



# TIPSHEET

## PROTECTION AND SHELTER/NFIs<sup>1</sup>



Updated January 2018<sup>2</sup>

Humanitarian protection is about improving safety, well-being and dignity for crisis-affected populations. Protection refers not only to what we do, but also the way we do it. These principles include:

**Do not cause further harm or create new risk of harm**



**Non-discriminatory access to assistance and services**



**Identify the most vulnerable and their specific needs**



**Safe and dignified access to basic services**



**Community participation and empowerment**



**Strengthen positive community protection capacities**

Humanitarian protection also includes being aware of specific protection issues that arise in disasters and emergencies, but do not fall within a particular sectoral or organisational mandate or capacity. These issues require information-sharing, advocacy or referral to specialized actors for appropriate response. Such issues include:

- Child protection concerns (e.g. identifying and assisting separated and unaccompanied children);
- Gender-based violence (GBV);
- Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA); and
- Protection of people with disabilities (e.g. physical, neurological or mental); people displaced by disaster; and other vulnerable groups.

Protection problems may include discrimination, violence, abuse, exploitation, deliberate deprivation or neglect of vulnerable individuals or groups (e.g. religious and ethnic minorities; people with disabilities; women; children; youth; older people; and people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression and sexual characteristics - SOGIESC) within the affected population. Some of these issues may have existed in the community before the disaster, and may increase with the shock and stress of the disaster or emergency. Others may arise due to humanitarian assistance and the way in which emergency relief activities are designed and delivered (e.g. inappropriate, inaccessible or unfair distributions).

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*Assistance or services provided must be (i) appropriate and accessible to all those in need within a population and (ii) provided in a manner that does not expose vulnerable people to further risk of harm.*

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Disasters affect people differently based on their age, gender, disability and many other factors. Vulnerable individuals or groups face different risks and barriers to accessing assistance and services before, during and after a disaster. These diverse needs should be reflected in assessments and response actions across all sectors. Below is a non-exhaustive list providing initial guidance in supporting protection-oriented relief and recovery activities.

### **General Protection Considerations for Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)**

- Identify which government agencies and other national actors are responsible for the provision of assistance and take steps to work together with the responsible government authority or authorities.
- Identify the most vulnerable individuals or groups within the community and be aware of specific needs of all groups according to age, gender and disability. Use this information to guide the design and delivery of assistance to ensure the most vulnerable can access assistance in safety and dignity.
- Disaggregate beneficiary data by sex and age.
- Ensure all employees and contractors are inducted in your organization's child safeguarding policy (i.e. rules and a clear set of behaviours when dealing with children which is binding on all staff) and a Humanitarian Code of Conduct (e.g. Fiji Government Post-Tropical Cyclone Winston Code of Conduct) that addresses sexual exploitation and abuse.
- Implement measures to prevent and respond to physical or sexual violence arising in crowded shelter conditions.
- Prioritize and support women, girls, boys and men with any special needs or vulnerabilities, such as help with child-care.
- Ensure the shelter is physically accessible for older people, people with disabilities, pregnant women and small children.
- Locate the shelter within easy and safe access to water and sanitation services and social facilities including health care, schools, and places of worship with paths to these services lit, open and easy to walk.

<sup>1</sup> Non-Food Items (NFIs). A Protection Mainstreaming Tool for Emergency Response in the Pacific Region drawing on Global Protection Cluster Essential Protection Guidance and Tools. For more information contact [pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com](mailto:pacificprotectioncluster@gmail.com) or +679 3301 178 (UN Women, PHPC lead agency).

<sup>2</sup> Updated from the PHPC Think Protection! A Quick Guide to Integrating Protection into Disaster Response in the Pacific Region 2012.

- Maintain privacy and dignity of different household members while keeping the family unit together with separate areas for vulnerable groups such as single women and unaccompanied children.
- Provide non-food items (NFIs) essential for personal hygiene, dignity and well-being, including sanitary materials for women and girls that are consistent with cultural and religious traditions.
- Assess the land tenure situation of displaced people and mitigate possible eviction from shelter assistance, including advocating with property or land owners and authorities.
- Confirm that any law enforcement patrols for the shelter site have received humanitarian protection training.
- Register any aid-funded new houses in joint title where there are two spouses and register titles for single-headed households, whether male-headed or female-headed households.
- Include the following questions in on-going monitoring:
  - Do affected populations face any barriers or obstacles to access shelter or NFI assistance?
  - Is there any group (e.g. women or people of diverse SOGIESC) in need of shelter or NFI assistance who are not able to access it?
  - Does the location or type of shelter or NFIs create or increase any protection risks for the affected population?

### **Registration and Distributions**

- When registering families or households for assistance, avoid registering only the male head of household - include the other adult family members, as well as unaccompanied minors, to ensure equal access to the registration process.
- Restrict recipient lists to concerned actors to maintain the privacy of personal data and avoid any inappropriate use.
- Establish measures to prevent, monitor and respond to safety concerns, including intimidation, coercion, violence or exploitation associated with distributions. Ensure staff and community representatives are aware of these processes.
- Provide clear information to the affected population explaining that vulnerable people do not have to pay or provide services or favours to anyone in exchange for receiving assistance. Ensure that this information is communicated and understood, especially by women and girls in the affected population who may be at increased risk of exploitation.
- Consider the quantities of distributed items and the distance from the distribution site to the place where beneficiaries are staying - are beneficiaries able to carry it home safely?
- Check the distribution time is safe for beneficiaries to travel to the distribution point and return home without further risk of harm, and that the distribution site is safe and accessible for all groups within the affected population.
- Explore options for home delivery of assistance where necessary (e.g. for people with disabilities, older people, child-headed households).
- Engage diverse community representatives (i.e. women, men, youth, ethnic minorities, older people, people with disabilities and people of diverse SOGIESC) in the design and implementation of registration and distribution processes (e.g. committees) for culturally and community appropriate assistance with suitable times, locations and processes.
- Communicate clearly to recipients any differences in the amount or content of assistance allocated based of need.
- Provide information on registration and distributions through a range of communication methods (e.g. poster, radio, loudspeaker, TV, newspaper) and, if possible, translated to the local language so information can reach all beneficiaries in the affected population including people who are illiterate, people with disabilities and minority language groups.
- Set up a confidential complaints mechanism for people to report concerns, including incidents of intimidation, violence and sexual exploitation committed by community members or humanitarian personnel.
- Assess awareness of staff on basic issues related to gender, GBV, human rights – including women’s rights, social exclusion and sexuality as well as knowledge of where survivors can report risk of GBV.
- Review existing and proposed community outreach materials to ensure they include key information on GBV risk reduction - including where to report risk and how to access care.<sup>3</sup>

### **Protection Considerations for Emergency Assessments**

- Analyze the composition of the affected population in detail, ensuring the population and household composition is disaggregated by sex and age. Include the number of single-headed households disaggregated by woman/girl/boy/man head of household; pregnant or lactating women; unaccompanied girls and boys; elderly women and men; people of diverse SOGIESC; women, children and men with disabilities (disaggregated by type of impairment); and women, children and men with serious or chronic illness.
- Assess the situation of all displaced people (including those in temporary settlements, those dispersed in smaller groups and those living with host families).
- Identify existing coping strategies adopted by the affected population to respond to the disaster and prevent further harm (i.e. positive and negative coping strategies).
- Based on the above information, sectoral staff should consider what arrangements are needed for females and for males with specific needs (such as those in the population groups listed above) to ensure they are able to access humanitarian assistance or services in safety with dignity, including consideration of privacy or mobility issues.
- Ensure host communities are included in assessments to avoid tensions arising between displaced people and host communities in terms of assistance provided (or not provided).



**I'M NOT A PROTECTION SPECIALIST – WHAT CAN I DO?**  
Listen to adults' and children's concerns about their safety and include these in your activities.

<sup>3</sup> [https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines\\_lo-res.pdf](https://gbvguidelines.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/2015-IASC-Gender-based-Violence-Guidelines_lo-res.pdf).