

Gender and Protection Checklist | Shelter and Reconstruction

KEY MESSAGES

- In disasters, shelter is a basic need for safety, dignity and protection
- All people have a right to shelter

Why include vulnerable people in shelter and reconstruction programs?

- Without shelter, vulnerable people like women, girls and boys, and people with disability are at higher risk of exploitation, abuse and violence
- People with disability and older people may need accessibility features in shelters, like ramps and hand rails
- Targeting vulnerable people in shelter programs helps the whole community recover faster and build resilience

How do we involve vulnerable people in shelter and reconstruction programs?

- Inform communities about their right to shelter, and where and how to access materials
- Prioritise the most vulnerable people for shelter and non-food items (NFI) distributions and involve them in decision-making about shelter materials and reconstruction
- Establish safe locations and routes to distributions of shelter materials and NFIs, and distribute during daylight hours
- Build back better when reconstructing shelters and buildings, with accessibility features for people with disability
- Provide on the job training for both women and men in construction and maintenance of shelters
- Monitor data on beneficiaries by sex, age and disability

Assessment

- Consult directly with vulnerable people to make sure their concerns and needs are heard; e.g. encourage women, girls and boys, and people with disability to speak for themselves.
- Assess the shelter needs of vulnerable community members by sex, age and disability, and prioritise these (e.g. include women and child heads of households, and children with disability).
- Assess the different NFI needs of vulnerable community members, e.g. sanitary materials for women and girls, or wheelchairs for the less mobile.
- Assess access to shelter and use of the home for different community members, e.g.
 - what are the needs of women, men, girls and boys for space, privacy and hygiene within the home to live safely and with dignity?
 - what about the location of shelter or accessibility features for people with disability?
 - what are the different care arrangements for children in residential care, child heads of households and children living on the street/displaced?
- Identify any protection risks associated with shelter, e.g.
 - a lack of access to shelter causing community tension or conflict
 - poor or crowded evacuation centres leading to a risk of women, girls or boys experiencing sexual or other gender based violence.

Access

- Prioritise the most vulnerable people for shelter and NFI distributions; e.g. female and child heads of households, unaccompanied children, people with disability and older people.
- Be flexible in registering heads of household for shelter/NFI assistance; e.g. don't require unaccompanied minors or child heads of households to 'attach' themselves to an adult in order to be registered.

- Consult with the community to identify vulnerable people with specific needs for shelter reconstruction and NFIs, e.g. provision of ramps and hand rails for people with disability. Involve a number of people with different disabilities to check that the shelter/ building is truly accessible.
- Make sure distribution points are accessible to vulnerable people, e.g. accessible locations and times; separated or priority queues; allow vulnerable people to send a proxy to collect food or livelihoods materials, or to have items delivered to their home.
- Aim for gender balanced staff teams for distributions and identify female staff as a contact point for women and girls in the community.
- Communicate information on shelter/NFI distributions through different methods (e.g. extension workers, radio, sms messaging, posters, newsletters, television or loudspeaker), so that information reaches everyone (e.g. literate, illiterate or children).
- Follow ‘build back better’ principles when reconstructing homes and community buildings, to improve access for people with disability and older people.
- Consider how social and cultural practices may limit access to shelter and NFI distribution and discuss with community leaders on ways to prevent discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

Safety and dignity

- Consult with vulnerable groups about ways to increase safety for shelter and NFI distributions and building activities, e.g. safe locations and routes to distribution sites; timing of distributions during daylight hours; priority queues for vulnerable people; safety patrols; accessibility features at distribution sites.
- Provide NFIs essential for personal hygiene and dignity, including sanitary materials for women and girls that are culturally appropriate.
- Monitor and respond to safety concerns with distributions, including risks of exploitation, abuse, violence, or injury.
- Consult with gender based violence specialists on ways to respond safely and confidentially to cases of exploitation and abuse, including where to refer survivors to services and support.

Participation, empowerment and accountability

- Provide staff with guidance and training about the situation for and capacities of vulnerable people.
- Inform beneficiaries about their right to shelter and where and how to access materials, e.g. targeted information sessions.
- Engage vulnerable people in decision-making about shelter and NFI programs to meet their needs, e.g. in decisions on site layout, shelter design and reconstruction. Develop ways for boys and girls to also meaningfully participate.
- Provide on the job training for both women and men in construction and maintenance of shelters.
- Provide training and policies to staff on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Provide clear information to communities explaining that beneficiaries, particularly women and girls, do not have to pay or provide services or favours in exchange for shelter or NFI assistance.
- Set up accessible, confidential and well-understood mechanisms for suggestions and complaints.

Monitoring

- Collect and monitor data on beneficiaries by sex, age and disability.
- Monitor to find out who is not able to access shelter and NFIs, and address any barriers they face.
- Monitor to make sure that beneficiaries receiving shelter materials and NFIs are the people using them. E.g. draft a letter of ownership signed by relevant stakeholders (Area Secretary/ Chief/ beneficiary/ donor etc.) to protect vulnerable people from having their shelter or building materials taken from them.
- Monitor for unintended outcomes of shelter and NFI distributions, e.g. the selection process for beneficiaries leading to the separation of families.

This checklist was adapted from:

- IASC Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action, 2015
- Shelter Programs – Tips for Protection Mainstreaming, Global Protection Cluster, May 2014
- Shelter and NFIs Gender Marker Tip Sheet, Inter-Agency Standing Committee, September 2012
- Mainstreaming Child Protection into Shelter - Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, Child Protection Working Group (CPWG), 2012