

BIO –2025



Maria de Irantzu (Iru) Serra Lasa is a seasoned leader and expert advisor in disaster risk management, focusing on the built environment, humanitarian shelter and settlements, and post-disaster reconstruction. With over 20 years of experience, she has a deep understanding of Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights in crisis contexts and provides strategic guidance through her consulting practice, **ResilireD**. Her work spans across non-profit organizations, the UN, academia, local governments, and corporate partners, where she drives initiatives that enhance resilience and preparedness for disasters, forced migration, and climate change impacts on marginalized communities through the built environment.

As an Adjunct Lecturer at **Howard University School of Engineering and Architecture, Department of Architecture**, she teaches a professional elective on Housing after disasters and crises, and Design Studio for third year architecture students.

Iru's global experience covers Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Americas, and Europe, where she has led numerous post-disaster response, recovery, and reconstruction efforts. Her leadership was instrumental at **Habitat for Humanity International** as the Senior Director of Disaster Risk Reduction and Response, where she oversaw global disaster response operations, including major international crises such as the Ukraine Refugee Crisis and the Beirut Port Blast, as well as key US-based disaster responses, such as Hurricanes Michael and Ian, and California, or Hawaii Wildfires.

Previously, she served as Director of Housing and Human Settlements for Habitat's Asia Pacific Regional Office in Manila, Philippines, and held various advisory roles with the **American Red Cross** and the **International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)** in Haiti, Panama, and Washington, DC, providing technical support for humanitarian shelter and settlement programs.

Iru holds a Bachelor's degree in Architecture and a Master's in Architecture and Urban Planning from The Madrid Polytechnic University. Her early career in Spain included roles in construction management, architectural design, and building materials science research. Fluent in Spanish, English, and French, she is committed to using her expertise to serve communities vulnerable to disasters and crises globally.