



Shelter/NFI Cluster
NW Syria - XB Hub
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

Dignified Shelter After Action Review Workshop

27th July 2023

Venue: Holiday Inn, Gaziantep Türkiye



Report compiled and reviewed by:
SNFI Cluster Coordination Team

1. Introduction:

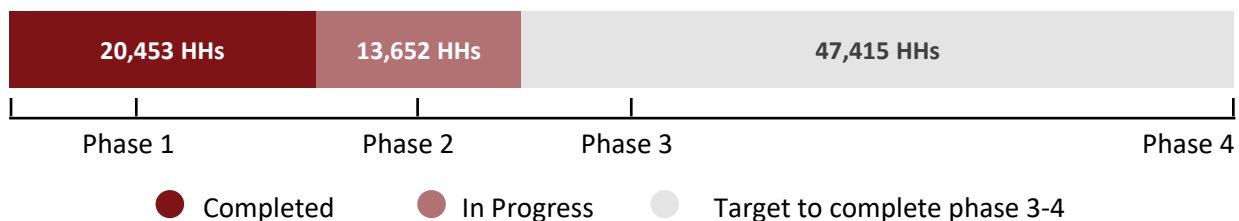
As of June 2023, CCCM data indicates that there are 1,532 IDP sites/camps in NW Syria hosting 1.97 million IDPs. Most of these sites are informal settlements that were originally established by IDPs themselves, with little or no site planning to address multifaceted vulnerabilities related to the built and natural environment, protection systems, access to essential services, governance capacities, social cohesion, supply chains, livelihoods, and water, sanitation, and hygiene.

On July 27th, 2023, a Dignified Shelter After Action Review workshop was attended by 29 participants from 23 cluster member organizations comprising of INGOs, LNGOs, IOs and UN agencies that had implemented Dignified shelter projects one year since the launch of the [Action Plan for Dignified Shelter and Living conditions in NW Syria](#) in March 2022. The workshop objectives included presenting best practices, solutions, setting cluster actions, reviewing challenges, and specifying areas for improvement in NWS.

The most recent version of the [Dignified Shelters Technical Guidance](#) was published in April 2022. This guidance outlines the key elements and standards to be considered when designing, rehabilitating, or installing shelters at IDP sites in NW Syria. The guidance was utilized to develop shelter solutions in accordance with these parameters. It also provided a number of case studies of designs which have been piloted in NW Syria and should be utilized as part of the guidance for [dignified and safer living conditions in NWS](#).

Between March 2022 and June 2023, the Shelter/NFI Cluster has made the following progress in the delivery of Dignified shelters: 20,453 households received dignified shelters across 88 sites (61 of which were registered sites), involving 23 implementing organizations. The project covered 2 governorates, 8 districts, 24 sub-districts, and 68 communities.

Currently, 13,652 households are still in progress, with 48 sites targeted. This phase involves 16 implementing organizations and aims to reach approximately 47,415 households to complete the first phase (valid HLP).



2. Summary of Cluster Members' presentations

Eleven organizations presented their findings with a focus on lessons learned, challenges, best practices, and feedback received from their Post Distribution Monitoring. The general feedback from the presentations is summarized below:

1. Include WASH facilities in the units, with a preference for concrete block walling for these facilities.
2. Factor in site leveling and planning into project costing and implementation.
3. Consider intercluster integration, such as WASH, protection, and FSL.
4. Improve targeted camps by building full infrastructure, roads, free spaces, drainage systems, and WASH activities linked to the site and at the household level.



5. Reorganize the units within the camps to provide sufficient space for privacy and movement of people, and mechanisms to increase access to all humanitarian services.
6. Incorporate initial design flexibility to meet changes requested by beneficiaries during the planning stage.
7. Integrate cash for work into the project activities to enhance beneficiaries' connection with project outputs, increase implementation speed, and improve income for targeted families.
8. Allocate housing units among families based on the number of family members.
9. Integrate the dignified shelter project with CCCM activities for sustainability after the NGO exits.
10. Share camp facilities needs among relevant clusters to ensure dignified living conditions, access to basic services, and livelihoods at the site level.
11. Improve shelter conditions for safety, protection against weather, privacy, dignity, and sustainability.
12. Invest in high-quality construction materials and techniques.
13. Build resilient infrastructure to withstand natural disasters and provide long-term solutions for displaced families.
14. Evaluate new designs for single and double units based on the local community's experiences and demands.
15. Consideration of public facilities in the project made it more comprehensive and met beneficiary needs.
16. Divide work among multiple contractors to accelerate work and make it more reliable.
17. Select land with favorable soil characteristics for enhanced strength and durability.
18. Collaborate with a specialist construction company, including engineering staff, to ensure well-thought-out plans.
19. Early contracting with executing contractors preempt potential delays.
20. Phased evacuation of camp into sectors streamlined the process and ensured efficient progress.
21. Phased distribution approach for grants to encourage responsible utilization.
22. Divide camp into sectors to enhance the efficiency of monitoring and accelerate the implementation process.

3. Proposed Areas of improvement and additions to the Dignified Shelter Approach

A group work session was held to discuss the top recommendations for improving or adding to the Dignified Shelter approach. Below is a breakdown of the improvement recommendations:

1. Selection Criteria:

- Beneficiary Selection Criteria: Refine the beneficiary selection criteria to prioritize vulnerable households and consider the needs of large families in the distribution criteria.
- Site Selection Criteria: Develop site selection criteria that integrate severity-based site comparison and protection-based prioritization criteria. The site selection should also take into consideration all relevant factors, including prioritizing sites on public land with valid HLP. This should incorporate enhanced coordination between CCCM and Shelter Cluster to identify camps that are most in need of dignified shelters.

2. Site Planning:

- Develop site planning guidance that incorporates global best practices, accessibility, and standards.
- Incorporate in the guidance a phased approach of upgrading and expanding existing camps to dignified shelters as a priority as opposed to the establishment of new sites. Development of new sites can be taken up as a last resort in case of space limitations.
- Take into consideration cultural practices and backgrounds of the beneficiaries in the site planning, e.g., livestock, livelihoods, and family structure.



- Take into consideration open areas in the plots, including space for gardening, congregating, expansion, and livelihoods.
- Consider space per person in the plot distribution in the site plan, including consideration for large families.

3. Technical Guidance:

- Develop a dignified shelter design unit option for large families that incorporates extra rooms as opposed to allocating two units. The design should take into consideration the recommended area per person.
- Consider ways of reducing costs in the various dignified shelter designs by increasing the percentage of concrete blocks in the shelter units.
- Incorporate latrines and kitchens in all the dignified shelter designs with more detailed design guidance.
- Consider vertical building construction for dignified shelters in sites with space limitations.
- Refine the technical specifications for all the materials, including sandwich panels, and specify a range of minimum and maximum specifications for the humanitarian response.
- Specify a range of area per person that should be incorporated in the shelter designs so as to ensure a harmonized standard of dignified shelter response.
- Improve the detailed minimum technical specifications and standards of materials to be used as well as detailed drawings.
- Review the different shelter types in the guidance that do not fit the definition of dignified shelter, based on PDMs from implementing organizations.

4. Environment and Greening Our Response:

- Incorporate environmental considerations in the dignified shelter guidance, including tree planting, green zones, and solar energy, in an effort to green our response and leave a positive impact on the environment.

5. Coordination and Inter-Cluster Collaboration:

- Revamp the guidance on the involvement of other clusters and stakeholders in the dignified shelter projects.
- Propose ways of coordinating and bringing in private donors to support the dignified shelter action plan where possible, and if not possible, ensure that permanent building construction complements rather than duplicates the humanitarian response.

4. Conclusion

It was agreed that the Dignified Shelter Technical Working Group was to be activated and tasked to update cluster-level guidance and direction on implementing a dignified shelter approach in North West Syria based on the best practices and reflecting the Post Distribution Monitoring Outcomes that were shared in the Workshop. The five key areas of update include beneficiary and site selection criteria, site planning, technical guidance, coordination, inter-cluster collaboration, environment, and greening our response. The expected outcomes of the TWiG will include:

1. Development of beneficiary selection criteria.
2. Development of clear and concise site prioritization and selection criteria.
3. Development of further site planning guidance.
4. Update of technical guidance documents based on recommendations.
5. Development of guidance on environment and greening of Dignified Shelter response.

6. Development of guidance and recommendations on coordination and inter-cluster collaboration in dignified shelter response.

Acknowledgment: The S/NFI Cluster would like to thank UNHCR for their support in providing the workshop venue and refreshments.