

Global Shelter Cluster (GSC) – Technical Community of Practice Webinar on Hosting Assistance

Date: 10 July 2025

Time: 10:00 Geneva time

Speakers:

- Pascal Panosetti – Global Shelter Cluster Technical Community of Practice Lead
- David Dalgado – Independent Consultant, formerly IFRC
- Denisse Solis – Independent Consultant, formerly IFRC
- Gareth Lewis – Currently works in Shelter & WASH with Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and worked with J'accueille, a French NGO to look at application of their hosting assistance model elsewhere.

Approximate number of participants: 43

Recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ca-xy5fFdoE>

1. Introduction & Objectives

- **Moderator:** Pascal Panosetti
- **Objective:**
To promote understanding of **Hosting Assistance** as a shelter response option within humanitarian programming and to share practical experiences and tools for designing and implementing such interventions.
- **Context:**
 - Hosting is one of the **oldest and most natural forms of humanitarian response**.
 - In displacement situations, friends, family, or even strangers often open their homes to displaced persons.
 - **Humanitarian agencies** and **governments** can play an important role in:
 - **Sustaining and enabling** these arrangements.

2. What is Hosting Assistance?

Definition:

- See the definitions in Sphere, but essentially **Hosting Assistance** involves supporting displaced people who are living with host families, either informally or through organized arrangements. Hosting arrangements can be in the hosts family's land in a separate shelter, in a spare room in their home, or in another separate shelter that the host family makes available.
- This includes support not only for **hosts**, but also for **guests** (the displaced) and the **broader host community**.

Distinction:

- **Hosting Arrangement vs. Rental Arrangement:**
 - **Hosting:** Based on goodwill and voluntary provision of shelter without the property owner having an expectation of financial gain, although they may still be compensated for the additional costs of hosting.

- Rental: Often involves an agreement (doesn't have to be written) to exchange rights to use a property for payment to the property owner, with a clear motivation of financial gain by the property owner.

3. Why is Hosting Assistance Important?

1. It is a **community-driven solution** that often emerges spontaneously in crises.
2. It can provide more **privacy, dignity, and has the potential for faster integration** than collective centers or camps.
3. If unsupported with humanitarian agencies only offering assistance in other environments such as camps or collective centres, then hosting arrangements may collapse, creating a **push factor towards those locations where people are receiving assistance**.
4. Helps open accommodation that may otherwise remain unavailable (especially in housing crises).
5. Disperses displaced populations throughout communities, reducing risks of **social tension**.
6. Can help facilitates **social inclusion, employment access, and local integration**.
7. Can be adapted for various responses:
 - Internal displacement
 - Cross-border movements
 - Mixed migration situations
8. Builds **empathy and reduces xenophobia** through direct interactions.

4. IFRC Framework of Hosting Assistance: Key Components

Seven Components of Hosting Assistance (Not all must be implemented by one agency):

# Component	Key Elements
1 Information & Orientation	Support for navigating services, cultural orientation, neighborhood info
2 Accommodation Checks & Improvements	Ensuring safety, adequacy, and suitability for the hosted family (disability access, safety)
3 Safeguarding & Risk Management <i>(Minimum Standard)</i>	Vetting hosts, background checks, managing protection risks for both hosts and guests
4 Assessment, Matching & Placement Support	Careful matching of hosts and guests with compatibility checks and clear agreements
5 Case Management	Ongoing monitoring, mediation, and tailored support for both hosts and guests
6 Financial Support (CVA)	Thoughtful use of financial support, if needed, without undermining volunteer spirit
7 Exit Strategies & Integration Support	From day one, planning for the transition to independent living

Note: The minimum standard is to include **safeguarding, risk management, vetting, and accommodation safety checks**.

Please refer to the IFRC Introduction to Hosting Assistance and the Step-by-Step guide for more information. <https://www.ifrc.org/document/introduction-hosting-assistance-programming>

And <https://www.ifrc.org/document/step-step-guide-hosting-assistance-people-affected-crisis>

5. Roles Humanitarian Agencies Can Play

Role Type	Examples
Non-Implementation	Technical advice, advocacy, coordination support
Partial Implementation	Contribute to specific components (e.g., matching or safeguarding) of a wider scheme
Full Implementation	Design and run comprehensive hosting programmes
Preparedness Role	Pre-identify potential hosts, build local capacity, ensure readiness

6. Operational Example: J'accueille (French NGO)

Presented by **Gareth Lewis**

- **Mission:** Change perceptions of migration by connecting refugees with hosts in France.
- **Achievements:** 1,300 people hosted since 2015 (primarily Ukrainians, Afghans, Syrians).
- **Process:**
 1. **Inform:** Communications campaigns to identify potential hosts.
 2. **Match:** Careful matching of hosts and guests (compatibility, house visits, house rules).
 3. **Host:** Start hosting, with regular **follow-up calls** to ensure success. The emphasis on follow-up is why J'accueille has hosting which last several months rather than weeks hosts often repeat the process to host others a very good rate of hostees finding jobs, their own accommodation.
- **Key Lessons:**
 1. Some hosts took time—up to **one year**—to move from interest to action.
 2. **Intercultural understanding** (active listening, empathy) is **teachable** and essential.
 3. **Volunteer follow-up** is low-cost but crucial to prevent breakdowns and ensure positive experiences.
 4. Hosting often lasts **6–12 months**, with high success rates for guest integration and host willingness to repeat.

Opportunities:

- Strengthening **community-based solutions**.
- Enhancing **local ownership** of displacement responses.
- Building **bridges across communities**.

Challenges:

- **Cultural context:**
 - May limit hosting viability.
 - Management of expectations from Hosts and guests should be addressed.
- **Information management** – establishment of an appropriate CRM to support all stages of engagement with hosts and guests, and processes related to matching and casework etc. This also included addressing data protection and coordination across agencies involved in hosting assistance.
- **Protection risks** for both hosts and guests (e.g.: vetting, monitoring, hotline support).

- **Sustainability** and avoiding host/guest dependency.
- **Governance gaps:** authorities may shift responsibilities without support.

7. Tools & Resources Shared

- **IFRC Hosting Assistance Guidance** - https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2024-08/Step-by-Step_Guide_for_Hosting_Assistance_To_People_Affected_By_Crisis_0.pdf
- **Tip Sheet for Managers** - <https://www.ifrc.org/document/introduction-hosting-assistance-programming>
- **E-learning course (available on IFRC learning platform)** - <https://www.ifrc.org/document/step-step-guide-hosting-assistance-people-affected-crisis>
- **Case Studies and learnings:**
 - Ireland Red Cross (since 2016) - <https://www.redcross.ie/safe-homes/>
 - Netherlands Red Cross “Open Home, Open Heart” - <https://ifrc.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5eba1f664c5ba559775072402&id=ed9ad89c2d&e=2630d68ebf>
 - French Red Cross analysis- <https://ifrc.us17.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5eba1f664c5ba559775072402&id=c9d1d91458&e=2630d68ebf>
 - Safe Homes EU Project (Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, France, Poland)
 - Safe Homes Case Studies: <https://www.ifrc.org/document/safe-homes-case-studies>
 - Safe Homes Lessons Learned: <https://redcross.eu/positions-publications/lessons-from-the-safe-homes-programme-hosting-as-an-option-to-accommodate-people-who-have-lost-their-homes>
 - [J'accueille's Hosting Impact Study 2017 \(French\)](#)

8. Conclusions & Takeaways

- Hosting assistance is a **valuable humanitarian response option** that requires careful planning, safeguarding, and partnership.
- Humanitarian agencies can contribute in multiple roles & responsibilities—from coordination to implementation.
- Successful hosting relies on:
 - **Safeguarding**
 - **Intercultural understanding**
 - **Case management**
 - **Supporting people’s plans to exit hosting arrangements**
- Lessons from Europe, while specific, offer **adaptable models** for displacement contexts globally.

10. Discussion / Additional Information Shared by Participants:

Q&A Segment

- Questions addressed on:
 - Program sustainability and exit strategies.
 - Impact measurement and data tracking.
 - Replicability of models in different regions.
 - The role of local authorities and community organizations.

Paulina KACZMARSKA (IOM) - In Poland, parliament passed the law to support UKR refugees on 12 march 2022 (within 2 weeks of the crisis). Article 13 of that act was dedicated to the host accommodation and gov support for hosts.

After the first wave of refugees, when the influx became more stable, gov started to look into how to best manage the situation. We had (and still have) gov collective centers (that's art 12 of the mentioned law) and plenty of private hosts, including NGOs and other entities, offering accommodation (both host, in private accommodation and larger, collectives sites). In 2023 gov started to consolidate collective sites and closing of those who were too big, unfit for prolonged stay etc. It was also important to support processes of integration and ability to become independent for people living in collective sites. By end of 2023 it also became clear that there is a lot of concerns related to the host accommodation. There was a lot of reports of fraud, corruption, protection and safeguarding issues. On top of that gov was also considering how long such support should last, when its time for people to stand on their feet and just become independent. Additional conversation related to the state budget constraints. Early 2024 gov carried broad consultations, including civil society representation about withdrawal from host support. In the end it was implemented mid 2024 by cancellation of art 13. Many NGOs or private entities run Collective sites were then contracted by government and they kept on running their places. But the need for such accommodation is also getting low now. we have app 25.500 people still living in collective sites.

Leeanne Marshall (Australian RC) - It would be great to hear more detail about case management but I'm also keen to hear more about what is involved with exit strategy support?

Answer: Sadly no time to respond to in the call – ran out of time. Refer to Case Management section and Exit Strategy section within: [Hosting Assistance Handbook](#)

Sandra Durzo (IFRC) - The 'goodwill' of hosts often has limits in terms of duration and willingness to host: are there matching incentives set up by local Government (France, elsewhere) to compensate with tax credits, utilities support or other benefits? I realize that in France the set up during the wave of Ukranian refugees there were a lot of unanswered questions on pros/cons etc.

Gareth Lewis (NRC) - In the UK at least, hosts can claim several hundred pounds/mth for hosting. In France no I don't think there is this support, but the hostees get money once they have refugee status. But the government is also funding J'accueille, mainly through local municipalities

Wahyu Widayanto (Indonesia Shelter Cluster) - The hosting model approach presents a compelling strategy to introduce to communities proactively, especially before disasters occur. Initiatives like the formation of sister villages can help address socio-cultural sensitivities and foster preparedness in a respectful and collaborative manner.

Just want to share, in Myanmar, we just develop guideline for CBI - Shelter/NFI and one of the interesting discussions especially on hosting were on the value transfer and period of assistances.

Target: Low income or at-risk HH in rural areas who host EQ displaced HH with severe damaged houses by EQ
Exit strategy should be planned from start to ensure access to adequate housing once financial

assistance is over (income generation program)
 Periodicity: One time assistance
 Frequency: Flexible, covering 6 months
 Conditionality: HLP DD: Written Rental Agreement, Adequate housing conditions
 Transfer value: *same amount as emergency shelter kit* (under discussion)

Answer: Caroline Dewast (GSC Support Team) - Hi Wahyu, looks super interesting, I guess you may also want to refer to the Rental TipSheet https://www.ifrc.org/sites/default/files/2021-08/TipSheet_RentalAssistanceProgramming_English_0.pdf

Ela Serdaroglu (IFRC) - A good entry point for the hosting program can be organizations who work with children and temporary foster families. They have a lot of experience with safeguarding, case management, etc and also the families they work with are open to social support in this way and can consider becoming hosts for displaced families as well.

Gareth Lewis (NRC) - Yes these organisations have been those most interested in working with J'accueille. But in general they were a bit scared. The scale is a bit scary for them, and how quickly it works. They were used to working with smaller numbers of people, for longer periods of time. They had the inter-cultural skills though, they had a lot of psychologists for example

Fedaa Ali (NRC) - Has there been any successful use of hosting assistance in similar blockaded/conflict-affected contexts or culture like Gaza context? Could you share lessons learned?

Answer: David Dalgado (Independent) - I am not aware of hosting assistance being used in a similar blockaded context, but I would start with (when the context allows) trying to speak with and understand the challenges that hosts and guests are finding in hosted arrangements to sustain the hosting and then work out what would help make the hosted arrangements more adequate (space, thermal comfort, cultural appropriateness etc.) and then what can realistically be undertaken given the limited access of in-kind items and lack of market functionality. I.e. it might be hard to do much that is meaningful until markets are functional allowing for CVA modalities or items can be got in, allowing for in-kind assistance.

Lana Barreto (NRC) - following up Fedaa's question... Could you share some examples of how to provide assistance in cases where accommodation arrangements are already in place? From my experience in Colombia and Venezuela, cultural issues are already very well resolved, but I see little action on the part of humanitarians, especially in terms of legislation. Now in Gaza, we all know that many families are hosting their extended family and close friends! I think the cultural aspects are more or less resolved, but politically, and we humanitarians don't do much with this type of assistance. Could you share some examples of this approach and exit strategy?

Answer: David Dalgado (Independent) - In cases where hosting arrangements are already in place, the focus should be on checking they are safe and dignified and then supporting them to be so as appropriate, to help sustain the hosting arrangement and minimise host fatigue or the guest being pulled to another settlement scenario (e.g. collective centre or make-shift site) where there might be assistance by agencies being offered.

Exit strategies in Gaza are outside of what can be realistically discussed in this Webinar, but now (in Gaza), when assistance becomes possible, it should be about supporting hosting while realistic exit strategies can be developed.

Fedaa Ali (NRC) - In remote management settings, how can organizations monitor the well-being of both host and hosted families and ensure accountability?

Answer1 : David Dalgado (Independent) - In the neighbouring countries to Ukraine response, a number of organisations undertook phone and video calls with both hosts and guests as part of their case management support.

Answer 2: Gareth Lewis (NRC) - Even in France, J'accueille does not carry out in-person visits. Everything is done over the phone. They have found that this is enough though because care is taken along the whole process to ensure that the hosting situation is safe and stable. The responsibility really sits with the hostee and host though. They are empowered with careful matching, training and support, but its up to them to ensure they choose the right host and hostee for them

Abel Agbomenou (German RC) - Q for Gareth Lewis, what is the coordination mechanism you put in place with the migration authorities ?

Answer: Gareth Lewis (NRC) - Its quite direct actually, they refer refugees to J'accueille. They need to have refugee status to be part of the programme though. Part of this is because if they don't then they don't have any support from the government for basic needs, and so they would be a burden on the hosts

Ela SERDAROGLU (IFRC) - For exit strategies it can be important to establish strategic partnerships with social enterprises that are actively working to find employment for refugees. e.g. Tent Foundation or TechMeUp in the Netherlands

Gareth Lewis (NRC) - Yes and also during the hosting period, J'accueille at least organises events, and ensures both hosts and hostees are informed of the huge range of activities available from different refugee support organisations from social events to education and skills training, to business incubators. These organisations all know each other pretty well in France.