

# DISPLACEMENT WITHOUT DIGNITY – THE CRISIS AT AFGHAN BORDERS

## Forced Deportations at Afghanistan’s Borders A Climate and Humanitarian Emergency

### BACKGROUND:

In 2025, tens of thousands of Afghan families are being forcibly deported – often within 24 hours’ notice.

At Torkham crossing alone, up to 50,000 people cross in a single day. 83% are women, children, and the elderly. They arrive in extreme heat  $>47^{\circ}\text{C}$  + ( $116^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) with minimal belongings, no infrastructure, and under severe social strain.

„On peak days, an entire small city’s population – up to 50,000 people – is forced across the border, 83% of whom are women, children, and the elderly“

Border zones are designed for control, not care. International relief has been slow to adapt, and where assistance exists, the shelter model has barely changed in decades.

### THE PROBLEM:

**THE PLASTIC TENT** remains the default humanitarian shelter. It is fast to deploy, but not sustainable for prolonged crises.



### Main Obstacles:

- $+47^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $116^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) inside tents
- No privacy or gender safety — **harmful for women and children**
- Tons of non-recyclable **plastic waste**

### A DIGNIFIED RESPONSE

## MUD-RESCU™ MUD Reusable Emergency Shelter Cluster Units

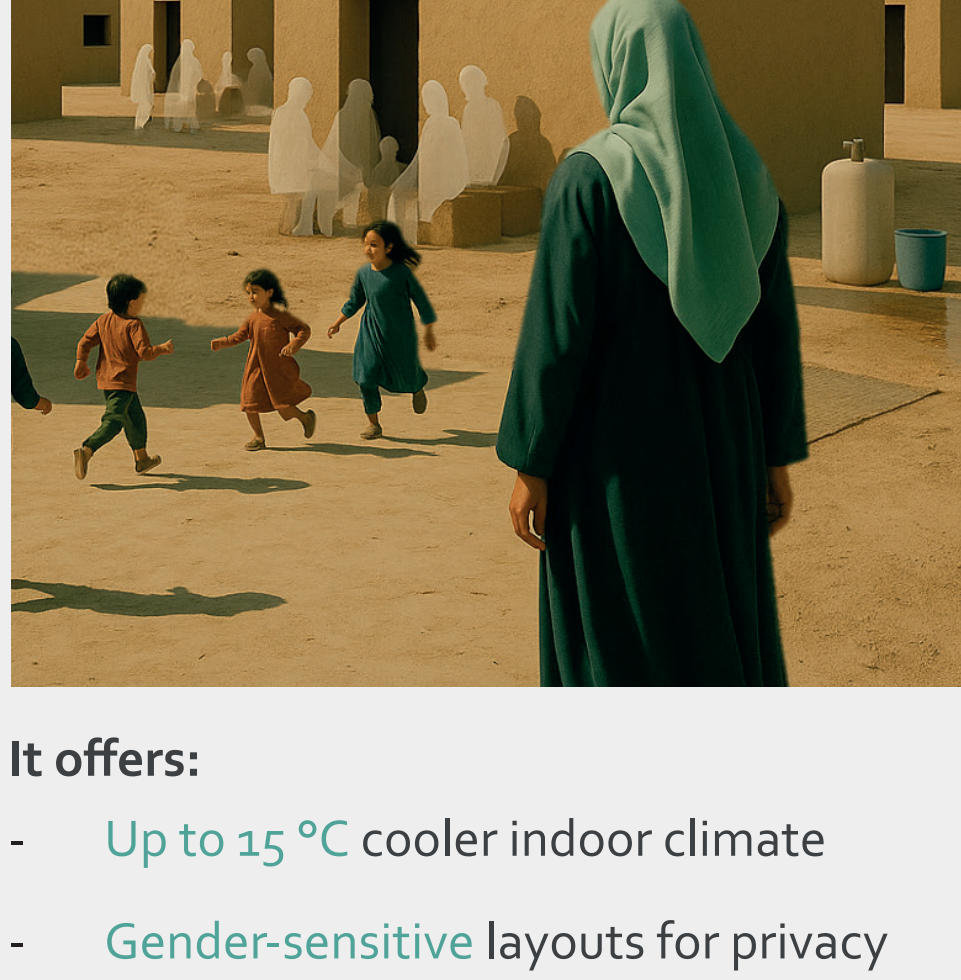
Developed by URBAN STEPS in collaboration with the non-profit organizations Breshna Foundation for Culture and MyGrandStory gGmbH.

MUD RESCU™ is a modular, low-carbon, culturally grounded shelter system made from compressed earth. It is designed for transitional protection — not as a permanent settlement, but as a **dignified alternative in predictable or protracted crises**.

We invite humanitarian organizations and local authorities to collaborate with us in piloting MUD RESCU™ units at key border sites, ensuring that vulnerable populations receive safe, climate-resilient, and dignified shelter solutions.

### THE SOLUTION:

**MUD RESCU™** – Mud Reusable Emergency Shelter Cluster Units – is a climate-resilient, transitional solution with built-in exit strategy.



### It offers:

- Up to  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$  cooler indoor climate
- **Gender-sensitive** layouts for privacy and safety
- Biodegradable, reusable materials — **zero plastic waste**

## Shelter Solutions Compared

		vs.	
	<b>PLASTIC TENT</b>		<b>MUD RESCU™</b>
Inside heat	Poor $>47^{\circ}\text{C}$ + ( $116^{\circ}\text{F}$ )		Good Up to $15^{\circ}\text{C}$ cooler
CO2 footprint	Very high $\sim 10\text{--}20\text{ kg CO}_2/\text{Tent}$		Very low $<1\text{ kg}/\text{MUD RESCU}$
Privacy	Low Open-plan		High Gender-sensitive layout
Exit strategy	Absent Tons of plastic waste		Integrated Dismantle or reuse
Reusability	Low Tons of plastic		High Biodegradable
Lifespan	Short $<12\text{ months}$		Long $>24\text{ months}$
Setup time	Very Fast 2–3 hours		Longer 2–3 days
Cost pp (shelter only)	High $>120\text{--}180\text{ USD}$		Low $<\sim 98\text{ USD (at pilot)}$

## MUD RESCU™ Pilot Project

BUILT FROM SOIL – POWERED BY LOCAL – RETURNED TO THE GROUND



## PILOT OUTLINE

### PURPOSE:

To test, document, and refine the MUD RESCU™ model under real-world border conditions before scaling.

### PHASE I

#### PILOT:

- 2 ha near Torkham border (or equivalent site)
- Capacity: 500–600 persons

#### PILOT BUDGET:

- USD 140,000–155,000
- Shelter only: USD 98/person.  
All-inclusive: USD 250–300 person

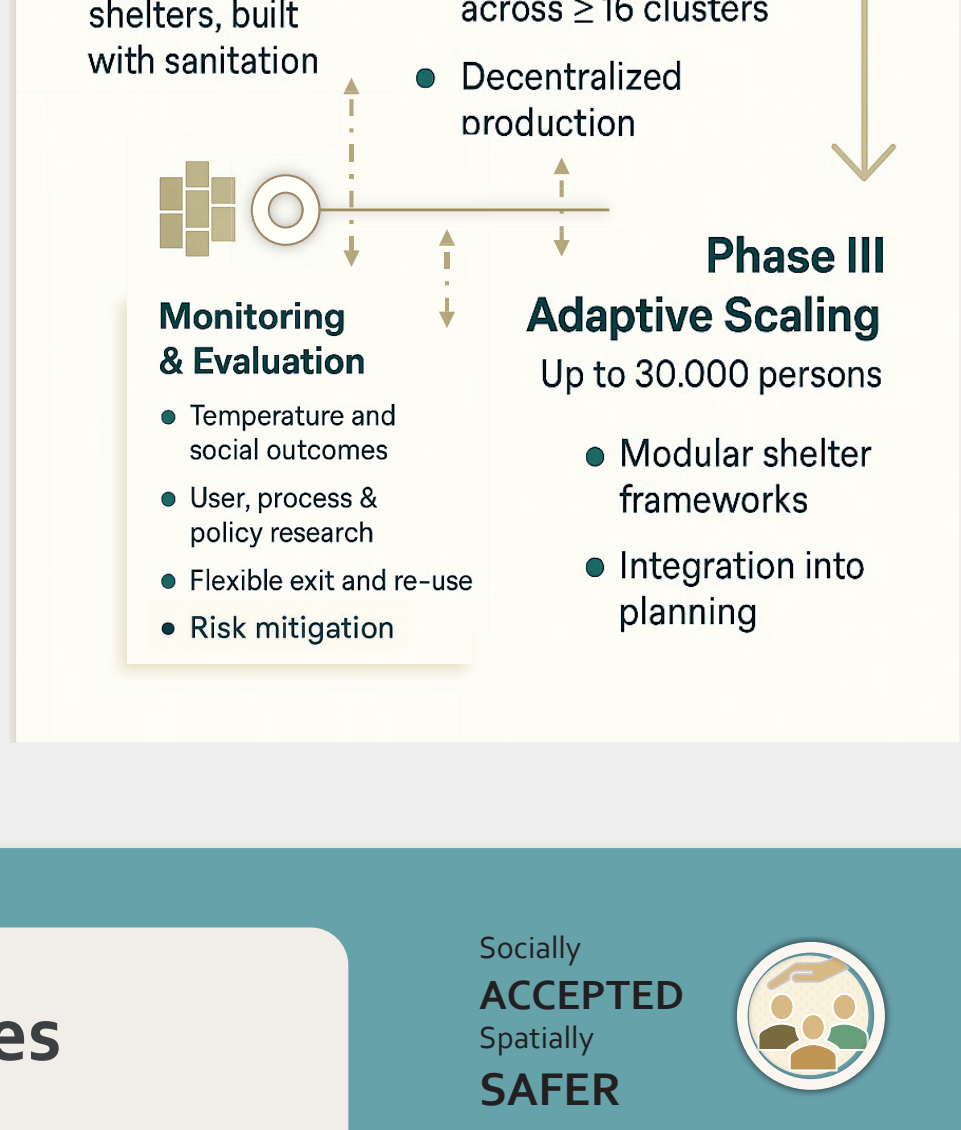
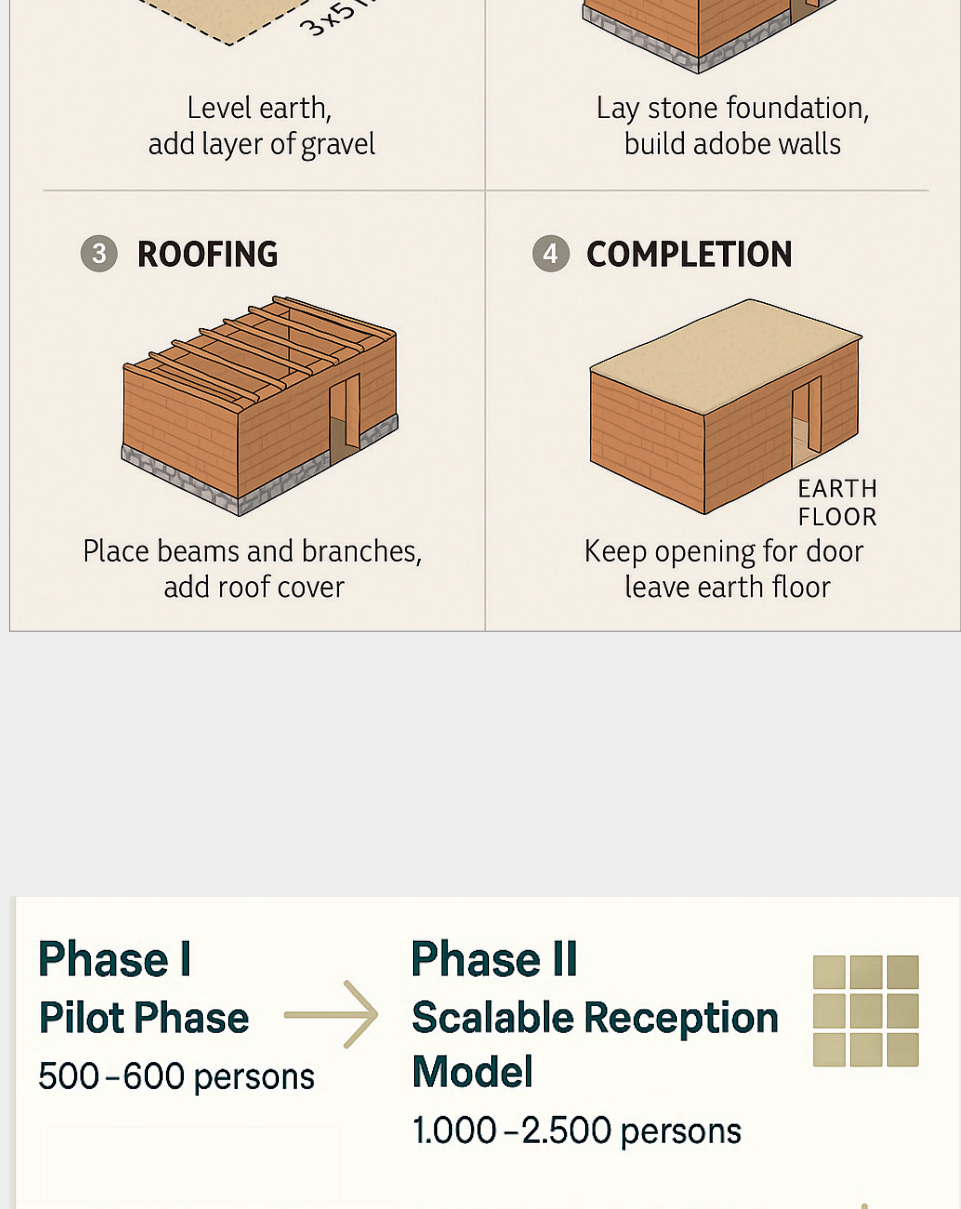
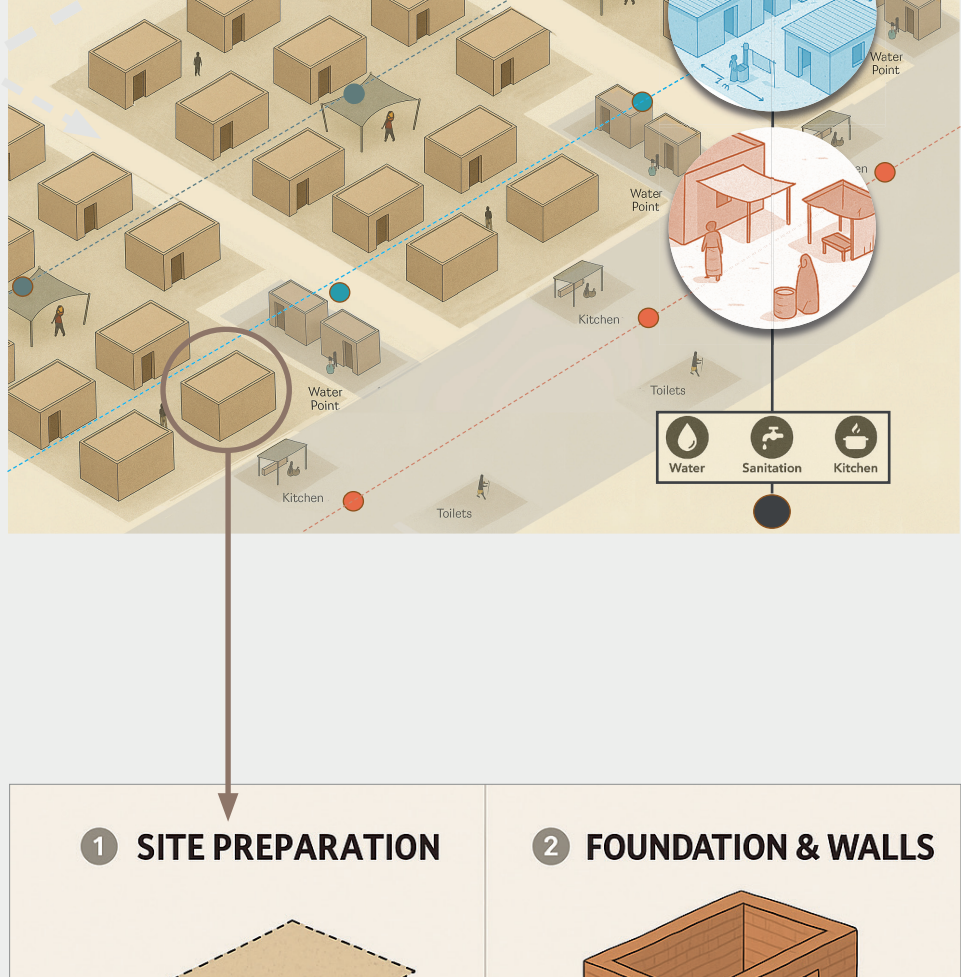
#### STRUCTURE:

- 7 clusters  $\times$  7 joint units
- Unit size:  $3\times 5\text{ m}$  modules,  $0.4\text{ m}$  walls,  $2\text{ m}$  spacing between joint units
- Infrastructure: Toilets, water points, cooking areas per cluster

STANDARDS:  
UNHCR Emergency Handbook,  
Sphere Handbook 2018

#### MONITORING & EVALUATION:

- Climate performance
- Time & cost tracking
- User satisfaction
- Reusability tests
- Documentation for scaling to Phase II & III



## MUD RESCU™ – Key Features

**Modular framework** – scalable design, serial construction

**Very low CO2 footprint** – no plastic, local materials

**Biodegradable & low-cost** – earthen walls, low, minimal waste

**Climate-adapted** – natural indoor temperature regulation of up to  $\pm 15^{\circ}\text{C}$

**Essential shelter only** – no built-in utilities, or amenities

**Transitional use** – designed for predictable crises, with integrated exit strategy

**Standards-compliant** – meets international humanitarian shelter guidelines

Socially  
ACCEPTED  
Spatially  
SAFER

NATURAL  
thermal  
<-conditioning  
earthen walls

NO  
EMISSIONS

LOCAL  
MATERIALS




INFINITELY  
REUSABLE

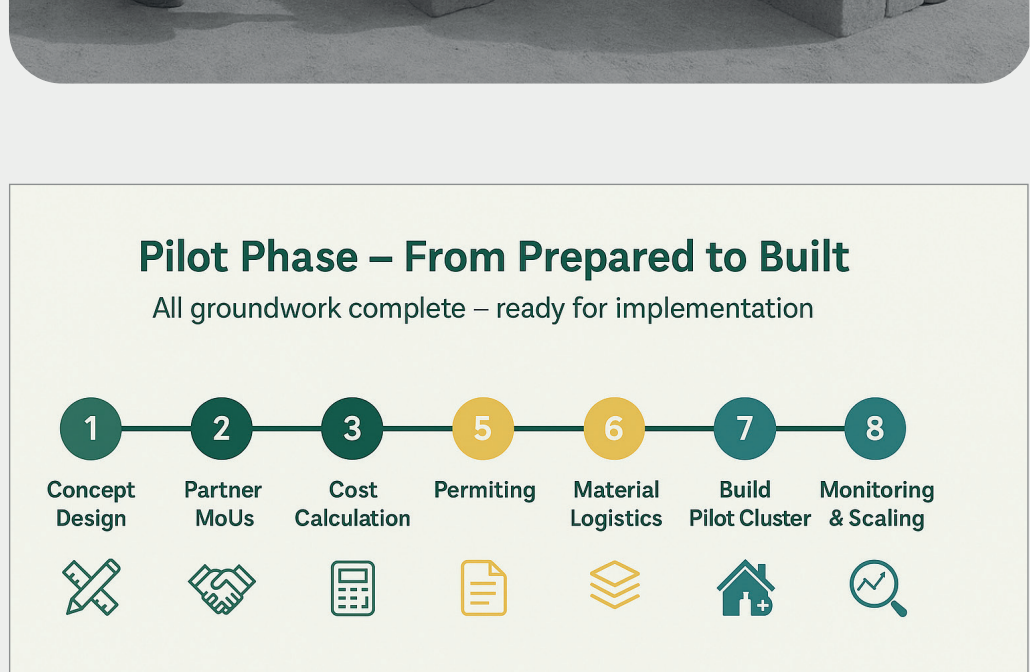
## Join the Groundwork

### COOPERATION MODEL

- **URBAN STEPS** – Vision, narrative framing, planning, and coordination
- **Breshna Foundation for Culture** (non-profit, Germany) – Cultural framing and documentation
- **MyGrandStory gGmbH** (non-profit, Germany) – Awareness and outreach
- **Additional NGO partners** – On-the-ground implementation, monitoring, and environment assessment

### WE ARE CURRENTLY SEEKING:

-  Institutional and donor partners for pilot project
-  Technical collaborators in construction, logistics and monitoring
-  Media and advocacy networks to amplify visibility and policy impact



### MUD RESCU™ Info Sheet – v2025.09

This document reflects the current concept. It will be updated as pilot implementation, data, and partnerships progress.

Join us in providing dignity, safety, and climate resilience for those who need it most.

### Pilot Phase – From Prepared to Built

All groundwork complete – ready for implementation

