

The daunting task of rebuilding after disaster requires strong inclusion of affected people and governments, and after decades of such programmes, Esther Charlesworth and Iftekhar Ahmed have added significantly to the debate with *Sustainable Housing Reconstruction*. This detailed and colourful book is essential reading for those involved, covering a range of disasters, typologies and program approaches, putting the interests of affected people at the centre of the debate.

Brett Moore, *Global Shelter, Infrastructure and Reconstruction Advisor, World Vision International*

Post-disaster politicians always say, 'We shall rebuild here now'. What rubbish. The disaster struck accidentally but the damage is no accident. Damaged buildings and housing are the result of hastily and poorly built structures that could not sustain the forces of nature. So, rebuilding has to be carefully thought out and well executed so there is not a repeat of the catastrophe that occurred. *Sustainable Housing Reconstruction* is a timely antidote to the rush to rebuild by laying out with cases how human and physical repair has to occur for the reconstructed post-disaster community to be fit for the future.

Edward J Blakely, *Honorary Professor of Urban Policy, United States Studies Centre at the University of Sydney and Director of Recovery post-Katrina for the City of New Orleans 2007–2009*

Far too many disaster reconstruction projects regard the efficient delivery of rows of faceless houses as the measure of success. However, in this vital study Esther Charlesworth and Iftekhar Ahmed move well beyond this notion. They claim, in twelve well-chosen international case studies, that housing reconstruction can be sustainable, delivering 'added-value'. This can include newly acquired building skills that strengthen livelihoods, safety from hazard forces, community resilience and a close identification of users with their creation. The book is a joy to read, aided by a splendid layout and delightful illustrations and must qualify as the best looking book on disaster recovery ever published!

Ian Davis, *Visiting Professor in Disaster Risk Management in Copenhagen, Lund, Kyoto and Oxford Brookes Universities*

Through 12 case studies from Australia, Bangladesh, Haiti, Sri Lanka, the USA and Vietnam, *Sustainable Housing Reconstruction* focuses on the housing reconstruction process after an earthquake, tsunami, cyclone, flood or fire. Design of post-disaster housing is not simply replacing the destroyed house but, as these case studies highlight, a means to not only build a safer house but also a more resilient community; not to simply return to the same condition as before the disaster, but an opportunity for building back better.

The book explores two main themes:

- Housing reconstruction is most successful when involving the users in the design and construction process.
- Housing reconstruction is most effective when it is integrated with community infrastructure, services and the means to create real livelihoods.

The case studies included in this book highlight work completed by different agencies and built environment professionals in diverse disaster-affected contexts. With a global acceleration of natural disasters, often linked to accelerating climate change, there is a critical demand for robust housing solutions for vulnerable communities.

This book provides professionals, policy makers and community stakeholders working in the international development and disaster risk management sectors, with an evidence-based exploration of how to add real value through the design process in housing reconstruction. Herein then, the knowledge we need to build, an approach to improve our processes, a window to understanding the complex domain of post-disaster housing reconstruction.

Esther Charlesworth is Associate Professor and the Director of the Humanitarian Architecture Research Bureau (HARB) in the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. Esther is the Founding Director of Architects Without Frontiers (AWF). Her most recent book, *Humanitarian Architecture: 15 Stories of Architects Working after Disaster*, was published by Routledge in 2014.

Iftekhar Ahmed is a Research Fellow in the Humanitarian Architecture Research Bureau (HARB), School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia. His research interests span the areas of disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, urbanisation and community development.

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Iftekhar Ahmed

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