities at The Jungle, Calais Refugee. This collaborative design and construction process sought to inform shelter design that is considerate of the cultural needs of the refugees that will inhabit the shelter. Source: Castillo, Chamma and Komlósi, *Improving Refugee Settlements*, 1-3, 1.

Accordingly, one must ask: what can design really do? The truth is: with a tent, possibility for improvement is limited. There is a need to debunk the naive infatuation with the idea that design can do much on its own. There is a need to understand that architects play a more relevant role when collaborating with structures like the UNHCR. At the beginning of the refugee response process, in the preliminary phase of guidelines drafting. Then in the second, although undesirable, phase of the refugee settlement when displaced people cannot return home. Typically, after six months to one year from the beginning of a refugee crises tents begin to degrade but greater funding start coming in. That is when design can improve the technical aspects of shelter for better quality[71].

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[71] van Warmerdam, interview.

CONCLUSION

In summary, this research explores the historiography of the events that led to the unfolding of the FIWISRER. Understood as pivotal experience in shifting politicised structures of authority within the UNHCR. The research reconstructs the resultant interdisciplinary collaboration within the UNHCR Commission and consecutive attempts to environmentally performative shelter. 1994 Ban's Paper Shelter for Rwanda exemplifies the consolidation of such interdisciplinary collaboration and new operational procedures. The case study opens the way for a final reflection on contemporary UNHCR operational procedures and what future practice should learn from the past.

In conclusion, results show that the FIWISRER offers a meaningful punctuation mark in this half-century map of humanitarian and architectural discourse. Firstly, following the FIWISRER, the UNHCR has produced consistent efforts for shelter performative standards by employing humanitarian technicians in the redaction of official guidance and projects. Secondly, the workshop drew attention to how refugee shelter design should enable humanisation of lives eradicated from the certainties of their existence. The understanding of humanitarian practice gained a broader meaning that includes cultural, urban, engineering psychological medical aspects. As a consequence, it sparked interest for collaboration with the refugees that shelter is designed for, considerate of their cultural understanding of place. However, economic and time constraints remain the main limitation to the potential of architectural intervention for refugees, and thus to the potential of the change sparked by the FIWISRER itself.

The value of this thesis for the practice of humanitarian architecture resides in its ability to provide an accessible appraisal of the FIWISRER and its aftermath reflected in the case study of Ban's Shelter for Rwanda. Although an official Second Workshop never took place and information on the FIWISRER remains difficult to retrieve, this event was a catalyst for change in the historiography of the UNHCR. In this resides the importance of educating new humanitarian practitioners on how events like the FIWISRER inform approaches towards humanitarian praxis. Moreover, the collected information contributes to the UNHCR Archive goal to recollect material pre 21st century.

Subsequent research shall advance the reconstruction of UNHCR policy and guidelines on the topic of better shelter provision after 1999, each mirrored by a case-study. If the brief of this thesis were broader, it would be interesting to analyse a contemporary comparative case study to understand how standards of interior quality in UNHCR refugee camp shelter design have developed since the 1990s.

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      57. Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995.

ANNEX

ACRONYMS

- FIWFRS = First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees

- MSF = Médecins Sans Frontières

- UN = United Nations

- UNCHS = United Nations Centre for Human Settlements

- UNHCR = United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

- UNOCHA = United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

DEFINITIONS

- International community = countries of the world considered collectively.

- Philanthropic = person or organization seeking to promote the welfare of others.

- Refugee = person forced to leave their country to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. Once a person becomes a refugee, they are likely to remain displaced for many years.

- Refugee Camp = temporary facilities built to provide immediate protection and assistance to people forced to flee.

- Refugee Shelter = basic structures ranging from temporary tent through transitional housing units to permanent camps, created as a residence for victims who have lost or abandoned their homes.

TIMELINE

1863 — Henry Dunant establishes the **Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)**

1949 — **Geneva Convention** on the Laws of War

20th century : from philantropic housing to century of camps

Shifting target in philanthropic housing from the working-class communities in industrializing cities to communities displaced by catastrophes caused by conflict and natural disaster

Cold War Modernism, common style of manifestation of philanthropic dwelling, for its dehumanizing effects generated by its preoccupation to produce monumental forms of social dwellings. humanitarianism exercises its own form of government of the social, the mass, humanity.

UNHCR politicised origins prevent specialised professionals within its policy-making division, the mandate is to provide shelter through legal channels

1950 — **Official establishment of the UNHCR** to provide aid for the millions of European refugees who had lost their homes during WWII

1954 — The UNHCR wins its **first Nobel Peace Prize** for its provision of assistance to WWII refugees

1970s — May 1968 shows the potential derived from the involvement communities

MMSF promotes a '**new humanitarianism**', prevailing to the current date, focused on emotive responses rather than institutionalised ones

1981 — The UNHCR wins its **second Nobel Prize** for its worldwide (Africa, Asia, America) provision of assistance to refugees

1993 — Wolfgang Neumann, first professional architect in a UNHCR Committee, convokes the **First International Workshop on Improved Shelter Response and Environment for Refugees (FIWISRER)**

new section to handle emergency coordination of operations, which promptly proceeded to plan various large refugee settlements

unprecedented number of refugees fleeing in massefrom one country

The humanitarian field manifests its abstract ideal into architectural action by establishing new international rules.

Architects manifest socio-political commitment in the problem-solving potential of architecture --> from small pro-bono innovative design-build structures to establishment of architectural practices entirely dedicated to the question of humanitarianism and shelter

UNHCR internal transformation to integrate experienced humanitarian technicians in policy-making to directly facilitate better refugee shelter design to humanise the condition of the refugees

1994 — **Rwanda Genocide**

1995 — Official report of the FIWISRER by Zetter

UNHR Shigeru Ban's **Paper Emergency Shelter**s for Ghiembe, Rwanda

Establishment of the **Voluntary Architects' Network** (VAN) by Ban

1996 — **UNCHS Nairobi workshop** to facilitate the continuum from relief to development

UNHR official Archives

Sphere Project Consortium for globally applicable minimum standards for humanitarian response services

theshelterproject (today Shelter Centre) for a manual for transitional refugee shelter

1999 — Last **Paper Emergency Shelter**s for Ghiembe

revision of the **Handbook for Emergencies -** basic human needs are equal universally.

UNHCR interagencies to coordinate shelter more effectively - 5 thousand operational aid agencies for 80 million forcibly displaced people

2020S — Establishment of **The Global Shelter Cluster** (IASC) by UNHCR

Policy on Alternatives to Camps

Shelter Design Catalogue

" (...) the trouble arose when it appeared that the new categories of persecuted were far too numerous to be handled by an unofficial practice destined for exceptional cases (and thus the camp became) the only 'country' the world had to offer the stateless" Hannah Arendt, 1970s

"Shelter to protect not the social but rather what is understood as a universal humanity" Ticktin, 2015

"[I]n a world population of 5.5 billion, roughly one in every 130 people on earth has been forcedintoflight. (...) Problems of refugees have not changed, but the refugee problem has." UNHCR, 1993

"to develop an emergency shelter concept, a policy framework, and a means for implementation that would consider emergency response protocols, standards, and technology, and establish a standing forum for the dissemination of information and knowledge." Siddiqi, 2017

"a binary split between a civilisedUsof the First World and a perceived primitiveOther" Herz, 2008

"Shelter is contextual and there exists no 'one-size-fits-all' solution"

Figure 19. Timeline mapping the historiography of the FIWISRER displaying intertwining events in policy, conventions, workshops and projects for improved shelter by the UNHCR. Source: image by the author, (The Netherlands, 2021).

THANK YOU