**SECTOR CHECKLIST**

## **Shelter and Settlements**

Losing a home can be a devastating experience, particularly in the context of an emergency. The provision of appropriate and safe shelter solutions is one way to promote the **safety** and **dignity** of project participants as shelter not only helps reduce physical exposure to threats but can also provide an important sense of comfort and security psychologically. As a potentially large asset, the way shelters are designed and allocated is crucial to ensuring **safety**, **dignity** and **meaningful** **access**.

This checklist offers **guidance for field** **staff** on how shelter programmes can be adapted to promote the safety, dignity and access of programme participants.

**ANALYSIS**

* **Protection analysis:** Include questions in needs assessment about vulnerabilities and barriers.
	+ Have potential barriers to accessing shelter assistance been identified? I.e. *logistical* (bad roads, time and distance, lack of ID documents); *financial* (fare for transportation); *security* (presence of armed groups, thefts); *physical* (lack of mobility or unable to repair or rebuild their shelters); *cultural* (unable to leave home alone, childcare/family responsibilities); *legal* (dispute over land tenure and access to properties to rent).
	+ Have efforts been made to identify the most vulnerable groups e.g. internally displaced people, refugees, people living with chronic illnesses, child/female headed households (HH), older people or person with disabilities etc[[1]](#footnote-1)?
* **Avoiding harm:** An analysis has been used to ensure assistance does not create additional harm.
* Would shelter assistance increase or decrease tension or violence in households/community? Will jealousy among non-recipient occur when shelters are provided?
* Have land tenure arrangements been considered? This includes statutory/legislative and customary access rights to land, water and other natural resources as well as inheritance rights. When unsure consult the Protection Cluster (Housing, Land and Property Group where possible).
* Have locally acceptable and available materials and labour been considered (when possible and appropriate) to benefit the local economy?
* Have efforts been made to minimise and/or mitigate the adverse impact on the local natural environment to reduce the risk of depleting local resources and causing tension in communities? e.g. considering construction processes and sourcing of materials.
* **Safety and dignity concerns:** Safety and dignity issues are considered throughout shelter interventions.
* Are questions about safety and dignity included in the needs assessment? E.g. physical attacks, mined areas, or environmentally unsuitable areas such as steep hills, subsiding land areas and areas prone to flooding, volcanic activities and other potential natural disasters, air quality, lighting and ventilation.
* Are questions included in the needs assessment to understand whether the type of assistance will enhance people’s dignity? Is it culturally appropriate? Is it appropriate for all groups?
* **Local capacities:** Coping strategies (positive and negative) and gender power dynamics are considered.
* What roles and responsibilities do households and community members have? Who is likely to be involved in decisions on engagement with Shelter staff, as well as any input into shelter design and construction?
* For distribution of materials, what is the preferred time and location and will it interfere with other responsibilities?
* **Disaggregating data:** Data has been broken down by sex, age, and disability
* Is data collected by sex, age and disability and used to inform programme design and implementation?
* Are staff responsible for collecting data trained on how to communicate with older people and persons with disabilities?
* Do baselines and MEAL tools (e.g. project indicators) include the collection of disaggregated data on the access and use of cash activities, including on how safe people feel?

**TARGETING PRIORITY GROUPS**

* **Needs based:** Shelterassistance is provided without discrimination and based on need.
* How has the community been involved in the selection of project participants? What criteria have been used to ensure the most vulnerable are included?
* Have people and communities been prioritized on the basis of need? Have the needs of different ethnic, racial, national or social groups been considered in shelter allocation, ensuring that the quality of shelter is equitable across all groups?
* Have displaced persons been treated equitably, whether they are living in host-family arrangements, collective centres, urban or rural locations, in camps, or planned camps?
* Have owners, tenants, the landless, informal dwellers and secondary occupants been treated equitably even if return, resettlement and reintegration options are different for different groups?
* **Protection risks:** Protection risks have been taken into consideration in implementation.
* Have the shelters been designed and built with adequate escape routes in the case of emergency evacuation? Has information and training on fire safety and evacuation procedures been provided?
* Are minimum space standards in shelters respected to minimize risks of exploitation and abuse?
* Are shelter or settlement activities that involve forced relocation or return avoided?
* Have risks related to the internal environment been considered, particularly regarding groups more vulnerable to them? E. g. smoke from cooking, lack of light and ventilation, heating and cooling, poorly maintained or installed services (i.e. gas and electricity), etc. Has the safety of shelters and settlements been considered e.g. efficient lighting, particularly in communal areas such as sanitation facilities; separate facilities and bathroom for men and women; dark and isolated areas avoided; and partitions and door locks provided (when culturally relevant)?
* Are shelter work sites safe? E.g. cordon off unsafe areas, cover deep holes, provide safety equipment (such as goggles, safety helmets, boots), consider the construction materials (chemicals, asbestos etc.) and establish safety procedures for both staff and participants in shelter programmes.
* Have shelter materials and distance between dwellings that offer greater privacy and dignity been considered, especially in cultures where men’s and women’s are markedly separate?
* If appropriate, are separate living areas available to groups such as single women, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied children? Are these areas protected from targeting of abuse or violence?
* Are adequate safe recreational spaces considered for children to play where family members can watch them from shelter to avoid children playing in remote areas?
* Is the security of data and privacy respected at all times?
* Do employment practices respect national legislation, particularly in relation to children?
* Are identified protection risks and benefits embedded into program monitoring processes and post-distribution monitoring (PDM) or similar tools?
* **Differing needs:** Shelterproject has been designed and adapted to meet the specific needs of different groups[[2]](#footnote-2).
* Is additional support to those who are unable to reconstruct their shelters provided, e.g. pregnant women, older people, persons with disabilities, to minimise the risk of exploitation or abuse?
* Are local traditions considered in the design of shelters? E.g. in some cultures, people prefer houses to face a certain direction and for rooms to be arranged a certain way.
* Are joint ownership rights of both male and female heads of household recognized?
* Are efforts undertaken to secure safe housing for unaccompanied children and establish monitoring procedures by specialized agencies and the community itself?
* Have schedules been managed to allow programme participants time off for personal reasons e.g. illness; pregnancy; family/childcare obligations?
* **Meaningful Access:** Barriers that prevent people from accessing assistance are considered.
* Are shelter activities taking into consideration the account the barriers mentioned in the analysis (logistical, cultural, physical, etc.)?
* Are shelters accessible and appropriate to all groups and individuals, in particular persons with disabilities and older people? Where necessary, make individual changes to household shelters, or build all shelters to be universally accessible*[[3]](#footnote-3)*.
* Are bathrooms accessible to persons with disabilities and older persons, and safe for children?
* Do particularly vulnerable groups such as female headed households, older people and person with disabilities have equal access to shelter activities? Where people are not be able to come to distribution/facility sites, have additional outreach measures or alternatives to delivering the goods been considered?
* Are essential services (e.g. health facilities, food distribution and water points, schools, etc.) and materials easily and safely accessed from the shelter and settlement locations? Have additional measures been considered if resources are not accessible, e.g. priority locations or transport?

**INFORMATION SHARING**

* **Accurate information:** Information about the organisation and the project has been shared with communities.
* Have details of the organisation and the settlement/shelter project been shared? E.g. where, when and how it will take place; who will be eligible; what type of shelter activities is being provided; when and how distributions will take place?
* Have efforts been made to ensure project participants are aware of their rights? E.g. disseminate information about the *Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement*[[4]](#footnote-4)*.* For non-displaced or on-site, information prepared by the Cluster can be disseminated.
* **Information methods:** Information provided considers different levels of literacy and capability.
* Have different methods (format, language and media) been used to communicate information, e.g. leaflets, face to face visits, radio, or text messages?
* Is there outreach to those with mobility issues or those who are illiterate to ensure they understand the conditions and procedures of the programme?
* **Staff behaviour:** Communities receive information what is appropriate and inappropriate staff behaviour and feedback and complaint mechanisms related to cash programmes.
* Have communities been provided with information about the organisations’ Code of Conduct and protection policies?
* Do communities understand how they can make complaints to the organisation?
* Do communities understand what is considered inappropriate behaviour and how to report such behaviour (feedback and complaint mechanisms)?

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

* **Engagement techniques:** Shelter staff are trained on and use participatory techniques.
* Does the design of the project involve the community to ensure assistance distributed meets needs and is appropriate for their age, sex and ability. E.g.:
	+ Can persons with disabilities access unconditional cash instead of Cash for Work (CFW) when this scheme is used? CFW, food-for-work schemes and childcare arrangements can be useful to support households with specific needs in building their own shelters. Monitor the implementation of such schemes to avoid exploitative and fraudulent practices, also ensure that this does not negatively impact on those less physically able.
	+ Have different groups that are not traditionally involved in construction activities but may be interested in participating been involved?
* Have disaster-affected populations been fully involved in the planning and management of their return, resettlement and reintegration?
* Are different techniques used to capture views of different groups, e.g. FGDs; KII; anonymous surveys?
* **Community dialogue:** Meetings are held regularly to allow for active and meaningful input from different groups.
* Are different groups able to raise issues that may be affecting their safety and identify possible solutions? E.g. location and timing of a distribution; identification of safe locations for shelters and settlements and design of safe shelters.
* Are different groups able to raise barriers that may be affecting their access to services and identify possible solutions?
* **Existing capacities:** Skills, resources, structures and practices have been taken into consideration in programming.
* Have skilled males and females who can support shelter construction, from both the IDPs and the other affected communities, been identified with the community?
* What strengths do communities have that can be further developed to enhance shelter programming? E.g. give women the opportunity to equally participate, equip programme participants with knowledge of safe and accessible construction practices.
* Have efforts been made to reinforce community’s self-help capacity? E.g. encourage traditional construction methods, particularly in areas where transportation of materials is restricted for logistical or security reasons.
* Have local construction practices been identified? Use safe and appropriate methods when possible.
* Are IDPs supported to upgrade their own shelters from transitional to more permanent structures as their situation evolves?
* Has permission (temporary or permanent) been obtained before using or building on any land, in writing where possible?
* Has assistance to host families, such as support in expanding or adapting the host family shelter been considered?
* What cultural practices need to be considered by staff e.g. separation of men and women at distribution centres; holy days?

**FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS MECHANISMS**

* **Differing channels/tools:** There are different mechanisms for communities to provide feedback and complaints.
* Have different groups been consulted on their preferred mechanism?
* Are there different options available for communities to provide feedback about staff and programmes (selection criteria, assistance provided, programme quality, etc.)?
* Are there safe and confidential channel in place, particularly for sensitive complaints, i.e. Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), fraud and corruption?
* **Response mechanism:** Feedback and complaints are acted upon and actions taken reported back.
* Is there a system in place for adapting shelter activities after feedback is received?
* **Tailored system:** Specific context and needs of different groups are considered in designing the system.
* Are different ways provided for different groups to safely, easily and anonymously lodge complaints i.e. mobile phone, face to face visit, etc?
* **Complaints handling:** Safe andconfidential systems and process are in place for handling complaints.
* Do staff know how to respond appropriately or refer case when receiving sensitive complaints?

**STAFF CONDUCT**

* **Codes and policies:** Organisation's Code of Conduct and relevant protection policies are signed and disseminated.
* Have people involved in shelter projects, including vendors, staff and volunteers, signed and been trained on the organisation's Code of Conduct and relevant protection policies (i.e. PSEA, Child Protection, Safeguarding) and adhere to the mandates and values of the organisation? Do they understand the expected behaviour and that there is a zero-tolerance against SEA?
* Has a short version (1-2 pages) of the Code of Conduct been provided in local language/s to staff, volunteers, vendors and the community?
* **Staff diversity:** Shelter staff represent the diversity of the community and are easily identifiable.
* Do staff represent different groups of the community (i.e. women, persons with disabilities and specific minority or ethnic group)?
* Where safe and appropriate, are staff easily identifiable e.g. wearing ID badges; branded T-shirts?
* **Roles and responsibilities:** Shelter staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.
* Do people involved in the shelter project, including vendors, staff and volunteers, understand their roles and responsibilities and know the details of the project (e.g. types of shelter assistance provided; selection criteria; time and location of distribution)?
* Have we made efforts to avoid and monitor exploitative labour especially child labour or SEA on construction sites? I.e. child labour in brickworks
* Are staff aware of the need to provide both men and women with the same benefits for their input and in their work in construction activities? E.g. if work is paid, ensure both men's and women's work is paid and is equal.
* **Staff wellbeing:** Wellbeing and care issues of staff are considered and recognised by the organisation.
* Have potential security risks at shelter work sites been considered and mitigated against?
* Is the organisation environment conductive to staff wellbeing and adequately resources (living conditions, working hours, opportunities for leisure and relaxation)?

**MAPPING AND REFERRAL**

* **Mapping of services:** Existing protection services, and their contact details, are collated and easily accessible**.**
* Is information on available protection services (e.g. family tracing and reunification, health, psychological support, legal service, etc.) regularly collated and shared with staff?
* Has information been provided about people’s entitlements and where and how they can access remedies, resolve disputes or apply for compensation - by referring to relevant authorities, legal services, or other agencies specialising in housing, land and property rights.
* **Referring cases:** Staff are well trained on how to refer individuals to services.
* Do staff know when, how and to whom to refer protection concerns (e.g. survivors or those of risk of SGBV, unaccompanied children)?

**COORDINATION AND ADVOCACY**

* **Internal coordination:** Coordination of protection mainstreaming initiatives occurs between projects.
* Do all sectoral/programme staff understand their responsibility to mainstream protection?
* **External coordination:** Coordination with local authorities, clusters, and other NGOs if effective.
* Are staff supported to share their experience of safe and dignified programming with other clusters and networks such as cash learning groups?
* Have local authorities responsible for shelter provision been identified and where possible supported? Have local authorities been involved in site planning and selection?
* Have monitoring mechanisms to assess the living conditions of different groups been set up? E.g. older people living without adult family members or child-headed households
* **Protection concerns:** Staff are raising protection issues with duty bearers.
* Are staff encouraged to raise issues such as unsafe service provision, excluded groups, SGBV, or forced relocations with protection focal points (if existing) or responsible actors (such as local government, Protection Cluster, UNHCR)?
* Are staff aware that cases of violations should be referred promptly and in accordance with standard operating procedures established in the area?
1. If there is a lack of information, assume that **15%** of the affected population has some form of disability and **11%** might be older people (60+). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. **Different groups** may refer, for example women, men, girls, boys, youth and older persons, as well as persons with disabilities and specific minority or ethnic groups without any such distinction (CHS). [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. **For example:** Place ramps to the entrance with a 1:10 slope (where possible) and at least 150 cm wide; attach wooden strips across ramps for better grip; install handrails or ropes and accessible handles (such as leaver handles) and ensure these are placed at an appropriate height; ensure steps are even and no higher than 16cm or deeper than 26cm; doors should be wider than 90cm wide; use non-slip flooring. Pavements and lanes around shelters should be a minimum of 90cms wide. Different and contrasting colour paint can be used to signal steps or changes in elevation. For further details see [*CBM Inclusive post-disaster reconstruction.*](https://www.cbm.org/article/downloads/54741/16-minimum-requirements-for-building-accessible-shelters.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. These Principles identifies rights and guarantees relevant to the protection of persons from forced displacement and to their protection and assistance during displacement as well as during return or resettlement and reintegration [↑](#footnote-ref-4)