

STANDARD 27: SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT AND CHILD PROTECTION

The following should be read with this standard: Principles; Standard 2: Human resources; Standard 13: Unaccompanied and separated children; Standard 17: Community-level approaches; Standard 26: Water, sanitation and hygiene and child protection; and Standard 28: Camp management and child protection.



Appropriate shelter and settlements are essential to healthy and safe families and communities. Humanitarian shelter and settlements support safe living environments that allow people to live with dignity, security and livelihoods. This sector also (a) promotes physical health by reducing the spread of disease and (b) contributes to the stability and psychosocial well-being of children and families. ‘Shelter’ refers to the household living space, including the items necessary for daily activities. ‘Settlement’ refers to the wider locations where people and communities live.

Child protection must be integrated into shelter and settlement interventions. Family size and composition in displaced populations and host communities can vary greatly. Children may be living alone or in new or altered family units, so there is a need for flexibility in the shelter provided (such as size and layout). To safeguard families from further exploitation, violence and forced eviction, knowledge of local land and property rights is central to making good decisions on where, how and to whom shelter is provided.






STANDARD

All children and their caregivers have appropriate shelter that meets their basic needs, including safety, protection and accessibility.

27.1. KEY ACTIONS

KEY ACTIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION AND SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT ACTORS TO IMPLEMENT TOGETHER

- 27.1.1. Adapt existing shelter, settlement and child protection assessment and monitoring tools, methodologies and indicators for joint identification, analysis, monitoring of and response to households at risk of inadequate or unsafe living conditions and/or child protection concerns:
 - Include the safety of children and their families as a sub-objective of each shelter and settlement intervention;
 - Include children's perspectives in all monitoring and assessments; and
 - Disaggregate data by gender, age and disability, at a minimum.
- 27.1.2. Collect baseline data on children's shelter, settlement and protection status.
- 27.1.3. Identify whether child protection concerns are improving or worsening the shelter or settlement situation. (For example, identify if a lack of safe, adequate shelter might be exposing more girls to sexual violence in an overcrowded camp.)
- 27.1.4. Agree upon the most effective joint mechanism for sharing information generated by assessments, evaluations and analysis.
- 27.1.5. Identify common areas of concern to shelter, settlement and child protection through consultation with children, caregivers and community members.
- 27.1.6. Identify solutions to address the situations of children in different living situations (such as children living in child-headed households, residential care, foster or kinship care or on the streets) and of different sexes/genders, ages and disabilities.
- 27.1.7. Establish joint prioritisation criteria to target children and households at risk.

- 27.1.8. Implement response interventions for households at risk of inadequate or unsafe living conditions and/or child protection concerns throughout all phases of the programme cycle.
- 27.1.9. Coordinate interventions throughout all phases of the programme cycle.
- 27.1.10. Ensure adequate representation of children in decision-making processes, community-based participation structures and site governance systems related to shelter. (See *Principles*.)
- 27.1.11. Develop and implement child-friendly, multisectoral child protection referral mechanisms so shelter workers can safely and efficiently refer child protection cases. 
- 27.1.12. Train shelter staff on child protection concerns, principles and approaches so they can correctly refer disclosed or identified child protection cases. 
- 27.1.13. Establish joint data protection protocols and confidential referral mechanisms for children and families at risk of inadequate shelter. 
- 27.1.14. Collaborate with children and other stakeholders to design, establish, implement and monitor joint, child-friendly, accessible and confidential feedback, reporting and response mechanisms for child protection concerns. 
- 27.1.15. Ensure that all staff have been trained on and signed safeguarding policies and procedures. 
- 27.1.16. Include child-friendly child protection messages in shelter and settlement interventions. (For example, shelter actors can inform children and caregivers about available child protection services and children's activities when providing new shelters for families.)
- 27.1.17. Document and address any unintended negative consequences and reproduce promising practices in relation to the impact of:
 - Shelter and settlement interventions on children's safety and well-being; and
 - Child protection interventions on shelter and settlement activities.
- 27.1.18. Review at regular intervals the connections and collaboration between child protection and shelter actors.

KEY ACTIONS FOR CHILD PROTECTION ACTORS

- 27.1.19. Coordinate with shelter and settlement actors and community members to include child protection in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of shelter and settlement programmes and interventions that:
 - Are safe, accessible, inclusive and protective for all children, including the most at risk; and


- Meet the needs of children of all sexes, gender identities, ages, disabilities, developmental stages and family settings.
- 27.1.20. Include information and referrals for shelter and settlement services in child protection activities while maintaining confidentiality and protecting personal household data.
- 27.1.21. Identify existing social protection services and mitigate any gaps, bottlenecks or barriers to children's access.
- 27.1.22. Work with shelter and settlement actors to identify existing and/or develop new information-sharing mechanisms.
- 27.1.23. Have child protection staff work with shelter and settlement staff to:
- Identify households and individuals who are at risk;
 - Address the situations of children in different living situations; and
 - Conduct response monitoring activities.

KEY ACTIONS FOR SHELTER AND SETTLEMENT ACTORS

- 27.1.24. Include child protection and children's participation in all phases of the shelter and settlement programme cycle.
- 27.1.25. Ensure assistance reaches all members of the affected population by:
- Using assessments to identify children who may have difficulty accessing adequate shelter and settlement services;
 - Identifying barriers to access for different groups, particularly children in child-headed households and children who are unaccompanied or living on the street;
 - Collaborating with child protection actors to identify and implement strategies to overcome barriers, such as literacy and identification; and
 - Registering all adult women as the main recipients of assistance in contexts where polygamy is practiced to avoid excluding subsequent wives and their children.
- 27.1.26. Conduct a risk analysis during programme design that:
- Assesses the **physical safety risks** involved in accessing shelter;
 - Identifies requirements that may cause a barrier to access, such as needing to be literate or needing certain documents to access support;
 - Assesses the best timing for the intervention; and
 - Determines the needs of specific groups, such as those caring for young children.
- 27.1.27. Involve children and caregivers in identifying adequate and safe communal spaces for children, including spaces for education, children's activities, non-formal education and cultural ceremonies.

With their participation, implement shelter and settlement interventions that:

- Are in safe, appropriate locations;
- Respond to differences in family size, disability or other barriers to accessing shelters; and
- Follow principles of universal design.

- 27.1.28. Provide beneficiary cards to child heads of households and children who are unaccompanied or separated so they can access assistance in their own names. Work with child protection actors to (a) discourage families from intentionally separating to access additional benefits and (b) avoid making children targets of theft or exploitation.
- 27.1.29. Review project design and implementation to ensure shelter and settlement responses (a) prevent overcrowding and (b) encourage families to stay together.
- 27.1.30. Design shelters and settlements that provide privacy and physical safety, particularly for adolescent girls, women and female-headed households. 
- 27.1.31. Design shelter responses that can be adjusted or modified for children who have difficulty reaching, entering, using and moving within/around facilities and services.
- 27.1.32. Ensure that all temporary shelters or constructions are safe and provide adequate privacy.
- 27.1.33. Advocate for gender balance in shelter and settlement workforces to support the inclusion of all children and caregivers.

27.2. MEASUREMENT



All indicators about children should be disaggregated by sex, age, disability and other relevant diversity factors. The indicators below measure progress against the overall standard. Indicators and targets can be contextualised with the goal of meeting the indicative targets below. Additional related indicators are available *online*.

Indicators	Target	Notes
27.2.1. % of shelter and settlement projects where child safety and well-being (including family unity, privacy and accessibility for children with disabilities) are reflected in design, monitoring and evaluation.	100%	Define 'safety' and 'well-being' in-country. Privacy and accessibility for children with disabilities should also be included.
27.2.2. % of constructed shelters that meet agreed-upon safety and privacy criteria for children and adolescents.	100%	'Shelter' refers to living spaces as well as community constructions. Child protection and shelter and settlement staff should develop safety and privacy criteria jointly.

27.3. GUIDANCE NOTES

27.3.1. ASSESSMENTS AND PLANNING

When identifying shelter-related protection needs, all assessments should involve:


- All adults (including women) and all children (including girls) with and without disabilities; and
- Caregivers of children at risk.

Women and girls should be consulted separately from men and boys, particularly regarding settlement planning and the times and places for distributing shelter materials. This will help reduce barriers to assistance as well as the risks of abuse, exploitation and violence. Assessment and monitoring teams and interpreters should include at least 50% women and should systematically consult with women and groups who face barriers to access.

Site planners must know the number of children and their related needs to determine the appropriate number of schools, play spaces and other spaces for children's activities. Improving accessibility for children and caregivers with disabilities has direct protection outcomes for the whole household and community. Therefore, site planners should provide dedicated support to households that require additional assistance with construction or access, including by providing them with plots closest to essential services.

27.3.2. IMPLEMENTATION

Child protection, shelter and settlement actors need to work together to address the short- and long-term shelter needs of the most vulnerable groups. Actions may include:

- Mobilising the wider community to help female-headed households, child-headed households, older people and people with disabilities to build their shelter units;
- Tailoring shelters to promote an accessible, inclusive and protective environment (such as providing more space for children with disabilities or greater privacy for adolescent girls); 
- Providing adequate indoor and outdoor play spaces for children;
- Providing adequate bedding and blankets for girls and boys to sleep separately;
- Providing adequate shelter to help reduce family separation;
- Designing shelters to support the privacy and dignity of women and children, such as providing specific areas for cooking and bathing;
- Addressing **physical dangers** (holes in the ground, open water, etc.) to prevent injuries to children and caregivers;
- Providing sufficient lighting at all sites (including water, sanitation and hygiene facilities) within settlements;
- Providing children with safe routes for accessing schools and play spaces; and
- Screening and monitoring participants to ensure only **children over the minimum working age** are involved in decent shelter and settlement-related work (including **cash-for-work** type programmes).

Shelter and settlement actors should always work with a representative cross-section of the affected population to identify barriers, risks and solutions.

27.3.3. MULTI-DISCIPLINARY APPROACH

Shelter and settlement projects must be coordinated across all sectors, including child protection. Shelter- and settlement-related issues that should be considered throughout the whole programme cycle include:

- Protection risks;
- Social norms;
- Perceptions of the host community; and
- The available human, financial, physical, environmental and social resources.



27.3.4. CAPACITY BUILDING



Shelter and settlement specialists' formal professional training may not include child protection. Child protection actors must support shelter and settlement actors to include child protection in all shelter- and settlement-related actions. At a minimum, shelter and settlement staff should be trained on:

- Child safeguarding measures, including implementing codes of conduct and protocols;
- Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse;
- Identifying and referring child protection concerns; and
- Consulting with children on shelter and settlement assessments, planning, monitoring and evaluations.



REFERENCES

Links to these and additional resources are available *online*.

- *'Shelter and Settlement', The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*, Sphere Association, 2018.
- *Collective Centre Guidelines*, UNHCR and IOM, 2010.
- *'Shelter and Site Planning and Non-Food Items', Guidelines for Gender-based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Settings: Focusing on Prevention of and Response to Sexual Violence in Emergencies*, IASC, 2005, pp. 53–61.
- *'Gender and Shelter in Emergencies', Women, Girls, Boys and Men: Different needs – Equal Opportunities (IASC Gender Handbook in Humanitarian Action)*, IASC, 2006, pp. 97–104.
- *All Under One Roof: Disability-inclusive Shelter and Settlements in Emergencies*, IFRC, Geneva, 2015.
- *The Right to Adequate Housing Toolkit*, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).