

## Prioritization of Vulnerabilities to Streamline Targeting Approaches

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#### Shelter Cluster Social Vulnerability Scoring Criteria and Shelter Vulnerability Prioritization Guidance

Social vulnerability scoring is developed to support partners in prioritizing intersectional vulnerabilities, operationalizing the [Shelter Cluster’s vulnerability criteria](#) and complementing the Shelter Technical Assessment carried out by shelter partners preceding program implementation.

It may be applied at household-level after completion of the site selection and technical shelter vulnerability assessment. Thus, the social vulnerability assessment is applicable only for eligible households from the technical assessment, leading to an informed prioritization criteria to provide shelter and household assistance (see figure 1 below).

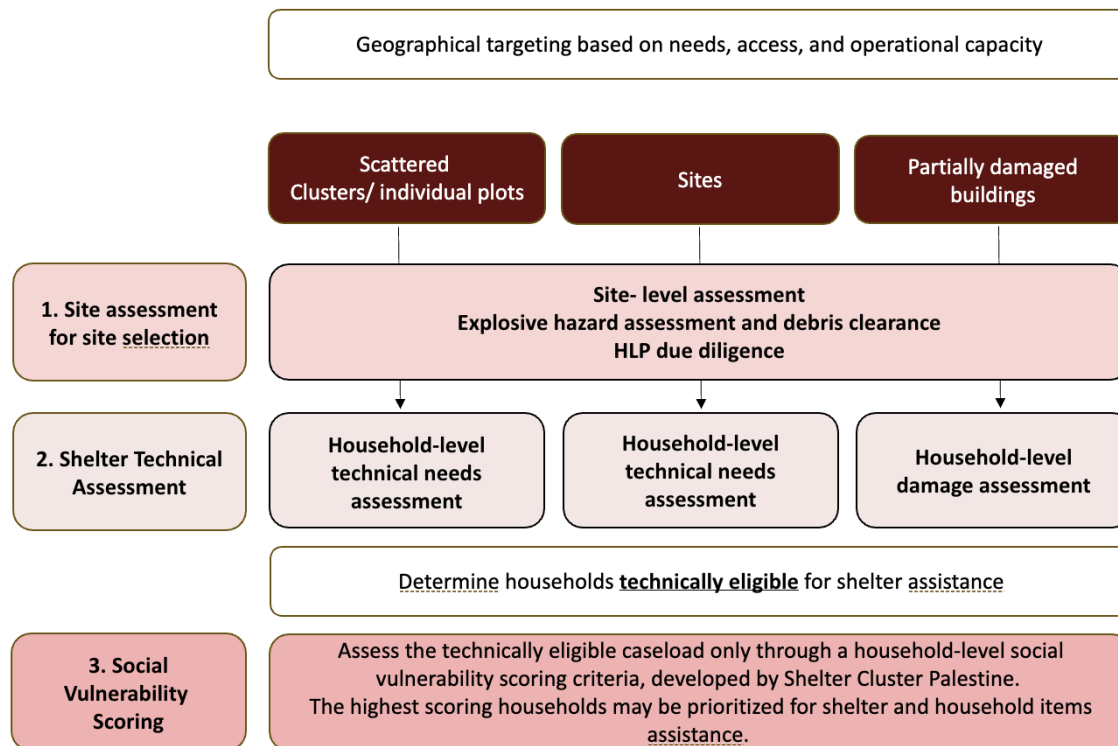


Figure 1. Recommended steps to assess affected households and prioritize most vulnerable households for shelter assistance.

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The social vulnerability scoring criteria is developed in coordination with Protection Cluster and in consultation with shelter actors. It has been endorsed by the Gaza Shelter Cluster SAG.

This document may be referred to alongside the Shelter Cluster [Targeting and Prioritization Guidance Note](#).

Please refer to the Shelter Cluster [Targeting and Prioritization Guidance Note](#) for detailed guidance on targeting households based on their shelter conditions and needs an **intersectional approach**.

In order to streamline targeting approaches in prioritization, based on the identified vulnerability of the beneficiaries, it is imperative to apply an intersectional approach, which can be used to understand the ways in which people can be exposed to protection risks, discrimination and barriers to assistance due to overlapping or intersecting identities, such as their gender, age, disability, ethnicity, legal status, and socioeconomic position. Rather than viewing affected populations as single categories, an intersectional lens highlights how compounded vulnerabilities can increase protection risks such as violence, exclusion, or exploitation. In practice, this approach can strengthen both the multisectoral needs analysis and response by helping humanitarian actors identify who faces the greatest risks, why those risks exist, and how to design inclusive, rights-based interventions that address both immediate harm and underlying inequalities.

It is recommended that shelter partners assess both shelter and social vulnerabilities<sup>1</sup>, using the matrix below as a guide to score intersectional social vulnerabilities. Those with the highest vulnerability scores will be prioritized to receive assistance, based on partners' capacity.

Vulnerability	Maximum Score	Remarks
<b>Elderly Headed Households (over 60 years)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the HH is led by an elderly person that is over 60 years old.</li> </ul>
<b>Any other Member over 60 years in the HH</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 elderly person= 1 point</li> <li>2 or more elderly persons = 2 points</li> </ul>
<p><b>Seeing:</b> How many family members have difficulty seeing, even if wearing glasses?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>0 = no points</li> <li>1 person = 1 point</li> <li>2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> The term *social vulnerability* is being used in this context by Shelter Cluster Palestine, to distinguish other kinds of vulnerabilities from shelter vulnerabilities.

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		<p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Hearing:</b> How many family members have difficulty hearing, even if using a hearing aid?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul> <p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Walking or climbing steps:</b> How many of you have difficulty walking or climbing steps?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul> <p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Remembering or concentrating:</b> How many of you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul> <p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Self-care:</b> How many of you have difficulty with self-care, such as washing all over or dressing?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul> <p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Communicating:</b> Using your usual language, how many of you have difficulty communicating (for example, understanding or being understood)?</p> <p>a) No difficulty, b) Some difficulty c) A lot of difficulty d) Cannot do at all</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul> <p><i>The scoring will be applied when the answer is a lot of difficulty or cannot do at all.</i></p>
<p><b>Families didn't receive NFI assistance from 6-12 months.</b></p>	1	

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<b>Families didn't receive NFI assistance more than 12 months.</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verification should be conducted through partner records, Site Management Committees (SMCs), or cluster tracking tools where available.</li> <li>• Partners may include questions only on shelter or NFI, or both, depending on type of assistance provided.</li> <li>• Shelter assistance includes any support aimed at improving, repairing, upgrading, or providing shelter, whether delivered through in-kind materials, technical support, or cash and voucher assistance (CVA) intended for shelter purposes.</li> </ul>
<b>Families didn't receive shelter assistance from 6-12 months</b>	1	
<b>Families didn't receive shelter assistance more than 12 months</b>	2	
<b>Female-headed households (FHH)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the HH is led by a female (includes adolescent, adult or elderly women)</li> </ul>
<b>How many pregnant and lactating women (PLW) in the HH</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul>
<b>Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> <li>• Partners are advised to refer these cases to protection cluster.</li> </ul>
<b>How many members are under the age of 5?</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1-3 person = 1 point</li> <li>• more than 3 persons = 2 points</li> </ul>
<b>Youth-headed households up to 18 yrs (YHH)</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the HH is led by a boy or girl up to 18 years.</li> </ul>
<b>How many members in the HH with chronic disease?</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 0 = no points</li> <li>• 1 person = 1 point</li> <li>• 2 or more persons = 2 points</li> </ul>

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<b>Households with no stable income AND facing protection-related risks due to economic hardship.</b>	1	<b>Examples of protection related risks:</b> -Risk of eviction -Harmful coping strategies -Children working -Lack of essential medical care -Asset selling. -Debt.
<b>Households with a high dependency ratio.</b>	2	This can be calculated:  Dependency ratio = number of dependents / number of working adults  -If the ratio is 0 to 1 = low, the score will be 0  - More than 1 and up to 2 =moderate, the score will be 1  -More than 2 = high, the score will be 2
<b>Total Score</b>	36	Agencies based on their programming and capacity can prioritize the HHs with the highest vulnerability.

### Scoring Range table

Score Range	Priority Level
25–36	Very High Priority
18–24	High Priority
10–17	Medium Priority
<10	Low Priority

**Annex A:** Agencies may carry out the above assessment through their social mobilizers, with support from internal Protection FPs or external Protection Cluster FP in the area, if any verification support is needed in the assessment process.

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Criteria	Verification Source
<b>Elderly HH</b>	ID / community verification
<b>Disability</b>	Washington questions
<b>Assistance history</b>	partner records
<b>PLW</b>	self-report
<b>Chronic illness</b>	medical document / self-report

### Terminologies:

**Head of household:** The person who holds primary responsibility for the household's welfare, decision-making, and day-to-day management, including financial support, shelter arrangements, and representation of the family in community or humanitarian matters. This can be verified by community leaders if required.

Traditionally the Head of household in Gaza is the adult male (husband or father) in the family. Due to displacement, casualties, detention, and loss of livelihoods:

Many households are now **female-headed** (widows, wives of detained or injured men), some are ever more vulnerable due to over age more than 60 years old, this will double the vulnerability. Therefore, these vulnerabilities are assessed and scored separately.

Note: The average size of a household is 5.3 persons in Gaza according to [PCBS](#). For emergency distributions, partners may consider providing two or three kits based on family sizes. However, for regular replenishment, the needs can be assessed in more detail, to increase specific item quantity in accordance with needs and item availability.

**Youth/child Headed Household** is a household that is led by an individual under the age of 18 years. A household is considered youth/child-headed when the primary income earner, main decision-maker, or overall household representative is under 18 years of age, in the circumstance where the household has no adult leading the household. Such households are socially considered vulnerable and will receive a vulnerability score under this criterion.

The household will be scored even if the youth/child headship is temporary. Once the vulnerability is no longer present and an adult assumes headship, the household will no longer be scored under this category.

**Economic hardship:** A condition in which a household's lack of financial resources directly contributes to, or exacerbates, identifiable protection risks affecting the safety, dignity, rights, or

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well-being of its members. It is not defined by poverty alone, but by the **protection consequences** of financial deprivation.

**Protection threats:** The likelihood that an individual or group will be exposed to violence, coercion, deprivation of rights, exploitation, abuse, or discrimination, resulting in harm to their safety, dignity, or well-being. In the context of displaced populations experiencing economic hardship, protection risks are those **where financial deprivation materially increases the probability of such harm**

**Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC):** Refers to children under 18 years old who are not living with their parents or usual primary caregiver.

**Dependent:** A household member who relies on another member for financial support, care, or basic needs and is not independently self-supporting including children, elderly persons, persons with disabilities, or individuals unable to generate income.

### **Disclaimer:**

### **Data Quality and Verification Considerations**

To ensure accuracy, consistency, and adherence to protection principles, the following measures must be applied by all partners during data collection:

#### **1. Enumerator Training**

All enumerators must receive adequate training prior to data collection, including:

- Clear understanding of all questions and definitions (e.g., shelter assistance, UASC, vulnerability criteria), shelter cluster can train partners on the tool.
- Proper use of the data collection tools (e.g., Kobo/ODK).
- Awareness of referral mechanisms for protection concerns (e.g., UASC).

#### **2. Gender-Sensitive Data Collection**

Data collection must be conducted in a gender-sensitive manner to ensure inclusivity and minimize risk:

- Where possible, interviews should be conducted with both male and female household members.
- Female enumerators should be available to interview female respondents, especially for sensitive topics.

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- Ensure safe and culturally appropriate engagement with all respondents.

### **3. Confidentiality and Protection Safeguards**

Particular care must be taken when collecting protection-related information:

- Personal and sensitive data must be kept strictly confidential.
- Do not record unnecessary sensitive details.
- Obtain informed consent before collecting or sharing information.
- Cases involving protection risks (e.g., UASC) must be referred through established referral pathways.
- Data must be stored and shared in line with data protection and safeguarding standards.

### **4. Data Verification and Consistency**

- Spot checks and supervision should be conducted regularly during data collection.

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