

SHELTER PROGRAMMES: Quick guide on how to address protection

Why focus on protection in Shelter programming?

Even if you are already assisting people in need by providing shelter services it is crucial that you take specific steps to ensure that everyone's basic human right to shelter is fulfilled in a way that allows all to **feel safe and in a way that does not discriminate; lead to harm; reinforce existing inequality or exclusion or fail to reach vulnerable people and those most in need.**

Planning phase: protection matters to consider

- Protection and vulnerability concerns** should be part of your **planning phase** – you cannot reach everyone at the same time: consider who are the most vulnerable and what assistance is most appropriate when prioritising your work.
- Communication with the community** (a) to consult on their needs and (b) for information sharing about options is crucial for designing responses. Important to meet not only with traditional community leaders but also those (women, children, elderly, and disabled) who may not be part of the normal decision making process. This helps to *minimize the risks that the project may fail*.
- Non-discrimination:** provide support based on need and not simple geographic coverage; and avoid any form of direct or indirect discrimination. Has everyone been considered for response? Is there differentiation between renters/non renters; between refugees/non-refugees? Response for female headed households without paperwork? Who is mapping and addressing any gaps?
- Do no harm:** the way assistance is provided must not expose people to hazards, e.g. location, lack of lighting and privacy can make women feel insecure and not utilise the service; avoid creating divides between groups
- Coordination of the response.** What is the mechanism to avoid duplication with other shelter providers and organisations working on related issues such as Water and Sanitation?

In practice: the right to shelter and protection in Gaza

- Temporary housing responses:** Have you considered how to organise the temporary site so that it is suitable to the geography (to avoid floods) and culturally (privacy for women and children), security (lighting), access to WASH (for disabled, elderly etc).
- Women's access to shelter responses:** provide support for women to avail housing and property rights; newly widowed women may be unable to benefit from shelter interventions as they are not recognised as heads of families and/or cannot provide evidence of ownership.
- Explosive Remnants of War (ERW):** Ensure that workers hired under your project have been trained on behaviour related to of ERW and that child labour is not used. Men and boys are particularly at risk of ERW and you should consider how to address this.
- To be counted is to be seen:** for needs assessments and monitoring, ensure disaggregation of data related to gender/age/disability/illness of all members of household. Having a full picture will assist you in providing appropriate responses.
- Security of tenure:** can you develop as part of the project a way for households to gain access to shelter responses when there is an apparent lack of security of tenure (e.g. landownership disputes)?
- Have you considered all aspects?** Land use to be considered: arrangements and existing community tensions; placement of pre-fabs in flood-prone areas; people moving into damaged buildings; any outstanding debts with utility companies

This guide on shelter to be read in conjunction with “Protection & Prioritising Vulnerable Persons in the Gaza Humanitarian Response”

We have started our work; how can we include a protection approach now?

With the massive caseload in Gaza it is clear not everyone can be reached at once, so be creative about how you can identify and find ways to support those with greatest needs first.

- Develop policy and processes on how to prioritise within the limited resources?
- Can your organisation dedicate time/human resources to support those you prioritise as vulnerable?
- Can you find a way to fast-track vulnerable individuals and families?
- Can you expedite support/assistance/ payments to those most in need?
- Set up a mechanism where individuals or groups can raise concerns about shelter facilities?
- If you are not able to respond refer cases to shelter partners who focus on the specific need?
- Can you propose to your management ways to train colleagues in your organisation and implementing partners on protection?

Good practices in Gaza – some examples

- UNDP: prioritising geographical location, female headed households and large families
- NRC: providing legal support regarding land rights to women and men
- UNRWA's guidance document on protection issues has a general principle to prioritise persons with greater vulnerability: pregnant/lactating women, families with children, female or adolescent headed households, children, persons with disabilities and elderly.
- UNRWA implementing a requirement for dual signatures of men and women for housing options

Check list – make sure you can answer yes to these five questions

Have you consulted with the community about what different groups need and want?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you prioritising the most vulnerable? <i>E.g. In the geographic area you work, who are most in need? How do you prioritise time and where do you start?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is your planned response appropriate? <i>to local culture; climate (rains/flooding/winterization) and people's preferences;</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does your response avoid doing harm? <i>Have you considered if there might be unintended consequences?</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you addressing the protection issues related to shelter? <i>[crowded living space; child protection concerns; gender-based violence; sexual exploitation; access for disabled people; lack of legal papers; environment, comfort, windows, privacy]</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What should I do if I have protection concerns?

If you are aware of someone in need of protection support [child who may be abused/ an adult with a disability/ elderly person who is at risk) contact the UNRWA Protection section for refugees (059 960 9511 or 059 792 0807) and the Protection Cluster lead/OHCHR for non-refugees who can advise of relevant partner organisations to follow up on the case.