

# PROTECTION POLICY

2023



المجلس الفلسطيني للإسكان  
Palestinian Housing Council

The strength of the Palestinian Housing Council (PHC) relies deeply on our steadfast commitment to implement all policies and guidelines throughout the execution of PHC's programs and projects. It is our endeavors that form the foundation of our enduring success, and strive to embody the highest ethical and professional standards. This commitment is essential to accomplishing our humanitarian and societal goals and mission. We emphasize the commitment of all PHC employees, across various administrative levels, to adhere to specific policies and frameworks applicable to their respective domains.

These policies and guidelines, signify our complete involvement in building a sustainable and equitable community. They express our fervor in delivering optimal housing services to the community in which we live and operate. The application of these policies is a fundamental pillar in building the PHC's reputation as a trusted entity, committed to sustainable development and earnest work.

Dr. Samieh Al-Abed



Chairman

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## Introduction

PHC protection policy regulates the protection at two levels, first PHC data, second the program's beneficiaries, including the type of support and assistance to be offered, good practice guidelines for the implementation of services, standards, and adequate provisions for implementation. This policy is in line with national legislation and international law, e.g. the International Human Rights Law (IHL). The policy outlines behaviors and actions which are unacceptable, provides standards for the appropriate protection of beneficiaries, and clear guidelines on what procedures to follow and by whom, including reporting mechanisms for suspected abuse to an assigned authority for investigation.

This policy is divided into four sections;

1. **PHC information security policy:** sets out the basis for PHC in protecting the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of its data, for classifying and handling confidential information, and for dealing with breaches of this Policy. Information Security Policy document covering all areas of PHC functions.
2. **Child protection policy:** It applies to PHC's duty to make sure that its staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children, do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and any concerns PHC has about children's safety within the activities and programs, are reported to the appropriate authorities.
3. **Safeguarding adults' policy:** PHC is committed to creating a culture of zero-tolerance of harm to adults which necessitates the recognition of adults who may be at risk and the circumstances which may increase risk; knowing how adult abuse, exploitation, or neglect manifests itself; and being willing to report safeguarding concerns. This extends to recognizing and reporting harm experienced anywhere, including within PHC's activities, within other organized community or voluntary activities, in the community, in the person's own home, and any care setting.
4. **Protection mainstreaming within PHC programs:** PHC ensures representing the key elements of Protection Mainstreaming within its activities, projects, and programs.

## Policy Statement

- PHC believes Palestinians have to be protected against settler violence and military measures. Thus, PHC is committed to providing its beneficiaries with protective materials and legal aid where possible.
- PHC believes everyone has the right to live free from abuse or neglect regardless of age, ability or disability, sex, race, religion, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, marital or gender status.
- PHC is committed to creating and maintaining a safe and positive environment and an open, listening culture where people can share concerns without fear of retribution.
- PHC acknowledges that safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and is committed to preventing abuse and neglect by safeguarding the welfare of all adults involved.

- PHC recognizes that health, well-being, ability, disability, and need for care and support can affect a person's resilience.
- PHC recognizes that some people experience barriers, for example, to communication in raising concerns or seeking help.
- PHC recognizes that these factors can vary at different points in people's lives.
- PHC recognizes that there is a legal framework within which the sector needs to work to safeguard beneficiaries who have needs for care and support and for protecting those who are unable to take action to protect themselves and will act in accordance with the relevant safeguarding legislation and with local statutory safeguarding procedures.
- PHC is Committed to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) according to the World Health Organization prevention and response of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment policy.

Actions taken by PHC are consistent with the principles of beneficiary safeguarding; ensuring that any action taken is prompt and proportionate and that it includes and respects the voice of the beneficiaries concerned.



## **Section 1: PHC Information Security Policy**

The management of Information Security is the reasonable selection and effective implementation of appropriate controls to protect critical organization information assets to achieve confidentiality; integrity; and availability of data. This Policy sets out the basis for the protection of information, facilitating security management decisions, and directing those objectives which establish, promote, and ensure the best Information Security controls and management within the PHC working environment.

### **Scope of PHC Information Security policy**

This Policy states broad management principles guiding the Information Security program in place within PHC. This Policy applies to all physical areas under the control of PHC. Where other specific functional policies set more stringent requirements, they take precedence in those functional areas. Information security standards and information security-related work instructions are subordinate to this Policy and provide more specific detail on the implementation of this Information Security Policy.

### **Objectives of PHC Information Security policy**

Establish the direction on and commitment to Information Security and ensure it is communicated, applied, and complied with throughout the organization. Further, to develop and implement Information Security architecture, to protect information assets from loss or misuse, and to mitigate the risk of financial, productivity, and reputation loss to PHC.

The Information Security Policy consists of a principal declaration, which sets out the position on Information Security and defines three security principles upon which this Policy is formed, followed by eight supporting Policy Statements that expand upon those principles.

### **Principles of PHC Information Security policy**

- The PHC recognizes that data and information (whether its own, or that entrusted to its care) are core to its ability to fulfill its mission.
- The PHC is fully committed to protecting information and the environments in which information is processed, transmitted, and stored, consistent with the following security principles:
  - Best practices in Information Security
  - All applicable laws, policies, statutes, regulations, and contractual requirements.

- Adherence to both the Policy and the related Information Security standards is mandatory for all staff and other authorized individuals and entities, to be incorporated within relevant working procedures.
- The following Policy Statements support the Principal Declaration and define the compliance requirements of Information Security Policy management. The Statements address the following (8) areas:
  - I. Asset Management
  - II. Human Resources Security
  - III. Physical and Environmental Security
  - IV. Communications and Operations Management
  - V. Access Control
  - VI. Information Security Incident Management
  - VII. Business Continuity Management
  - VIII. Compliance

**I. Asset Management:** To achieve and maintain appropriate protection and control of PHC information assets and to ensure that responsibility and accountability for this protection and control are properly vested in designated information owners/custodians. To ensure appropriate handling procedures are applied to important information assets following are the responsibility for Assets:

- All assets shall be identified and an inventory of all important information-related assets drawn up and maintained for information security purposes.
- All information and assets associated with information systems shall be owned by a designated unit of PHC.
- Ensure that information and assets associated with information systems under their control are appropriately classified.
- Periodically review access restrictions and classifications, taking into account applicable access policies.

**II. Human Resources Information Security:** PHC ensures that staff and other authorized individuals or entities understand their responsibilities and reduce the risk of theft, fraud, or misuse of facilities. Responsibility for Human Resources Information Security:

- Security roles and responsibilities of all staff and other authorized individuals or entities of PHC information assets shall be defined and documented in appropriate terms and conditions prior to employment or contract finalization, reflecting the requirements of this Policy.

- All staff and other authorized individuals or entities using PHC information assets shall apply security measures in accordance with all relevant PHC regulations, rules, policies, and procedures.
- All HR data, files, and records are deemed sensitive and confidential. All PHC staff and, where relevant, other authorized individuals or entities, shall receive appropriate training and regular updates on Information Security-related policies and procedures as relevant to their function.
- Responsibilities for performing employment separation, reassignment, and termination shall be clearly defined and assigned.
- Staff and other authorized individuals or entities shall return all PHC assets in their possession upon separation from employment, contract, or agreement.
- The access rights of all staff and other authorized individuals or entities to information and information systems shall be removed or altered as appropriate upon separation or termination of their employment.

**III. Physical and Environmental Security:** To ensure that PHC premises, work areas, and information assets are adequately protected against identified risks to information assets. Critical or sensitive information systems should be housed in secure areas, protected by defined security perimeters, with appropriate security barriers and entry controls.

- Information systems shall be sited or protected to reduce the risks from environmental threats and hazards, and opportunities for unauthorized access. Power and telecommunications cabling carrying data or supporting information services shall be protected from interception or damage.
- Information systems shall be protected from power failures and other disruptions caused by failures in supporting utilities. Such protection shall be integrated with business continuity planning (BCP) and disaster recovery (DR).
- Information systems and equipment containing storage media shall be checked to ensure any sensitive data or licensed software has been removed or securely destroyed prior to disposal.
- Information systems and equipment shall not be removed from PHC premises without proper authorization.

**IV. Communications and Operations Management:**

- Adequate operating procedures shall exist for the management and operation of PHC information systems.
- Formal documented procedures shall be established, maintained, and made available for all activities involving information processing and communication facilities.
- Changes to information systems and applications shall be subject to change management control. Change management procedures shall be developed with appropriate documentation to demonstrate compliance.



- Appropriate segregation of duties and responsibilities shall be implemented to the greatest extent possible to reduce the possibility that any one individual can compromise an application, a policy, a procedure, or an activity, or perform unauthorized or unintentional modifications to, or misuse any information assets.
- Acceptance criteria for new or upgraded information systems shall be established, and suitable tests of the system(s) carried out during development and prior to acceptance.
- Existing information system resources shall be monitored and adjusted as necessary, and projections made of future capacity requirements, to ensure continued performance at the required levels.
- Appropriate backup arrangements, including annual testing, shall be implemented and maintained to protect information and software and to ensure all critical information assets and processes can be recovered if required for any reason.

#### V. Access Control

- To ensure appropriate restrictions on access to information, adequate access control shall be applied to the information assets to ensure access is available only to current members of staff (or other authorized individuals or entities) who require it in the course of their official duties and that the rights of user access take proper account of the type and level of sensitivity of the information concerned
- PHC information systems, networks, services, operating software, and applications shall be configured to ensure that appropriate access control and authorization mechanisms are implemented, functional, and effective.
- Routing controls should be implemented for networks to ensure that computer connections and information flows do not breach the access control policy of the applications.
- Access to operating systems should be controlled by a secure log-on procedure. All users should have a unique user ID for their personal use only and a suitable authentication technique used to authenticate users.

**VI. Information Security Incident Management:** To ensure incidents affecting Information Security within PHC are reported and responded to in a timely and effective manner to allow corrective action to be taken. All staff members and other authorized individuals or entities are required to report suspected information security weaknesses or incidents to the BOARD.

**VII. Business Continuity Management:** To ensure that PHC is equipped to react to disruptions of operations, and to ensure the timely resumption of critical business processes, following disasters or major failures of information systems. To ensure business continuity, the Disaster Recovery Standards policy is in place.

### **VIII. Compliance with Legal Requirements**

- To ensure compliance with applicable legal, statutory, regulatory, and contractual requirements, procedures shall be implemented to guide PHC in terms of its obligations.
- PHC managers shall ensure that all security procedures within their area of responsibility are carried out correctly to achieve compliance with security policies and standards.
- Directors shall make an annual compliance -self-assessment that they comply with this Information Security Policy and its related standards.
- Audit requirements and activities involving checks on operational systems shall be carefully planned and agreed to in advance, to minimize the risk of disruptions to business processes.
- Access to information systems audit tools shall be protected to prevent any possible misuse or compromise.
- Failure to comply with this Policy without obtaining a prior waiver shall be dealt with in accordance with PHC Rules, or as appropriate.

## **Section 2: PHC Child Protection policy**

Child protection Policy is a broad term to describe philosophies, standards, guidelines, and procedures to protect children from both intentional and unintentional harm. PHC Child Protection Policy is made up of several components, all with the goal of keeping children and youth safe. It includes protection protocols, guidelines for reporting incidents, steps for preventing abuse, training for PHC staff, the rules PHC follows for using the information in print and web materials, and safety measures for sponsor-beneficiary interactions.

### **Child Protection Protocols**

Each field office is required to have its child protection protocols based on PHC's overarching Child Protection Policies and Guiding Principles. These protocols include local laws on child abuse, procedures that are required by local law, a list of local authorities to whom child abuse cases are reported, as well as a list of partner organizations to contact that can provide the appropriate support services for victims.

### **Guiding Principles of Child Protection**

1. Having zero tolerance for child abuse.
2. Protecting children's rights and their best interests.
3. Placing the child is the priority when dealing with all identified or suspected cases of child abuse.
4. Empowering and educating children on their rights, personal safety, and steps they can take if there is a problem.
5. Integrating child protection into all aspects of our organizational strategy, structures, and work practices.

### **Reporting incidents of Child Protection**

For all reported child-abuse incidents, PHC requires that the child's best interest be the priority. In addition, all incidents must be dealt with promptly, and they must be handled in a confidential manner that does not harm the victim or the person reporting the abuse.

### **Child abuse and exploitation**

According to the World Health Organization, "child abuse" or "maltreatment" constitutes 'all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or

commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power'.

Abuse can take many forms, and PHC works to recognize and deal with any situation that can adversely affect a child's mental or physical health, development, or dignity. The four main types of PHC monitors are physical abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse

PHC's understanding of child abuse and exploitation includes, but is not limited to:

- **Physical abuse** may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer feigns the symptoms of or deliberately causes illness to a child who they are looking after. This is commonly described using terms such as 'fictitious illness by proxy' or 'Munchausen's syndrome by proxy'.
- **Emotional abuse** is defined as the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to causes severe and persistent effects on the child's emotional development. It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless and unloved, inadequate, or valued only so far as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children. It may involve causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.
- **Sexual abuse** involves forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g., rape) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.
- **Neglect** is defined as the persistent failure to meet the child's basic physical and/ or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's physical or cognitive development.
- **Bullying** may be defined as deliberately hurtful behavior, usually repeated over a period of time, where it is difficult for those bullied to defend themselves. It can take many forms, but the three main types are physical (e.g. hitting, kicking, theft), verbal (e.g. racist or homophobic remarks, threats, name-calling), and emotional (e.g. isolating an individual from the activities and social acceptance of their peer group).

- **Sexual abuse of children** can also be defined as contacts or interactions between a child and an older or more knowledgeable child or adult (a stranger, sibling, or person in a position of authority, such as a parent or caretaker) when the child is being used as an object of gratification for an older child's or adult's sexual needs. These contacts or interactions are carried out against the child using force, trickery, bribes, threats, or pressure. Sexual abuse can be physical, verbal, or emotional.
- **Commercial sexual exploitation of children** comprises sexual abuse by the adult and remuneration in cash or kind to the child or a third person or persons. The child is treated as a sexual object and as a commercial object. The commercial sexual exploitation of children constitutes a form of coercion and violence against children and amounts to forced labor and a contemporary form of slavery.
- **Child pornography** means any representation, by whatever means, of a child engaged in real or simulated explicit sexual activities or any representation of the sexual parts of a child for primarily sexual purposes. This can include photographs, negatives, slides, magazines, books, drawings, movies, videotapes, and computer disks or files. Generally speaking, there are two categories of pornography: soft-core which is not sexually explicit but involves naked and seductive images of children, and hardcore which relates to images of children engaged in sexual activity and the use of children in the production of pornography is sexual exploitation.
- **Violence** was defined by the UN Secretary General's Study on Violence as 'physical, psychological (psychosocial), and sexual violence to children through abuse, neglect or exploitation, as acts of commission or omission in direct or indirect forms, that endanger or harm the child's dignity, physical, psychological, or social status, or development.'
- **Commercial exploitation** means exploiting a child in work or other activities for the benefit of others and to the detriment of the child's physical or mental health, education, moral or social-emotional development. It includes, but is not limited to, child labor.

A child who is being abused may experience more than one type of cruelty. Discrimination, harassment, and bullying are also abusive and can harm a child, physically and emotionally.

## **Implementation and accountability of Child Protection**

This Child Protection Policy is developed to ensure the highest standards of professional behavior and personal practice to ensure no harm occurs in any situation to children and adolescents during their involvement in PHC activities, projects, and programs. It, therefore, includes measures regarding recruitment procedures, review of management structures, creation of space for children to speak out, staff training, and development of transparent protocols. The included standards are

a tool servicing the promotion of the welfare of children in PHC activities, projects, and programs. The Child Protection Policy is supported by clear guidelines on how it needs to be implemented by organizations participating in and supporting children in PHC activities, projects, and programs.

### **Accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation of the Child Protection Policy**

The aim of monitoring and evaluating the Child Protection Policy is to learn from practical case experiences, which will contribute to informing policy reviews and changes to the Child Protection Policy. PHC will regularly monitor the implementation of its Child Protection Policy and procedures. Progress, performance, and lessons learned are reported to the managing directors and included in PHC's annual reports. Monitoring and Evaluation will be done by checking whether the standards from the Child Protection Policy are implemented and whether safeguards are working along with a high level of coordination with legal entities and Shelter Cluster Palestine protection focal point to ensure do-no-harm principles. Next to the overall monitoring and evaluation of the Child Protection Policy, reactive monitoring will take place, after incidences have occurred, which will contribute to a learning process for PHC and if necessary, changes to the Child Protection Policy or reporting procedures.

### **PHC procedures to ensure the above commitments are met:**

All PHC staff will sign up for and abide by the attached code of conduct

- All partners will abide by the code of conduct.
- All staff and volunteers will have access to a copy of the child protection policy.
- Recruitment procedures will include checks on suitability for working with young people.
- The induction will include a briefing on child protection issues.
- Every workplace will display contact details for reporting possible child abuse and every member of staff will have contact details for reporting.
- Training, learning opportunities, and support will be provided by PHC members as appropriate to ensure commitments are met.

### **Code of conduct of Child Protection**

All PHC staff must sign up to and abide by this Code of Conduct, staff and others must never:

- Hit or otherwise physically assault or physically abuse children.
- Develop physical/sexual relationships with children.
- Develop relationships with children which could in any way be deemed exploitative or Abusive.
- Act in ways that may be abusive or may place a child at risk of abuse.



- Use language, make suggestions, or offer advice that is inappropriate, offensive, or abusive.
- Behave physically in a manner that is inappropriate or sexually provocative.
- Have a child with whom they are working to stay overnight at their home unsupervised.
- Sleep in the same room or bed as a child with whom they are working.
- Do things for children of a personal nature that they can do for themselves.
- Condone, or participate in, the behavior of children which is illegal, unsafe, or abusive.
- Act in ways intended to shame, humiliate, belittle or degrade children, or otherwise perpetrate any form of emotional abuse.
- Discriminate against, show differential treatment, or favor particular children to the exclusion of others.

This is not an exhaustive or exclusive list. The principle is that staff should avoid actions or behavior which may constitute poor practice or potentially abusive behavior. It is important for all staff and others in contact with children to:

- Be aware of situations that may present risks and manage these plans and organize the work and the workplace to minimize risks as far as possible, and be visible in working with children.
- Ensure that a culture of openness exists to enable any issues or concerns to be raised and discussed.
- Ensure that a sense of accountability exists between the staff so that poor practice or potentially abusive behavior does not go unchallenged.
- Talk to children about their contact with staff or others and encourage them to raise any Concerns.
- Empower children - discuss with them their rights, what is acceptable and unacceptable, and what they can do if there is a problem.

In general, it is inappropriate to:

- Spend excessive time alone with children away from others.
- Take children to your home, especially where they will be alone with you.

### **Section 3: Safeguarding Adults Policy**

Safeguarding Adults is compliant with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) Laws and regulations directives on the rights of disabled people and commitments to the rights of older people. The Safeguarding Adults legislation creates specific responsibilities on Local Authorities, to provide additional protection from abuse and neglect to Adults at Risk. When a Local Authority has reason to believe there is an adult at risk, they have a responsibility to find out more about the situation and decide what actions need to be taken to support the adult.

PHC will safeguard adults by ensuring that PHC's activities are delivered in a way that keeps all adults safe, especially for female households, people with disability, the elderly, and marginalized adults. PHC is committed to best safeguarding practices and to upholding the rights of all adults to live a life free from harm from abuse, exploitation, and neglect. The purpose of the safeguarding adults' policy is to demonstrate the commitment of PHC to safeguarding adults and to ensure that everyone involved in PHC is aware of:

- The legislation, policy, and procedures for safeguarding adults.
- Their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults.
- What to do or who to speak to if they have a concern relating to the welfare or well-being of an adult within the organization.

#### **Scope of Safeguarding Adults policy**

This safeguarding adult policy applies to all individuals involved in PHC including Board members, Staff, and PHC beneficiaries, and to all concerns about the safety of adults whilst taking part in PHC, its activities, and the wider community. PHC expects its partner organizations, including, for example, suppliers and sponsors to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to the principles and practices as set out in this Safeguarding Adults Policy.

#### **Commitments of Safeguarding Adults policy**

To implement this policy PHC ensures that:

- Everyone involved with PHC is aware of the safeguarding adult policy and knows what to do and who to contact if they have a concern relating to the welfare or well-being of an adult.
- Any concern that an adult is not safe is taken seriously, responded to promptly, and followed up in line with PHC Safeguarding Adults Policy.
- The well-being of those at risk of harm will be put first and the adult actively supported to communicate their views and the outcomes they want to achieve. Those views and wishes will be respected and supported.
- Any actions taken will respect the rights and dignity of all those involved and be proportionate to the risk of harm.
- Confidential, detailed, and accurate records of all safeguarding concerns are maintained and securely stored in line with our Protection Policy and Procedures.

- PHC will cooperate with the relevant Local Authorities in taking action to safeguard an adult.
- All Board members, staff, and officials understand their role and responsibility for safeguarding adults and have completed and are up to date with safeguarding adult training and learning opportunities appropriate for their role.
- PHC share information about anyone found to be a risk to adults with the appropriate bodies and Authorities.
- When planning activities and events PHC include an assessment of, and risk to, the safety of all adults from abuse and neglect and designates a person who will be in attendance as a safeguarding lead for that event.
- Actions taken under this policy are reviewed by the Board and senior management team on an annual basis.
- This policy and related policies are reviewed no less than on a two-yearly basis and whenever there are changes in relevant legislation and/or government guidance as required as a result of any other significant change or event.

### Implementation of Safeguarding Adults policy

PHC is committed to developing and maintaining its capability to implement this policy. To do so the following will be in place:

- A clear line of accountability within the PHC for the safety and welfare of all adults.
- Access to relevant legal and professional advice.
- Regular management reports to the Board detailing how risks to adult safeguarding are being addressed and how any reports have been addressed.
- Safeguarding adult procedures that deal effectively with any concerns of abuse or neglect, including those caused through poor practice.
- Arrangements to work effectively with other relevant organizations to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults, including arrangements for sharing information.
- Codes of conduct for Board members, Staff, Managers, and other relevant individuals that specify zero tolerance of abuse in any form.
- Risk assessments that specifically include the safeguarding of adults.

## **Section 4: protection mainstreaming within PHC programs:**

PHC ensures representing the key elements of Protection Mainstreaming within its activities, projects, and programs. PHC ensures the integration of protection principles in the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Protection mainstreaming is considered through the assessment/ project design, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation.

### **Prioritize safety & dignity, and avoid doing harm**

- Ensure that the proposed locations for shelter are considered in terms of the threat of physical attacks, threats to safety such as 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;
- It is essential to understand land tenure arrangements, including statutory/legislative and customary access rights to land, water, and other natural resources as well as inheritance rights. This precaution will reduce the risk of eviction or conflict erupting due lack of clarity on these issues. When unsure consult Protection Cluster focal point when possible;
- Ensure that shelter has been designed and built with adequate escape routes in the case of an emergency evacuation, and that disaster-affected populations have received information and training on fire safety and evacuation procedures;
- Take specific precautions in the shelter in terms of surveillance and implement community surveillance if possible;
- Provide efficient lighting throughout the site/settlement, with special attention to public and communal areas such as sanitation facilities;
- Respect minimum space standards in shelters to minimize risks of exploitation and abuse;
- Establish communal areas and collection points at a safe distance from shelter sites and temporary settlements. Ensure that they are accessible to persons with disabilities and older persons;
- Ensure the provision of separate toilets for men and women, avoid dark and isolated areas;
- Include partitions and door locks (when culturally relevant) to better protect women and girls, particularly single women and female-headed households;
- Provide shelter materials and distance between dwellings that offer greater privacy and dignity, especially in cultures where men's and women's are markedly separate or the privacy of the family is very important;
- Assess whether access to shelter is causing tension or conflict;
- Ensure settlements/sites have good visibility and lighting and adequate security at night;
- Ensure that essential services (e.g. health facilities, food distribution and water points, schools, etc.) and materials can be easily and safely accessed from the shelter and settlement locations;

- If required for safety, ensure that there are separate living areas available to groups such as single women, people with disabilities, and unaccompanied children, and these areas are protected from targeting of abuse or violence;
- Avoid any shelter or settlement activities that involve forced relocation or return;
- Monitor the safety of affected populations on an ongoing basis and make changes to the design of the shelter program or advocate with local authorities for improved safety;
- Take into account local material, existing capacities, and the environment. Whenever possible, locally acceptable and available materials and labor should be used to benefit the local economy, while not depleting local resources

### **Meaningful Access**

- Treat displaced persons equitably, whether they are living in host-family arrangements, or collective centers, are self-settled in urban or rural locations, are self-settled in camps, or are living in planned camps;
- Ensure that agencies consider the needs of different ethnic, racial, national, or social groups in shelter allocation, ensuring that the quality of shelter is equitable across all groups;
- Prioritize people and groups on the basis of need – do not prioritize certain groups because their solutions are easier to achieve;
- Ensure that shelters are accessible and appropriate to all groups and individuals, note in particular concerns of persons with physical or mental disabilities and older persons– where necessary, make individual changes to household shelters, or build all shelters to be universally accessible;
- People with disabilities and older persons may not be able to come to distribution/facility sites (e.g. food, water). Plan additional measures to reach persons with disabilities and older persons;
- Ensure that bathrooms are accessible to persons with disabilities and older persons, and safe for small children;
- Ensure particularly vulnerable groups such as female-headed households, older persons, and persons with disability have equal access to Core Relief Items and the ability to transport them;
- Treat owners, tenants, the landless, informal dwellers, and secondary occupants equitably even if return, resettlement, and reintegration options are different for different groups;
- Recognize the joint ownership rights of both male and female heads of household and prevent discrimination;
- Provide both women and men with the same benefits for their input and their work in construction: e.g. if work is paid, ensure that both women's and men's work is paid and is equal;
- Ensure adequate safe recreational spaces for children to play and for community groups to meet where family members can watch them from the shelter to avoid children playing in remote areas;
- Support and assist displaced persons until such time as they are no longer disadvantaged as a result of their displacement;

- All efforts should be undertaken to secure safe housing for unaccompanied children and establish monitoring procedures by specialized agencies and the community itself;
- Ensure that unaccompanied older persons are assisted in constructing their shelters;
- Develop an appropriate response to help vulnerable groups access to aid, transport shelter material, and construct shelters. Pay particular attention to assistance needed by persons with disabilities and older persons to ensure the construction of accessible shelters;

### **Accountability, Participation & Empowerment**

- Observe and ask about local construction practices and use the appropriate method when possible;
- Identify local authorities responsible for shelter provision and strengthen and support their role where possible;
- Ensure that local authorities are involved in site planning and selection so as to avoid problems and ensure consent and participation from local leaders. Provide technical and construction assistance;
- Involve women and men in the planning and the implementation of Core Relief Items distribution;
- Provided support to diverse groups that are not traditionally involved in construction activities but may be interested in participating in shelter programs;
- Ask disaster-affected populations, including diverse groups, to help identify safe locations for shelters and settlements as well as shelter design;
- Train and practice fire procedures and emergency evacuations with affected populations;
- Ensure that disaster-affected populations are fully involved in the planning and management of their return, resettlement, and reintegration;
- Promote modalities of shelter that enable internally displaced people (IDP) to upgrade their shelters from transitional to more permanent structures, as their situation evolves;
- Reinforce the community's self-help capacity: encourage traditional construction methods, particularly in areas where transportation of shelter material is restricted for logistical or security reasons; give women the opportunity to equally participate in the process; equip beneficiaries with knowledge of safe construction practices;
- Cash-for-work and food-for-work schemes as well as childcare arrangements can be useful to support households with specific needs in building their shelters. Monitor the implementation of such schemes to avoid exploitative and fraudulent practices;
- Work with the community to identify skilled women and men and adolescent girls and boys who can support shelter construction, from both the IDP and the other affected communities;
- Ensure that protection or community services staff work alongside shelter specialists and site planners in all multi-sectorial assessments and specialized shelter assessments to ensure that the protection implications of shelter interventions are taken into account at the onset.



- Ensure consultation with host communities, government authorities, as well as beneficiaries, men, women, boys, and girls. Involve persons with disabilities and older persons in your needs assessments in order to have accurate information about their specific needs;
- Obtain permission (temporary or permanent) before using or building on any land or property, in writing where possible;
- Consider assistance to host families and host communities, such as support in expanding or adapting the host family shelter;
- Set up a mechanism for complaints and appeals, and ensure that men and women are both comfortable accessing these complaints mechanisms;
- Provide information 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 specializing in housing, land, and property rights;
- Avoid and monitor any exploitative labor, especially child labor on construction sites;
- Disseminate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and implement programs that support displaced people's rights;
- Promote respect for social customs for dealing with the remains of the dead while ensuring that existing facilities such as graveyards or crematoria are adequate;
- Conduct regular structured dialogues and discussions with individuals and groups of different ages, gender, and backgrounds, particularly those with specific needs on shelter issues, to ensure that any protection concerns highlighted are discussed and resolved;
- Work with the community to set up monitoring or similar mechanisms to assess the living conditions of persons with specific needs in the community, such as older persons living without adult family members or child-headed households.