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Moving from Pilot to Scale: a comparative Study of Innovate Shelter and Settlements Response Project for Urban IDPs in Mekelle and Adigrat, Tigray, Ethiopia

Samuel Bekele

(Samuel Bekele, PhD candidate, School of architecture and urban planning, Mekelle University, Ethiopia and School of doctoral studies of IUAV, University of Venice, Italy, archsami@yahoo.com)

1 ABSTRACT

Globally, more than half of internally displaced peoples (IDPs) have lived in urban areas as the influx exacerbated by natural and man-made shocks/disasters. Following the two-year war (2020-22) in Tigray (Northern Ethiopia), more than 2 million have internally displaced, hosted in collective centres and makeshift shelters. They are still struggling to access basic services in cities and towns that have scarce resilient and sustainable capabilities. To respond to urban IDPs for shelter and settlement provision, an innovative pilot area-based (neighborhood) approach (ABA) has been implemented in Mekelle city with a scaling up a year later in Adigrat town. This paper aims to gain insight into the scale-up type, paths, process, and management of ABA humanitarian project by comparing the performances of two experiences with the help of a selected literature review on related topics. The study is conducted using a comparative case study approach using available data from primary and secondary sources and from a quick meta-analysis. Four types of scaling-up patterns have been identified: qualitative, functional, political and organizational, each with its own dynamics and degree of context sensitivity. Three scale-up pathways include expansion, replication and spontaneous diffusion. The comparative assessment reveals that both pilot and scale-up projects attempted to apply the principles of ABA model in urban post-disaster recovery (Sanderson and Sitko, 2018), exploit the vernacular architecture system of hidmo houses, the building code and planning local culture, as well as the strong sociocultural family tie. The scaled-up project benefited from lessons learned from the pilot, such as implementation of a multi-sector approach and household-tailored shelter response, though it faded out on inclusion and exclusion criteria, selection and targeting of beneficiaries that highly contribute to the effective ABA implementation in urban settlements where a large gap between need and response still exists.

Keywords: Ethiopia, Tigray, urban IDP, area-based approach, scale-up

2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Every year, millions of people are forced to leave their homes with conflict and disasters as the main drivers. In 2023, a record 75.9 million people are forcibly displaced internally across the globe. Of the total, 68.3 million were displaced by conflict and violence and 7.7 million by disaster. Almost nearly half (46 percent) live in sub-Saharan Africa. Some 34.8 million people were displaced in 2023 which is up from the previous year. The biggest increase came from Sudan, currently in the midst of a bloody and disruptive civil war, followed by DRC,Somalia and Ethiopia. Ethiopia, in particular, had 2.85 million conflict and violent induced IDPs at the end of 2023. (IDMC, 2024). Tigray region, in the top north of Ethiopia, hosts the highest number of IDPs, primarily due to the 2020-22 conflict with the Federal Government: 80% were living with host communities mainly in urban areas such as Abi Adi, Adigrat, Adwa, Axum, Mekelle, Sheraro, and Shire. (UNOCHA, Ethiopia – Situation Report, 1 Mar 2024, 2024) (IOM, Ethiopia – Site Assessment Round 33 – Tigray, 2023). According to the UNOCHA, when the war intensified in 2021, 5 million Tigray people needed an urgent humnaitarian assistant and 63,110 did flee to Sudan as refugees (UNOCHA, Ethiopia – Tigray Region Humanitarian Update, 2021). Out of them, 2,036,398 become IDPs (432,358 households) in Tigray (IOM, Emergency Site Assessment: Northern Ethiopia Crisis 7, 2021).

Urban centers around the world have become a destination for millions of internally displaced people (IDPs) seeking short, medium, or long-term refuge. The international community and local governments prefer to focus on IDPs in camps and collective centres: schools, public building, disused buildings, and alike. And that, despite the fact that urban settlements become a preferable home for 6 out of 10 refugees (Crawford, 2015) and slightly half of all IDPs. (IDMC, 2015)

2.1 Area-based approaches (ABA): a shift in shelter and settlement humanitarian response

In 2010 the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) called for a ‘paradigm shift in humanitarian assistance in urban areas based on a district or community-based [approach], rather than an individual beneficiary

approach, so as to forge partnerships for assistance delivery and recovery with actors on the ground.' (IASC, 2010). A World Bank review on ABAs, following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, concludes that 'area-based interventions led by local authorities or communities can have wide-ranging benefits and should be encouraged' (IRC, 2015). The International Rescue Committee (IRC) also recommended that humanitarian responders should adopt "an area-based approach".And that is to coordinate the delivery of services in urban areas, to ensure coordination devices as a complement to existing governance systems, and accommodate a suitable multisectoral and multi-stakeholder approach that crises require (IRC, 2015). According to the IRC, ABA is defined as an area, or better a space, rather than a mere sector or target group. All stakeholders, services and needs are mapped and assessed, and relevant actors mobilised and coordinated with (IRC, 2015). In 2013, the global shelter cluster (GSC) called for a 'wider acceptance of a settlement approach in humanitarian responses' in its 2013-2017 strategy and ran a session called 'Towards a settlement approach: discussion on integrated programming of humanitarian responses and the role of the GSC'.

2.2 Scaling up

The concept of 'scale' is used in various scientific disciplines that attribute different meanings to it. The term 'scale' concerns the spatial, temporal, quantitative, or analytical dimensions used by scientists to measure and study objectives and processes and often understood in terms of hierarchy (Gibson et al., 2000) (Gillespie, 2004). In geography and spatial analysis, scale is a dimensional relationship between a cartographic representation and a physical reality. In our case, scale represents a biunivocal translation between two practices or contexts. It becomes a tool that allows us to conceptualize and compare two settlement patterns as responses to emergency.[1]

To achieve the vision of scale, projects develop a strategy referred to as a scaling up. Scaling up refers to efforts to bring more benefits to people over a wider geographic area: in short, more quickly, more equitably, and more lastingly. (IIRR, 2000) (Hartmann and Linn, 2008) define upscaling as "expanding, adapting, and sustaining successful policies, programs, or projects in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people." According to the scale up taxonomy adopted by (Uvin and Miller, 1994) and (Korten, 1980), essentially four different types of scaling up processes are differentiated: qualitative, functional, political, and organizational.

Types and paths of scale up
Qualitative:
spread: increasing numbers of people spontaneously adhere to the organization and its programs **replication:** a successful program (methodology and mode of organization) is repeated elsewhere **nurture:** a well-staffed and well-funded outside agency, using a specific incentive-based methodology, nurtures local initiatives on an increasingly large scale **horizontal aggregation:** a number of distinct organizations or programs combine their resources or merges **integration:** a program is integrated into existing structures and systems and in particular government structures, after it has demonstrated its potential
Functional:
horizontal (sectoral) integration: unrelated new activities are added to existing programs, or new programs are undertaken by the same organization **vertical (factoral) integration:** other components related to the same chain
Political:
information and mobilization: an organization's members or local communities are stimulated to participate in the body politic **networking:** non-permanent collaboration is created between various political organizations on political issues of joint interest **vertical aggregation:** federative structures are created to influence policy making **direct entry into politics:** grassroots organizations, or their leaders, either create a political party or join an existing one
Organizational:
diversify funding **sources** increase degree of **self-financing** through consultancy, sub-contracting, service for fee. etc. promote **skill** development develop procedures and structures allowing for **organizational learning** create **institutional variety**, both internally and externally maintain participation and accountability

Table 1: Scale up type and paths

(Larry Cooley and Richard Kohl, 2005) propose a framework for scaling up innovations, distinguishing between expansion, replication, and spontaneous diffusion:

- Expansion: Scaling up within the original organization by extending services to new locations or increasing the number of beneficiaries served.

[1] Conversation with D Patassini (research tutor), Iuav University of Venice (February 2025).

- Replication: Scaling up by other organizations, where the original model or intervention is adopted and implemented elsewhere.
- Spontaneous Diffusion: The informal spread of ideas or practices without coordinated efforts, often through networks and word-of-mouth. These categories, referred to as organizational paths for scaling up, highlight different strategies for broadening the impact of interventions.

In the context of humanitarian responses, the term “scale” or "scaling up" is used variably, encompassing aspects of development and emergency post-crisis interventions. This variability contributes to a limited body of literature specifically addressing scaling up in humanitarian emergencies, which may differ in concept and approach from development-focused scaling up. Notable contributions to this field include works by the (WHO & ExpandNet, 2010), (Edwards, M. and Hulme, D., 2002), and (Uvin, 1995).

Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme's 2013 guidance note on scaling up development programmes presents three distinct scenarios for scaling up, as illustrated in the accompanying figure.

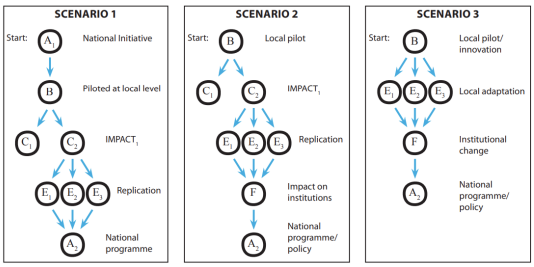

Figure 1:scenarios for scaling up (UNDP,2013)

Literature reviews and studies show that different definitions of the concept, type, and phases of the term scale up exist. However, many definitions have one centrality: that it is a move from pilot to new project in different ways/approaches.[2] The table below shows a list of summaries of the evolution of interpretation, meaning, and type of the scale-up.

Sources	Definition and/or type of scale
Korten (1980)	scaling up process as three successive stages – effectiveness (developing a solution that works), efficiency (finding a way to deliver the solution at an affordable cost), and expansion (developing a way to provide a solution on a larger scale)
Berg (1987)	organizationally, management-wise, and financially
Clark (1991)	three types of scaling-up: project replication, building grassroots movements, and influencing policy reform.The first two are linked to expansion.
Hyden (1992)	differentiates between scaling-up organizationally and functionally or activity-wise.
Howes and Sattar (1992)	"intensification" refer to addition of new activities to existing programs.
USAID,1992	scale-up as expansion of membership or target group
Fisher (1993)	scaling-up as a process of influencing policy and the term "scaling out" to describe expansion
IIRR (2000)	scaling up as effort to bring more quality benefits to more people over a wider geographic area more quicly,more equitably and more lastingly.
IIRR (2001)	scaling-up refers to vertical and horizontal interactions
Uvin 1995	four different types of scaling up process are differentiated-qualitative,functional,political and organizational
Consultative group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), 2000	scaling up referes to efforts to bring more quality benefits to more people over a wider georapgic area more quicly,more equitably and more lastingly.
World Bank 2003	Scaling-up: efficiently increase socioeconomic impact from a small to a large scale of coverage.
Hartmanm and Linn (2008)	Scaling up means expanding, adapting and sustaining successful projects, programs or policies in different places and over time to reach a greater number of people (originally proposed by the World Bank, but explicitly endorsed by the authors).

Table 2: Literature review and previous studies (Scale definition and types)

Following the two-year war (2020-22) in Tigray, more than 2 million have internally displaced, hosted in collective centres and makeshift shelters, exposed to struggling to access basic services in cities and towns that have less resilient and sustainable capabilities. In Tigray, 8 out of 10 IDPs are presently living in host communities, most of them in urban areas (UNOCHA, Ethiopia-Situation Report, 1 Mar 2024, 2024). In such cases, a one-size-fits-all approach to emergency shelter responses that includes standard kits such as tarpaulins becomes less practical. When displacement becomes prolonged, urban IDPs attempt to transit from relief to recovery, in which an innovative and context-driven humanitarian response becomes crucial.

[2] Combinations of patterns, pathways and scenarios might draw a variety of scaling up practices (Conversation with D Patassini (research tutor), Iuav University of Venice – February 2025).

Area-based approaches (ABA) is an alternative shelter and settlement response. It can be defined as "supporting people after a natural or manmade disaster in a given specific locations, such as a neighborhood, that help to transition effectively from relief to recovery." (Sanderson and Sitko, 2018) The innovative shelter and settlement responses so-called "an area-based approach" or "neighborhood approach" or "settlement approach" implies a similar definition and can be used interchangeably.

In 2022 and 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Ethiopia implemented both pilot and scaled-up Area-Based Approach (ABA) shelter and settlement response projects in the Tigray region, specifically in Mekelle city and Adigrat town. This study conducts a comparative analysis of these projects, aiming to assess the transition from pilot to scale-up phases and to provide insights into the types and pathways of scaling up. The analysis offers a detailed examination of the project processes, management, and performance of the ABA or neighborhood projects. The study emphasizes humanitarian response initiatives in the shelter and settlement sector, focusing on the often-overlooked internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in urban areas within host communities.

3 NEIGHBORHOOD APPROACHN (NA) PROJECT

The neighborhood approach (NA) project is an innovative shelter and settlement response targeting IDPs who are living in host community houses. The response includes in-kind shelter construction kits and cash for skilled labor. The intent of NA project is to increase social cohesion between IDPs and host families, avoid protection-related risks, create economic opportunities, and improve access to services, such as reopening of schools occupied by IDPs. In other words, the main purpose of NA project intervention was to favor the assimilation of IDPs in the host communities. Host communities (families) would accommodate IDPs as members of their family, relatives, or friends without expecting any compensation or reward. Living together was part of the socio-cultural habit, and expected to reinforce affection and give care to each other. NA project was initially implemented as a pilot in Mekelle city by IOM Ethiopia and funded by EHF (Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund). The project work was completed within a year in 2022. On the other hand, the scale-up project in Adigrat town was also implemented by the same partner, IOM Ethiopia, but funded by BHA (Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance/USAID, now suspended). The project work was completed within a year in 2024. Both consist of the project life cycle, including initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, and closure, which is not common to emergency shelter projects during active conflict and relief (recovery) period.

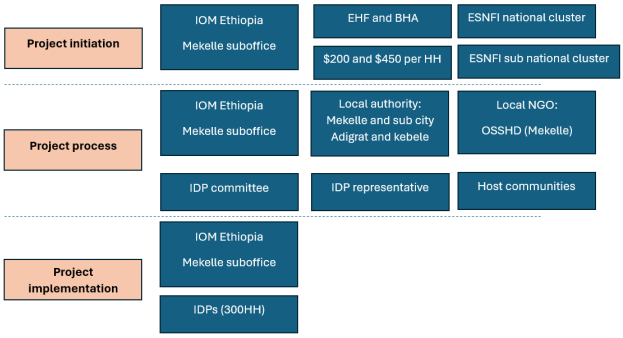

Figure 2: Project structure and flow including the stockholders mapping (illustration by: author)

Unlike other emergency shelter provision projects, which are very standard in response mode, NA pilot project implementation passed through rigorous feasibility study, house-to-house verifications and tests, demand identification and then resulted in a tailored household (HH) shelter response. NA implementation was supported by active engagement of different actors such as local authorities (mainly municipality and Bureau of labour and social affairs (BOLSA) office), local NGOs such as Organzation for social services,health and development (OSSHD), host community, IDP representative, and selection committee (which is gender-balanced). Participation level, size of committee members, and city/town administrative structure vary greatly. Stakeholders support the project in awareness creation, including providing valuable information to IDPs and host communities on project nature, response type, selection criteria, kit distribution, shelter construction, monitoring and supervision.

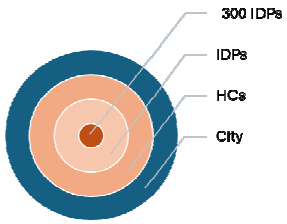

Figure 3: Project hierarchy: city, host community (HC), urban IDPs and target IDPs (abstraction: author)

Project information of the two case study:		
Project location	Mekelle	Adigrat
Implementing partner	IOM	IOM
Project title	Neighboring Approach Piloting Project	Scale up of Neighboring Approach Project
GPS coordinates	13° 29' N and 39° 28' E	14° 16' N and 39° 27' E
Project country	Ethiopia	Ethiopia
Region (province)	Tigray	Tigray
Zone	Mekelle special zone	Eastern zone
Subcity/Kebele	7 subcity	6 kebele
Donor	EHF	BHA
Budget initial	$60,000.00 ($200 per HH)	$135,000.00 ($450 per HH)
Number of beneficiaries	300 HH	300 HH
Project commencemnet date	January 2022	January 2024
Project ending date	December 2022	December 2024
Target population	Urban IDPs	Urban IDPs
IDP place of origin	Western Tigray	All zones except western Tigray

Table 3: Case study basic information

According to Sanderson and Sitko (2018), an area-based approach (ABA) or neighborhood approach (NA) do help the transition from relief to recovery. They work with existing structures and can be scaled up. (Sanderson, 2018) Five key elements of ABA are:

(1) People-centered, as meaningful engagement with affected population is essential.

(2) Focus on a defined area, such as a neighborhood.

(3) Take time, spanning relief to recovery.

(4) Can be scaled up to other areas, which emphasizes the need for local ownership.

(5) Rely on strong collaboration between sectors and key actors.

Based on the context-led project management cycle, the principles are intended by humanitarian aid agencies for naturally triggered disasters responses in urban areas. However, in this study, neighborhood pilot and scale up project have been evaluated using Sanderson and Sitko's criteria in post-war emergency and protracted displacement context.

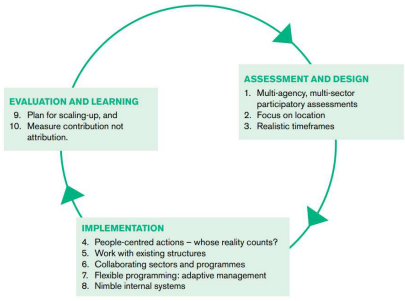

Figure 4: Core principles and criteria applied to Urban ABA in post-disaster context (Sanderson, 2018)

4 METHOD AND APPROACH

Both case study projects have been implemented as a pilot in Mekelle city in 2022 and then scaled up a year later in Adigrat town in 2024. As a result of the two-year war between 2020-22, a large number of IDPs have been influxed into different parts of the Tigray region. According to the metro area population prior to the 2020 war, Mekelle city has a population of 524,000 with an annual growth rate of 3.76 percent, and in 2022 was 565,000 with a 3.86% increase from 2021. On the other hand, Adigrat has a population of 121,776 in 2022 with an annual population growth rate of 5.1%.

Figure 5: Map of study area: Mekelle and Adigrat in Tigray region, Ethiopia (source: UNHCR via AP)

A comparative case study involves comparing multiple cases to develop explanations or generalizations. In this research, both case studies were selected based on their new nature of response, such as the pilot project in Mekelle, followed by the scale-up project in Adigrat town. Both case study projects have the same size of beneficiaries (300 HH IDP population), but different geographic locations. Mekelle is the capital city of Tigray regional state, whereas Adigrat is a town and administrative capital of an eastern zone of Tigray. The case study method explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection using multiple sources, reports and case themes (Creswell, 2013). The objective of comparative analysis focuses on similarities and differences in the values of variables, the shape of relations among variables, and the occurrence of events or patterns of events. In our case, the comparative analysis within the experimental framework includes the project management processes and ABA principles (assessment and design, implementation and evaluation, and learning).

According to Yin 2014 and related literature, when dealing with an extreme or a unique case, it is useful to design an empirical inquiry able to link the phenomenon with its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (Yin, 2014). In a multiple case study, research involves the study of several cases within a particular research framework or setting. This approach can help uncover patterns, similarities, and differences among the cases, leading to deeper insights and a more comprehensive understanding.

In case study research, data collection is a critical process that involves gathering comprehensive and contextually rich information about a specific case within its real-life setting. The objective is to achieve a deep understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Various data collection methods are employed, including literature reviews, interviews, surveys, field notes, document and artifact analysis,focus group discussion (FGD) ,archival research, reports, and case files. Triangulation – the use of multiple data sources and methods – is applied both in data collection and analysis to enhance the credibility and depth of the findings. This approach facilitates cross-case comparisons, highlighting similarities and differences across cases.

For cross-case analysis, researchers compare data across multiple cases, employing techniques such as categorization, pattern matching, thematic analysis, constant comparative methods, and the use of comparison matrices and typologies. These methods aid in identifying generalizable patterns while also exploring the unique characteristics of each case. By systematically organizing and analyzing the data, researchers can draw meaningful conclusions and develop logical strategies that inform both theory and practice. This comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis ensures that case study research provides valuable insights into complex issues, contributing to a nuanced understanding of the cases under study.

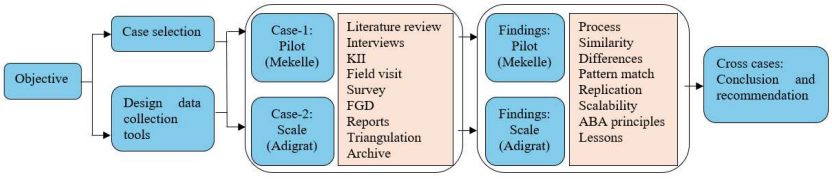

Figure 6: Research methodology (source: authors)

5 RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

During the emergency and post-war period, the need for alternative shelter and settlement solutions, such as the NA project, is immense in Tigray, as a significant portion of IDPs live within host communities. The

transition from a pilot project to a scaled-up approach in various geographic areas by the same organization represents an expansion strategy (Larry Cooley and Richard Kohl, 2005). Each project supports 300 households (more than 2,700 individuals), consisting of urban IDPs and their paired host families.

5.1 The pilot project

The pilot project was implemented in seven sub cities of Mekelle and targeted 300 households (HH) of IDPs, comprising more than 1,500 individuals. Of the 300 households surveyed, 175 were female-headed. The age of the survey participants ranged from 18 to 75 years, with an average age of 47, and the average family size was 5. All the interviewed households shared a house with a host family. Regarding housing typology, 76% of the floors were made of cement or concrete, 50% of the walls were constructed from stone, and 90% of the roofs of CGI sheets. Mekelle is divided into seven sub cities: Adihaki, Ayder, Hadinet, Hawelti, Kedamay Weyane, Semen, and Quiha. Each subcity contains different numbers of tabiya/kebele (the smallest administrative unit in a town, lower than a subcity or woreda), with a total of 27 kebeles. According to the Key Informant Interviews (KII), the 300 beneficiaries were distributed across the seven subcities and kebeles proportionally, based on the number of IDPs, in consultation with the local government. A large number of IDPs are found in Ayder sub city, followed by Adihaki and Quiha. This distribution means that 20% of the beneficiaries are from Ayder, as it hosts the highest number of IDPs and is one of the largest sub cities in terms of surface. All the respondents (100%) stated that the durable solution for prolonged displacement is to return to their place of origin and begin recovery efforts, even though 40% of the region remains inaccessible.

The sex disaggregation in households and individuals is shown in the table below.

Indicators	Male	Female	Total
Households (HH) head	125	175	300
Individuals/total family size	718	805	1523

Table 4: Gender

The shelter response types/methods include both in-kind kits and cash. The in-kind kits consist of CGI (corrugated galvanized iron), cement, poles, nails (for structural and roofing purposes), locking systems (for windows and doors), and hinges (for windows and doors). Cash support for labor is determined based on the individual household's (HH) Bill of Quantities (BoQ), but it is aligned with three scenarios of response. According to the survey of 300 households, 25% of the households require expansion of a new shelter within the host family's house, while 45% of the households have shelter within the host family's home but need renovations, such as replacing the roof, doors, and windows. The remaining 30% of households share a house with host families, but they require rehabilitation of worn-out house components.

The three scenarios were developed based on a house-to-house survey and tailored into kits according to the available space within the host family's plot of land and the building materials. According to the Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) conducted in September 2022, with a 20% sample of households, the success rate of the project was only 40%. However, no further monitoring was conducted to assess the entire population after the PDM.

The pilot project's implementation process and design were innovative in their approach and showed potential for scaling up. Documents such as the project working manuals, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), distribution reports, final project reports, and lessons learned sessions, along with presentations conducted by the implementing partner, paved the way for scaling up the project.

5.2 Scale up project

Like other towns in Tigray, most of the IDPs in Adigrat town were found in collective centres (primary and secondary schools), host communities (across six kebele), and a planned camp called the Ex-UNMEE (United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea) camp. Following the 2022 pilot project in Mekelle, IOM conducted the first scale-up of the ABA project in Adigrat town, located about 120 km north of Mekelle. The scale-up project began with a feasibility study and followed the same project management process as the pilot project.

The project targeted 300 households (HH) of IDPs, or 1,200 individuals, who were living with host families. The age of the survey participants ranged from 18 to 100 years, with an average age of 59, and the average family size was 4. According to the house-to-house survey, the housing typology, size, and required shelter

interventions were identified. Regarding housing typology, 70% of the IDPs lived in host family houses, with plot sizes ranging from 175 to 250 square meters. The houses were predominantly made of stone walls, concrete floors, and CGI (corrugated galvanized iron) roofs. Similar to the pilot project, all respondents (100%) stated that the durable solution for prolonged displacement was to return to their place of origin and begin recovery efforts.

The sex disaggregation of households and individuals is shown in the table below.

Indicators	Male	Female	Total
Households head	161	139	300
Individuals/total family size	590	610	1200

Table 5: Gender.

Adigrat is divided into six kebele. The allocation of the 300 households (HH) was based on the number of IDPs and the size of each kebele. Kebele 04 received 30% of the beneficiaries, the highest allocation, followed by kebele 05. Adigrat's local authorities, the IDPs' representative committee, and the selection committee were actively involved in implementing the project from the outset.

Both the pilot and scale-up projects used similar response types/methods, which included in-kind assistance and cash support. The in-kind shelter kits contained CGI (corrugated galvanized iron), cement, nails (for structural and roofing purposes), hinges (for doors and windows), and locking systems (for doors and windows). Cash support for labor was determined based on the individual household's Bill of Quantities (BoQ).

Unlike the pilot project, the scale-up project included an additional sector focused on WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), with components such as dignity kits and latrine slab cover. Tailored responses were provided for each household to ensure that the interventions were unique and context-specific, in contrast to the pilot project, which primarily focused on three scenarios: expansion, renovation, and rehabilitation.

5.3 Similarities and differences

Comparative analysis examines the similarities found in different situations or cases that share common elements, while also highlighting the differences between them. Comparative project analysis:

Project objective	To provide an alternative emergency shelter and settlement solution for IDPs who are being hosted by or sharing accommodation with host communities in urban areas.
Target	Urban IDPs found in host family and/or host community.
Implementation tools used	Feasibility study, project plan and schedule, intention survey, various meetings, official correspondence, notices, formats, templates, and scenario/kit development were all part of the process. In the scale-up project, Google Maps was also used to georeference each household's location, which later facilitated monitoring and supervision activities.
Project structure	The project's structure includes the implementing partner, donor, ESNFI cluster (both national and subnational), IDPs (beneficiaries, representative committee, and selection committee), local authorities (municipality, subcity, and kebele), and the host community, all of whom were actively involved during the project initiation and implementation process. In the pilot project, a local NGO called OSSHD was also engaged during the first phase of the project to support grassroots awareness creation and sensitization on the project's nature and response types.
Shelter responses type/methodology	Both in-kind shelter kits and cash-based intervention (CBI) for skilled laborers.
Project management process	Includes following milestone activities: Local authority, IDP & host community engagement Intention and housing typology survey Conception of individual typologies of responses HLP (housing, land, and properties) verification, beneficiary sensitization, and grouping Distribution of kits and cash Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) Shelter construction Supervision and monitoring
Challenges	Operational challenges such as delay of procurment, industrial materials inflation and inconsistent support from local authorities.

Table 6: Similarities.

The scaled-up project primarily benefited from lessons learned during the pilot phase, such as the implementation of a multisector approach encompassing shelter, settlement, and WASH sectors, as well as household-tailored shelter responses. However, it faced challenges in the selection and targeting of beneficiaries, which are crucial for the effective ABA implementation in urban settlements, where there is a

significant gap between needs and responses. The pilot project targeted IDPs in urban areas originating from inaccessible regions, mainly Western Tigray.

ABA principles application and and project management process	Pilot project-Mekelle	Scale up project-Adigrat
Multi-agency and multi-sectoral sectoral participation	One main partner (IOM), one local partner (OSSHD), and one sector (shelter and settlement)	One partner (IOM) and multi-sector (shelter and settlement and WASH)
Focus on location	Geographical area / area-based /neigborhood responses rather than individual IDPs (Mekelle)	Geographical area / area-based /neigborhood responses rather than individual IDPs (Adigrat)
Responses nature and type	Cluster-based scenarios have been developed for the expansion of new shelters, renovation of existing shelters, and rehabilitation of worn-out shelters.	Tailored and contextual responses have been provided based on household demand, including new shelter construction, renovation, and rehabilitation scenarios.
In-kind shelter response	Based on three scenarios	Based on individual household (HH) BoQ
Cash response	Unconditional, one-time cash payments have been provided for the purpose of skilled labor.	The cash response comprises two phases: the first involves unconditional cash transfers, and the second provides conditional cash transfers based on pre-agreed performance criteria related to shelter construction.
Use of local building materials and constructions	Stone and hollow concrete blocks (HCB) are the dominant building materials for house construction.	Stone, hollow concrete blocks (HCB), and mud blocks are the dominant building materials for house construction.
Settlement type	IDPs are found in planned settlements with host families and communities plot.	IDPs are found in both planned and informal settlements in urban and peri-urban areas.
Impact of IDP returnee exercises	No returnee exercises were conducted during the blockade and siege in 2022.	Two rounds of returnee exercises led by partners and the government affected the project.
Inclusion and exclusion criteria for beneficiaries	Only IDPs from inaccessible areas, primarily from West Tigray, are included.	None
Selection and targeting of beneficiaries	IDPs with vulnerability.	IDPs from both accessible and inaccessible areas, including those with vulnerabilities.

Table 7: Differences

Figure 7 (left): A mud block shelter constructed by IDP on a host family's plot in Adigrat (source: author 2024). Figure 8 (right): A CGI shelter constructed by IDP on a host family's plot in Mekelle (source: author 2022)

6 CONCLUSION

The study offers a comprehensive understanding of innovative shelter and settlement response projects for urban IDPs in Mekelle city as a pilot and scaled-up initiative in Adigrat town. It aims to compare the implementation processes of both projects and examines the transition from pilot to scale. Scaling up seldom occurs as a one-dimensional process; rather, it involves multiple dimensions. Consequently, four distinct types of scaling-up processes – qualitative, functional, political, and organizational – have been identified, each associated with different organizational pathways: expansion, replication, and spontaneous diffusion.

The findings of this study indicate that both qualitative and functional scaling-up processes were implemented during the transition from pilot to scale in the NA projects. These processes involved adding beneficiaries in new geographical locations, executed by the same organization using the same methodological approach. Strategies such as spread, replication, and horizontal integration were employed to facilitate the smooth scalability of the projects. The scaling scenarios revealed that local innovation projects typically commence at the grassroots level, followed by local adaptation and institutional change, eventually evolving into national programs or policies. The comparative assessment of the process and implementation of ABA model for urban post-disaster recovery (Sanderson and Sitko, 2018) indicates that both projects endeavored to apply ABA principles, though there were challenges in fully implementing all aspects. The scaled-up project benefited from lessons learned during the pilot phase, such as the integration of a multisectoral approach, including WASH, and tailored responses based on comprehensive house-to-house assessments. Both projects leveraged the sociocultural family ties among IDPs and host families, which enhanced social cohesion. The ABA responses capitalized on the advantages of vernacular architectural

systems, notably the use of locally available building materials like mud blocks in Adigrat and the traditional "hidmo" construction method for shared stone walls. Additionally, adherence to building codes and proclamations, such as regulations governing the built-to-open-space ratio on plots and building footprints, was observed.

This paper offers valuable insights for humanitarian partners in the shelter and settlement sector, as well as for program and policy makers involved in emergency and post-crisis periods. Shelter partners can draw lessons from the innovative pilot project and its subsequent scaling-up strategy, processes, and pathways. Many projects fail to scale up after the pilot phase due to inadequate planning tools and the absence of structured steps, such as developing a scale-up plan, establishing preconditions for scaling up, and effectively implementing the scaling-up process. This study achieves its objectives by collectively addressing project management processes and ABA principles (Sanderson and Sitko, 2018), including assessment, design, implementation, and evaluation and learning. These insights directly contribute to the paradigm shift needed in shelter and settlement responses in urban areas, as advocated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the Global Shelter Cluster (GSC), and donors.

The comparative study is limited to two projects – a pilot project and its subsequent scaled-up version – implemented in different towns. Therefore, the findings may not be broadly generalizable. Future research could expand the number of case studies to enhance the robustness of the conclusions. Despite this limitation, the study offers significant contributions. The pilot project introduced innovative approaches in post-war crisis shelter and settlement sectors, providing valuable lessons for humanitarian shelter partners, program managers, cluster coordinators, and policymakers. By employing a comparative study approach, the research highlights similarities and differences in variables and patterns, enriching the understanding of effective strategies in this field.

7 ABBREVATIONS

ABA	Area-based approach
BHA	Bureau for humanitarian assistance
BOLSA	Bureau of labour and social affairs
BoQ	Bill of quantities
CGI	Corrugated galvanised iron
EHF	Ethiopian Humanitarian Fund
ESNFI	Emergency Shelter and Non-Food Items
FGD	Focus group discussion
GSC	Global shelter cluster
HH	Households
IDP	Internally displaced people
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
KII	Key Informant Interviews
NA	Neighborhood approach
NGO	Nongovernmental organization
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
OSSHD	Organzation for social services,health and development
PDM	Post-distribution monitoring
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

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