

SHELTER, SETTLEMENT AND RECOVERY



THIS SECTION APPLIES TO:

- Shelter, settlement and recovery (SS&R) coordination mechanisms
- Actors (staff and leadership) involved in humanitarian SS&R responses and distribution of non-food items (NFIs): NGOs, community-based organizations (including National Red Cross/Red Crescent Society), INGOs and United Nations agencies
- Local committees and community-based groups (e.g. groups for women, adolescents/youth, older persons, etc.), related to SS&R
- Other SS&R stakeholders, including national and local governments, community leaders and civil society groups.

Why Addressing Gender-Based Violence Is a Critical Concern of the Shelter, Settlement and Recovery Sector

The work of the Shelter, Settlement and Recovery (SS&R) sector is critical to the survival of populations displaced by humanitarian emergencies. Whether the displacement occurs within or across national borders, a variety of shelter and settlement options may be implemented depending on the context. Failure to consider GBV-related risks in SS&R can result in heightened GBV exposure for inhabitants. For example:

- ▶ Overcrowding in urban areas or camp situations can exacerbate family tensions, which in turn can contribute to intimate partner violence and other forms of domestic violence. Overcrowding can also increase the risk of sexual assault by non-family members, particularly in multi-family tents, multi-household dwellings or large communal spaces. Some families may arrange child marriages in order to alleviate congestion or attempt to protect their daughters from assault in communal dwellings. Even when camps are planned to avoid overcrowding, problems may arise as populations grow and additional land is not available.
- ▶ Shelters that are poorly designed (e.g. with insufficient doors and partitions in sleeping areas; inadequate locks; lack of privacy for dressing and bathing; not weatherized to



ESSENTIAL TO KNOW

Defining 'shelter'

The term shelter is used throughout the text to refer to both the basic definition of shelter—a 'habitable covered space providing a secure and healthy environment with privacy and dignity for those residing in the dwelling'—and the process through which this habitable space evolves from emergency shelter to durable solutions, which may take years.

(UN, DFID and Shelter Centre. 2010. 'Shelter after Disaster: Strategies for transitional settlement and reconstruction', p. 321, <<http://sheltercentre.org/node/12873>>)

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SEE SUMMARY TABLE ON ESSENTIAL ACTIONS

withstand the elements; etc.) may increase the risk of sexual harassment and assault for inhabitants. For example, when shelters become so hot that men are sleeping outdoors, women may fear attack if going outside to use the latrines at night. Transgender and intersex persons are particularly vulnerable to stigma, discrimination and physical threat if they cannot sustain an adequate level of privacy for basic activities such as dressing and bathing.

- ▶ When women, girls and other at-risk groups¹ (particularly woman- and child-headed households, unaccompanied children, persons with disabilities and older persons) are sheltered on the perimeter of camps or in areas with insufficient lighting, their risk of GBV is increased.
- ▶ In both camp and non-camp settings, inadequate or partial distribution of shelter-related non-food items (NFIs, such as cooking and heating fuel and fuel alternatives, building materials for shelter, hygiene and dignity kits, lighting for personal use, etc.) can increase vulnerability for women, girls and other at-risk groups, who might be forced to trade sex or other favours in exchange for these items.
- ▶ Lack of rental assistance (e.g. cash grants, cash-for-rent or cash-for-work) can increase vulnerability to sexual assault and exploitation by landlords. Women, girls and other at-risk groups may also be at risk of assault if they cannot secure rental property or pay their rent and are therefore obliged to seek shelter in open spaces (such as churches or mosques) or in multi-family dwellings.
- ▶ Lack of security patrols and other protection monitoring systems in and around shelter sites can create an environment of impunity for potential perpetrators.

Risks of GBV can be reduced through SS&R programming that continuously monitors for and develops strategies to address emerging GBV-related safety risks related to shelters, settlements and NFIs. This requires meeting internationally agreed-upon standards. It also requires taking into account cultural and social patterns from the onset of the emergency and into the recovery phase to build safer and more resilient communities in the long term. SS&R actors should engage women, girls and other at-risk groups in the design and delivery of their programming; prioritize GBV risk reduction in allocation of shelter materials and shelter construction; and ensure equal and impartial distribution of SS&R-related NFIs.

These actions taken by the SS&R sector to prevent and mitigate GBV should be done in coordination with GBV specialists and actors working in other humanitarian sectors. SS&R actors should also coordinate with—where they exist—partners addressing gender, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), HIV, age and environment. (See 'Coordination', below.)

WHAT THE SPHERE HANDBOOK SAYS:

Shelter, Settlement and Non-Food Items Standard 1: Strategic Planning

- ▶ Shelter and settlement strategies contribute to the security, safety, health and well-being of both displaced and non-displaced affected populations, and promote recovery and reconstruction where possible.

Guidance Note #7:

Risk, Vulnerability and Hazard Assessments:

- ▶ Actual or potential security threats and the unique risks and vulnerabilities due to age, gender [including GBV], disability, social or economic status, the dependence of affected populations on natural environmental resources, and the relationships between affected populations and any host communities should be included in any such assessments.

(Sphere Project. 2011. *Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response*, <www.spherehandbook.org>)

¹ For the purposes of this TAG, at-risk groups include those whose particular vulnerabilities may increase their exposure to GBV and other forms of violence: adolescent girls; elderly women; woman and child heads of households; girls and women who bear children of rape and their children born of rape; indigenous people and ethnic and religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) persons; persons living with HIV; persons with disabilities; persons involved in forced and/or coerced prostitution and child victims of sexual exploitation; persons in detention; separated or unaccompanied children and orphans, including children associated with armed forces/groups; and survivors of violence. For a summary of the protection rights and needs of each of these groups, see page 10 of this TAG.



Essential Actions for <i>Reducing Risk, Promoting Resilience and Aiding Recovery</i> throughout the Programme Cycle	Stage of Emergency Applicable to Each Action			
	Pre-Emergency/ Preparedness	Emergency	Stabilized Stage	Recovery to Development
ASSESSMENT, ANALYSIS AND PLANNING				
Promote the active participation of women, girls and other at-risk groups in all SS&R assessment processes	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assess the level of participation and leadership of women, adolescent girls and other at-risk groups in all aspects of SS&R programming (<i>e.g. ratio of male/female SS&R staff; participation in committees related to SS&R; etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assess shelter design and safety to identify associated risks of GBV (<i>e.g. overcrowding; location of shelter; partitions for privacy; locks and lighting; cost of rent; accessibility features for persons with disabilities; etc.</i>)		✓	✓	✓
Assess whether shelters maintain family-community links while still maintaining privacy (<i>e.g. assess if females are forced to share shelter with males who are not family members</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Analyse GBV risks associated with the distribution of SS&R assistance and non-food items (<i>e.g. sexual exploitation or forced and/or coerced prostitution in exchange for shelter materials, cash for rent, work vouchers, etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assess awareness of SS&R staff on basic issues related to gender, GBV, women’s/human rights, social exclusion and sexuality (<i>including knowledge of where survivors can report risk and access care; linkages between SS&R programming and GBV risk reduction; etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Review existing/proposed community outreach material related to SS&R to ensure it includes basic information about GBV risk reduction (<i>including where to report risk and how to access care</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
RESOURCE MOBILIZATION				
Identify and pre-position age-, gender-, and culturally appropriate supplies for SS&R that can mitigate risks of GBV (<i>e.g. sheets for partitions; doors; locks; accessibility features for persons with disabilities; etc.</i>)	✓	✓		
Develop proposals that reflect awareness of GBV risks for the affected population related to SS&R assistance (<i>e.g. heightened risk of trading sex or other favours in exchange for shelter materials, construction and/or rent; increased risk of sexual violence in cramped quarters or quarters that lack privacy; etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prepare and provide trainings for government, SS&R staff and community SS&R groups on the safe design and implementation of SS&R programmes that mitigate the risk of GBV	✓	✓	✓	✓
IMPLEMENTATION				
► Programming				
Involve women and other at-risk groups as staff and leaders in the design and implementation of SS&R programming (<i>with due caution where this poses a potential security risk or increases the risk of GBV</i>)	✓	✓	✓	
Prioritize GBV risk reduction in the allocation of shelter materials and in shelter construction (<i>e.g. implement Sphere standards for space and density; provide temporary housing for those at risk of GBV; designate women-, adolescent- and child-friendly spaces; etc.</i>)		✓	✓	✓
Ensure equal and impartial distribution of SS&R-related non-food items (NFIs) (<i>e.g. establish clear, consistent and transparent distribution systems; ensure at-risk groups have the same access to NFIs; etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Distribute cooking sets and design cooking facilities that reduce consumption of cooking fuel, which in turn reduces the need to seek fuel in unsafe areas	✓	✓		
► Policies				
Incorporate relevant GBV prevention and mitigation strategies into the policies, standards and guidelines of SS&R programmes (<i>e.g. standards for equal employment of females; procedures and protocols for sharing protected or confidential information about GBV incidents; agency procedures to report, investigate and take disciplinary action in cases of sexual exploitation and abuse; etc.</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Advocate for the integration of GBV risk-reduction strategies into national and local policies and plans related to SS&R, and allocate funding for sustainability (<i>e.g. address discriminatory practices hindering women, girls and other at-risk groups from safe participation in the SS&R sector; consider the construction of women-, adolescent- and child-friendly spaces and safe shelter from the onset of an emergency; etc.</i>)		✓	✓	✓
► Communications and Information Sharing				
Consult with GBV specialists to identify safe, confidential and appropriate systems of care (i.e. referral pathways) for survivors, and ensure SS&R staff have the basic skills to provide them with information on where they can obtain support	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ensure that SS&R programmes sharing information about reports of GBV within the SS&R sector or with partners in the larger humanitarian community abide by safety and ethical standards (<i>e.g. shared information does not reveal the identity of or pose a security risk to individual survivors, their families or the broader community</i>)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Incorporate GBV messages (<i>including where to report risk and how to access care</i>) into SS&R-related community outreach and awareness-raising activities, using multiple formats to ensure accessibility		✓	✓	✓
COORDINATION				
Undertake coordination with other sectors to address GBV risks and ensure protection for women, girls and other at-risk groups	✓	✓	✓	✓
Seek out the GBV coordination mechanism for support and guidance and, whenever possible, assign a SS&R focal point to regularly participate in GBV coordination meetings		✓	✓	✓
MONITORING AND EVALUATION				
Identify, collect and analyse a core set of indicators—disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant vulnerability factors—to monitor GBV risk-reduction activities throughout the programme cycle	✓	✓	✓	✓
Evaluate GBV risk-reduction activities by measuring programme outcomes (including potential adverse effects) and using the data to inform decision-making and ensure accountability		✓	✓	✓

NOTE: The essential actions above are organized in chronological order according to an ideal model for programming. The actions that are in bold are the **suggested minimum commitments** for shelter actors in the early stages of an emergency. These minimum commitments will not necessarily be undertaken according to an ideal model for programming; for this reason, they do not always fall first under each subcategory of the summary table. When it is not possible to implement all actions—particularly in the early stages of an emergency—the minimum commitments should be prioritized and the other actions implemented at a later date. For more information about minimum commitments, see **Part Two: Background to Shelter, Settlement and Recovery Guidance**.