

Situational Context

Intro/Poetics/Displacement

Translation (Intro). As Robert Frost and Joseph Brodsky say, respectively, "poetry is what is lost in translation" and "poetry is what is gained in translation". The act of translation essentially creates a dialogue between two mediums. This interplay may potentially take overtones from one medium, at the expense of the other, to achieve a more suitable representation of the original source; as opposed to becoming a mere transcription. Within this dialogue, particular nuances from the original are sometimes incidentally lost because of the character of the 'destination' medium. It is this middle ground of 'give and take' that allows for the qualities of the mediums to collide and successfully create a coherent merging of content, meaning and expression. Translation then becomes an exercise in the liminal space between two or more mediums. How can architecture delve into these in-between spaces to explore design solutions that take into account the qualities and character of the varying mediums involved in translation?

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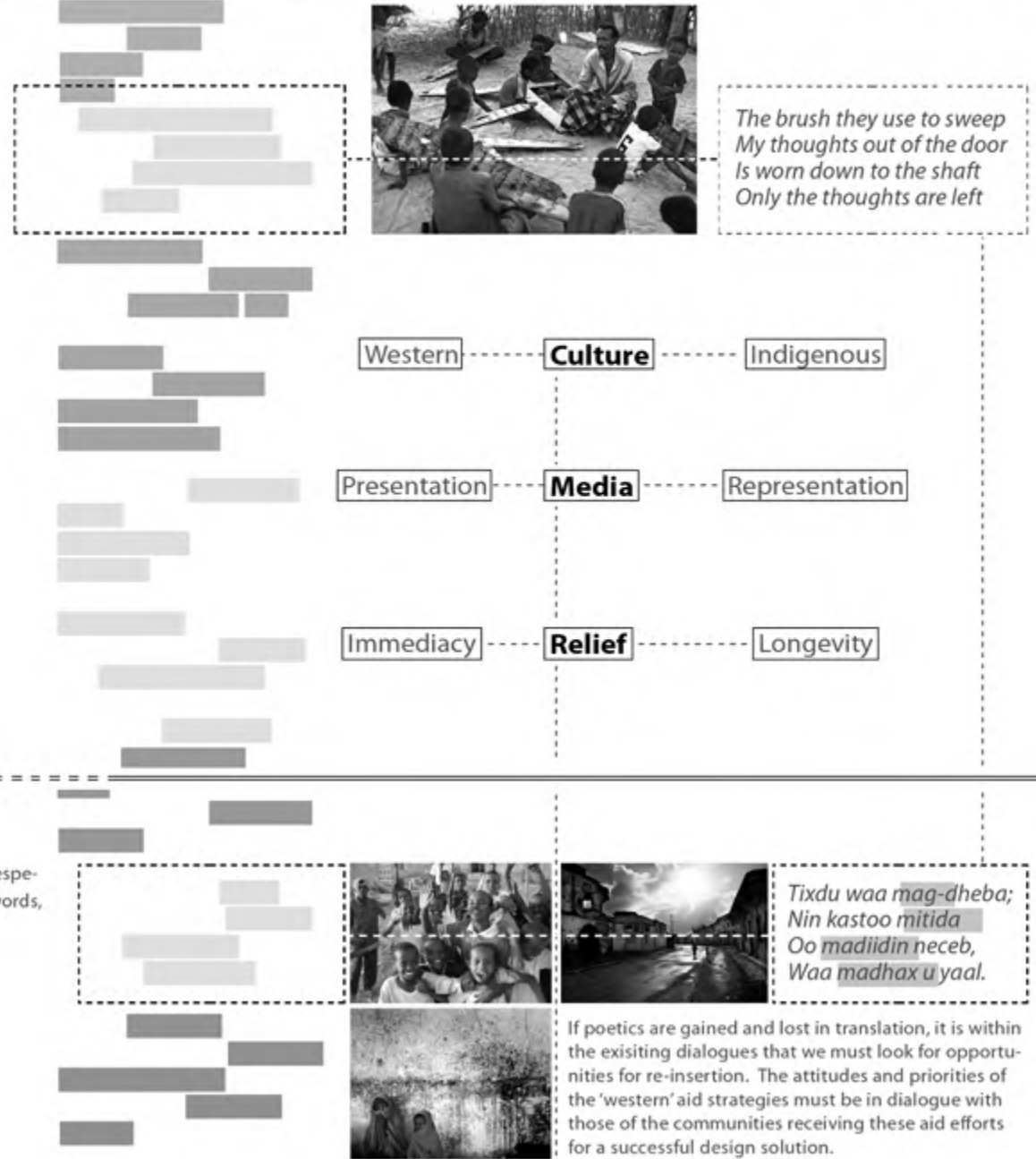
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Translation(s)

Re-Inserted Poetics



Somali Poetics

Content/Rhythm/Pattern

*I come to this land, the land
Speaks in prose of growth and gain*

*And the sound of rain is the sound of rain,
Rainwater like thunder and very fast should be
In something only the rain can sustain.*

*I write these words and read them to you
To let you know that we live through language.
Without it - deformity, ugliness, illness;
Without it - no anchor for culture; nature is
The making of things, no making of nature.*

*A man might lose all property, money,
Poverty, but if he's made to grow.*

*He's a person I know, once your pen
Is your wealth, you're less than nothing without it.*

*Ask the old Gods how our culture has grown.
Think back to the time when our language suffered*

*Our fathers once sang destroyed or derided,
Our epics fading in memory, even
Our idioms gradually losing their meanings.*

*Every lost syllable tells in my heartbeat,
Every lost line is a scar on my heart.*

*Poems go hand in hand to create
A chain of wisdom, a chain that goes
From strength to strength, when this is broken
When our chain of poems was broken and scattered,
We were left with nothing but fragments, some
But scraps of wisdom - only utterance
Nothing more than a handful of images.*

Waxay hoga-**lusaysaa**,
Afka nolosha waw **lir**
La'aantiisna **lir** iyo
lir lagama waayeen,
lir may lahaateen
Dhaqan lama **lallaaleen**
Qaran lama **lusmaysleen**,
Nin kastaa ha **lookhee**,
Far baa lagu **lanaadaa**,
Haddii qalinka loo **ludho**
Wax qoraalka laga **laga**,
Lama **laabbaggeli** karo.

Waaq iyo **lunnix** iyo
Bal **lincaro** weyddii,
Soo **lir** ayaamaha,
laariikhda raacdee!

Afkaygow, **labaaliye**
Maxaad **lir** ku nooleydi!
Maxaad belo u **lagneydi**!
Shisheeyuhu **lir** iyo xeel
Muxuu kugu **luntunsaday**,
lirqaadkaaga dhaawacay!
Maxaa gabay **lilmaanna**
Maahmaaho **loolmoor**
Maalmuhu **lirreenoo**
Qalbigaygu **lebayaa**!

Cultural Expression. Social gatherings often consist of poetry being recited. The poetry has a naturally rhythmic quality which is particularly suited for musical adaptation. In areas such as Djibouti where displaced Somalis have settled near other cultures, such as the Afar, improvised poetry is performed with music which is a hybrid created by the interaction of the two cultures.

What's the 'Deelley'? In Somalia, poetry is their dominant means of media because it is the only mode of expression which the people have control over. During the reign of Siad Barre, Somali poets began a chain poem in which each subsequent poet would add a verse. The poem was entitled 'deelley' as it continued a rhythm based on the alliteration of the letter 'd'. Poets contributed varied positions, some that supported the dictatorial regime and others who voiced opposition towards it. In the end it became a collection of verses which created a thorough depiction of cultural, social and political issues which the contributing poets claim led to the people's support in the overthrow of the Barre regime.

Cultural Expression

Presentation/Representation

Media often bombards us with images of foreign conflict, disaster, famine and death. We are focused on the immediate and what is often lost in the process is an identification or connection with the culture that is associated with the information we are receiving.



March 13, 1964



Aug 4, 1986



Aug 4, 1994



Jun, 5 2006





Con - Tent Mapping

Displacement of Somali Refugees 03/2010

The Afgooye Corridor is a 20 kilometer long strip of land where Somalis seeking refuge from violence have been living in makeshift settlements. An estimated 500,000 Internally Displaced People (IDP) live along the corridor in 221 settlements; the world's most densely populated region for displaced people. The World Health Organization believes the limited access to health care, safe water and sanitation are life-threatening concerns for these people.



Al Shabaab; Somalia's largest group of Islamist insurgents, which allegedly has links to Al Qaeda has been added to the United States' list of foreign terrorist organizations. Since 2007 they have been fighting against the interim government and its Ethiopian allies and attacking African Union peacekeepers.



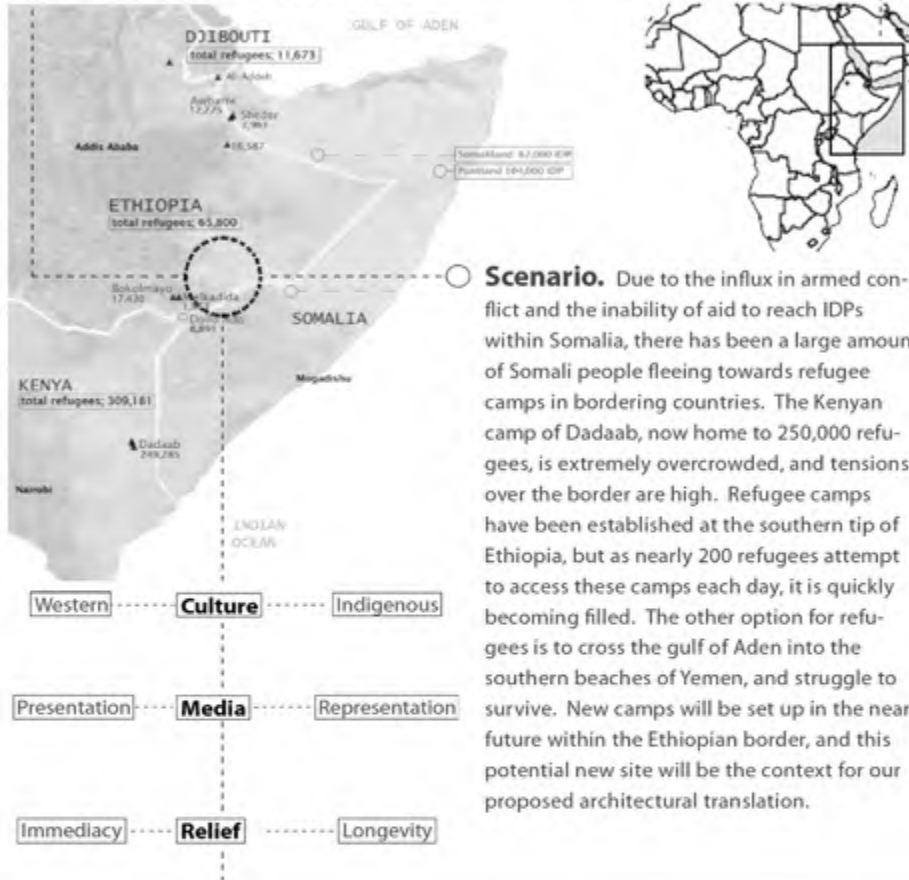
A pattern is emerging whereby the militia briefly occupy the town, often killing a number of people, then withdraw with arms, ammunition and military vehicles seized from Somali government and Ethiopian troops.



conflict / climate / displacement

Synopsis: Scenario/Design

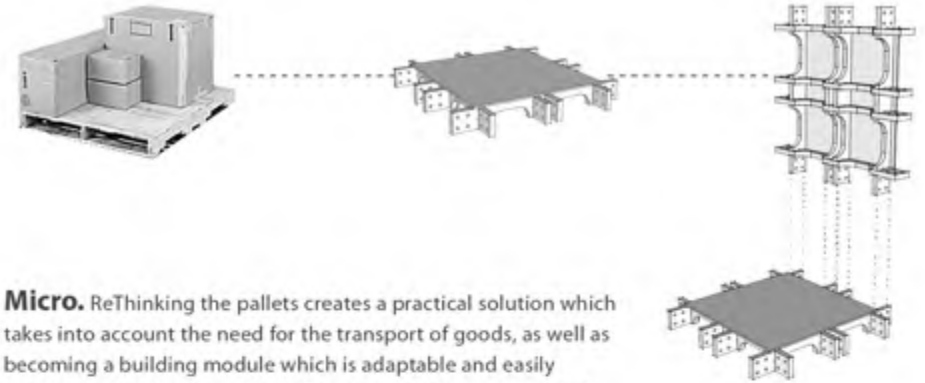
Micro to Macro



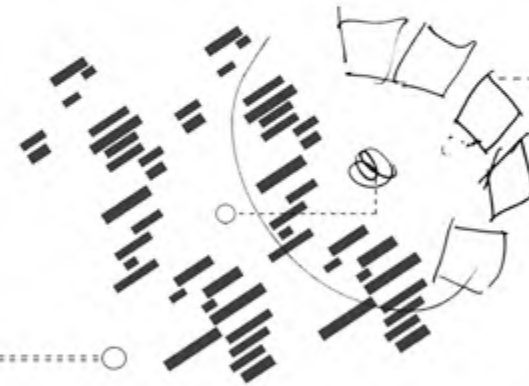
Scenario. Due to the influx in armed conflict and the inability of aid to reach IDPs within Somalia, there has been a large amount of Somali people fleeing towards refugee camps in bordering countries. The Kenyan camp of Dadaab, now home to 250,000 refugees, is extremely overcrowded, and tensions over the border are high. Refugee camps have been established at the southern tip of Ethiopia, but as nearly 200 refugees attempt to access these camps each day, it is quickly becoming filled. The other option for refugees is to cross the gulf of Aden into the southern beaches of Yemen, and struggle to survive. New camps will be set up in the near future within the Ethiopian border, and this potential new site will be the context for our proposed architectural translation.



Architectural Translation. A propositional design scheme from micro to macro that deals with the immediate needs of relief efforts but also is in dialogue with Somali culture and their future, allowing for adaptation and re-composition. Providing them with the ability to write the next verse of their poem.



Micro. ReThinking the pallets creates a practical solution which takes into account the need for the transport of goods, as well as becoming a building module which is adaptable and easily constructed with minimal tools. The units would be assembled in pairs with a cistern between the two, helping to capture rain water for later use while partially helping mitigate flooding.



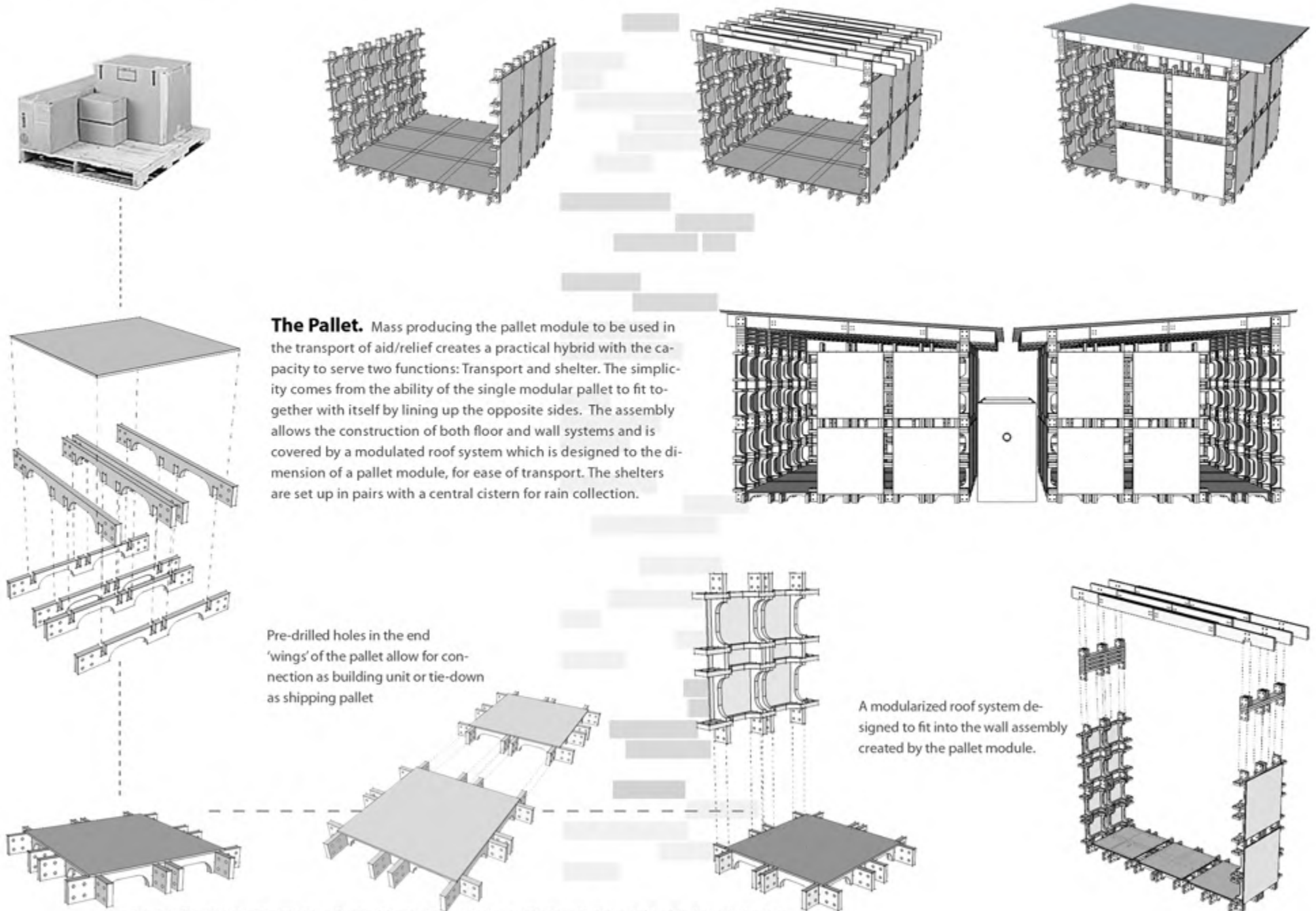
Macro. The set-up and configuration of the refugee camp would be pre-designed to account for medical, sanitation, educational and community spaces using these modular shelters. Hiring and training locals to assemble the units and develop the refugee communities will speed the process and create a base of workers able to expand the settlement or set up subsequent camps.

Conflict Recovery and Relocation. When hostilities and armed conflict begin to resolve, the ease of dismantling and and reassembling these units will allow for relocation of communities. Having trained local labour in the assemblage of these units, they can lead the set-up of the new communities. The simple designs for the shelters and other camp buildings can be recomposed, modified, and reappropriated to the locals' desires.



Proposed Design - Micro

ReThinking the Pallet



Proposed Refugee Camp Design - Macro

A Case for Temporary Human Settlement

Site Conditions. Location is the initial step to planning a refugee camp. Aspects including security, legal status and land tenure and accessibility to resources and communications are crucial. Attention to infrastructure, and local population compatibility are necessary to enable the displaced population to thrive in their new environment.

Incremental Planning. A phased planning approach supports the notion that settlements formed during the emergency phase is the prelude to a more sustainable settlement. Financially it offers the best chance for accomplishing immediate objectives and allows for maximum involvement of the displaced population (DP) in decisions about the final design and construction; therefore supporting community identity.

Security. The host country will have national security as its main concern. Having the camp located away from the border of the country being fled provides more protection from rebel and military groups. Protection also includes safeguarding the displaced population from the origins of the crisis from which it has fled.

A Cautionary Note about Representation. It is necessary to ensure that information is gathered about all sections of the displaced population equally. Inhabitants may be affected by trauma prior to re-settling; therefore supporting social order and maintaining social harmony will be important. Refugees will be looking for the familiar; cultural aspects and tradition should be present within the camp.



01. Distribution / Training



02. Health / Sanitation



03. Shelters / Clusters

04. Community / Social Space

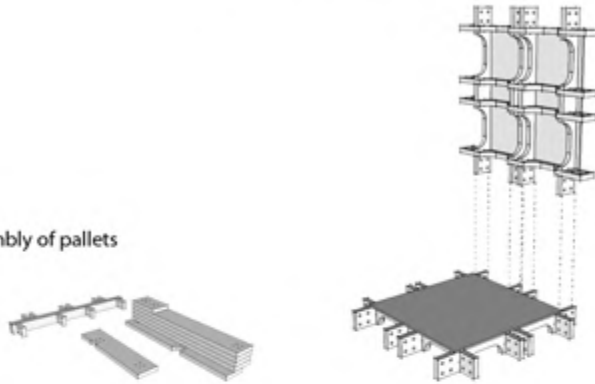


05. Education / Markets

Pallet/Settlement Timeline

From Manufacturer to Refugee Camp

Assembly of pallets



Aid and shelter construction parts are stored in pallets



Stockpiling of the pallet system begins in North America



Pallets are shipped to refugee camps. (new camp location in Ethiopia)



Training is provided on the methods of shelter assembly.

03. Shelters / Clusters

Shelters begin to form clusters, creating communities.



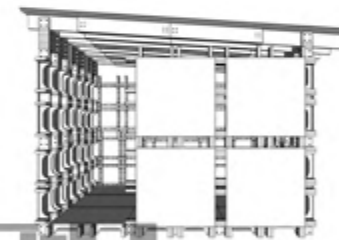
02. Health / Sanitation

Health Centres are set up. Water points and latrines are strategically placed in areas of wide access

01. Distribution / Training

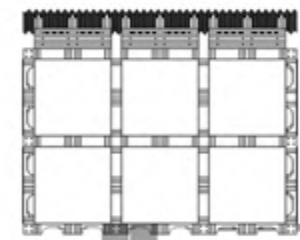
Located at the camp reception; pallets and land allocations are distributed according to demographics and cluster design.

Utilize the skills acquired by the displaced; giving them work will aid in participation and create a sense of community. Having input from the refugee population can also prevent cultural mistakes made by planners.



04. Community / Social Space

Social spaces develop in between clusters as cultural hubs link to medical facilities and markets.



05. Education / Markets

Schools are primarily set up according to need near family clusters and playgrounds.

Food for work programs are introduced



Post Script

Conflict Recovery/Relocation



Post Script. Upon conflict recovery, these units can be dismantled and re-used, re-composed, and re-appropriated for relocated communities. By involving the locals in earlier camp set-up, there will be workers with a knowledge base of the pallet module able to dismantle and reassemble these types of units in their new location. Although designed specifically as a response to Somali culture and their specific situation, we feel that the adaptability of the module and its practicality lends itself to being used in varying disaster contexts, both natural and unnatural.

Acknowledgements

Flashpoints: <http://www.flashpoints.info>
Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org/>
CBC: <http://archives.cbc.ca>
U.S. Department of State: <http://www.state.gov/p/af/ci/so/>
Music and Metre in Somali Poetry by Giorgio Banti and Francesco Giannattasio
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/586655?cookieSet=1>
<http://www.poetrytranslation.org>
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(Photographer: SHANE DIXON KAVANAUGH)
The UN Refugee Agency: <http://www.unhcr.org>
Medecins Sans Frontieres: <http://www.msf.org.uk>
Relief Web: <http://www.reliefweb.int>
<http://worldshelters.org>
Alert Net: <http://www.alertnet.org>
<http://www.globalindustrial.com>
"Representation and the Perspective Hinge" Alberto Perez-Gomez

