Need for adaptation: transformation of temporary houses

Building permanent accommodation after a disaster takes time for reasons including the removal of debris, the lack of available land, and the procurement of resources. In the period in-between, affected communities find shelter in different ways. Temporary houses or transitional shelters are used when families cannot return to their pre-disaster homes and no other alternative can be provided. In practice, families stay in a standard interim solution for months or even years while trying to return to their routines. Consequently, they adapt their houses to meet their midterm needs. This study analysed temporary houses in Chile and Peru to illustrate how families modify them with or without external support. The paper underlines that guidance must be given on how to alter them safely and on how to incorporate the temporary solution into the permanent structure, because families adapt their houses whether or not they are so designed.