

Mapping UNSW Impact

Global Development

Primary SDG	11: SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Broad theme	Urban resilience
Research	Improved humanitarian practice in post-disaster recovery, shelter and settlements; improving the resilience of low income housing in urban areas
Impact region	Low and middle income countries with rapid urban growth and susceptibility to disasters and crises
Faculty	Built Environment
School/Institute	Smart Cities
Academics	David Sanderson, Laura Bruce
Project partners	Global: International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, Overseas Development Institute (UK)
	Bangladesh: Dhaka Community Health Trust, SEEDS (Indian NGO), the Asia Disaster Reduction and Response Network (ADRRN), the Centre for the Research of the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED), University of Louvain, UK AID Start Initiative - \$10 million for 18 months, ends March 2019
Related SDGs	3: Good Health and Well-being
	1: No Poverty

Elevator pitch

In response to the increasing number of people living in low income, urban settlements, David is working in Bangladesh, The Pacific and globally to improve the resilience of settlement structures to naturally-triggered disasters, improving residents' quality of life.

The Challenge: Low income housing is on the rise but lacks resilience and causes bad health

Over one billion people live in low income urban housing. One million people a week are moving into urban areas, and predictions are for a steady increase and the expansion of slum dwellings. Issues inside slums are big and complex, and are often ignored by the developing world that has preferred to focus on rural projects. In Bangladesh, for example, where slum sizes have grown 60% over the last 20 years, illegal electricity setups increase the risk of deadly fires. Tin used for walls and roofs heats up quickly and can be deadly for residents. NGOs have started to enter urban housing areas like these in an attempt to improve housing conditions but there is a lot more that can be done.

There is a howling gap of assistance in The Pacific, for instance, where low income housing is on the rise and communities are battling against rising waters and poor infrastructure. These countries are expanding their urban footprints, but governance and corruption issues, as well as the region's dispersed and low population, deter NGOs and other aid groups. This needs reversing.

UNSW's solution: Encourage community-led improvements, lobby at policy level

David's mission is to see humanitarian and development groups work together on more local, urban issues, and be more accountable, more efficient and smarter in their involvement with the poor. As a part of this mission, he is editor of the inaugural *State of the Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements Report* for UNHCR/IFRC, which is due out August 2018. He is writing a good practice review for the ODI (UK) on *Urban humanitarian recovery: how to work better in the urban world* that will be published September 2018.

On the ground, David is working with UK AID on a project to build the resilience of poor, urban communities in Bangladesh. UK AID is providing grants to support neighbourhood-level innovations in these countries that improve health and living conditions. Can these innovations be scaled up to improve resilience? David and Laura are overseeing four low-income settlements in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Around 40 applications from organisations have been submitted to Dhaka Community Hospital Trust. David and Laura are providing technical support around the selection of the best innovations, and on how the Trust should balance risk in its portfolio of funding selections.

In the Pacific, David is wanting to do more work on housing resilience in response to the growth of poor, urban communities there. He attended a December 2017 conference with country representatives to discuss the increase in low income households in urban settings and potential responses. Next steps are to evaluate project opportunities with governments and NGOs.

The Impact: Increased housing resilience and living conditions for poor residents

Through his publications, David is pushing for more NGOs to enter urban low-income areas. For those already there, he wants them to work smarter and faster. He is also aiming to influence governments to do more for the poor in their urban housing strategies.

In Bangladesh and The Pacific, David's work will see community-driven innovations implemented on a broader scale in urban low income settlements. This will result in increased house resilience, and better living and health conditions for residents. More resilient houses also means less loss of life in the case of natural disasters.

Researchers

David Sanderson has over 25 years of experience working across the world in development and emergencies. Between 2013-14 he was a Visiting Professor at Harvard University and in February 2016 he was appointed the Inaugural Judith Neilson Chair at UNSW. He is a member of several NGO boards and committees, including the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF).

Laura Bruce is Research Associate for the Inaugural Judith Neilson Chair in Architecture. Laura has over 12 years of experience working for international NGOs in project management, advocacy and research across the international development and humanitarian sectors.

Ben Falkenmire 12.03.18