

Shelter Sector Guidance

Guidance on integrating green spaces and green shading into settlements and container cities

Green spaces and the presence of vegetation in temporary settlements like container cities are **vital for the wellbeing of residents**. Green spaces and individual vegetation plantings significantly improve the liveability of settlements and cities by supporting thermal comfort, mental health and social inclusion. **Areas that are shaded by trees or vines are on average of 5°C cooler than shaded areas without vegetation**. This significantly improves living conditions and lowers energy demands related to cooling. The **World Health Organization recommends that people reside within 300m of a green space** due to the well documented mental and physical health benefits, especially for children and the elderly. **Green spaces have also been shown to foster social inclusion in displaced communities**.

The following is a set of recommended actions for increasing access to green spaces and vegetation:

1. **Maintain vegetation and green spaces during site preparation**. This is the most cost effective and fastest way to provide green spaces and vegetation within the settlement or city.
2. **Collaborate across sectors, especially with the WASH sector, to include grey-water capture systems in the settlement or city design**. This will significantly reduce the cost and improve the sustainability of maintaining green spaces.
3. **Collaborate across sectors, especially with respect to site planning and improvement, to include green spaces as part of the drainage and flood prevention systems in the settlement or city**. Vegetation helps reduce surface flooding during heavy rains and also improves soil condition to reduce dust in dry periods.
4. **Where space allows, include open green spaces with varied vegetation and trees into the settlement or city design**. This will require longer-term maintenance which should be planned for, consider **collaborating with the CASH sector to include this in cash for work initiatives**.
5. **When planning and designing communal spaces, including child friendly spaces, ensure the inclusion of green spaces into the design**. For example, food or native plant gardens in raised beds can be created and included in educational activities.
6. **Use plants to shade semi-permanent or permanent dwellings**, it will greatly reduce heat load. When installing containers or other semi-permanent or permanent shelters **include, at a minimum, one pot or plant container per dwelling**. It must be large enough to accommodate a fast-growing vine, such as a passion fruit, or other plant.
7. **Support any existing gardening capacity or interest within the community by providing space for communal gardens, providing nature-based training or though nature-based social activities. Collaborate across sectors to make this part of social inclusion and mental health programming**.
8. **Do not introduce new plants to the area. Use only locally available plants**.

Contact Numbers: [Türkiye Earthquake 2023 | Shelter Cluster](#)