



# Shelter and NFIs in Humanitarian Crises.

Guidance



Terre des hommes

Aide à l'enfance.

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## Preface

In 2014, Terre des hommes published a manual on interventions in emergencies to capitalise on its experience and to formalise its approach to Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) during humanitarian crises.

In order to take into account developments and lessons learned by Terre des hommes and other Shelter and NFIs organisations, Terre des hommes decides to update its intervention policy and broaden its scope of action on Shelter and NFIs in humanitarian crises.

This document attempts to define and institutionalise Terre des hommes' fields of intervention, approach, framework and limitations. The document is meant for use by Terre des hommes employees, in order to share a clear and harmonised vision of the organisation's mandate and provide orientation on Shelter and NFIs in humanitarian crises, while taking into account different contexts and response phases. It also provides partners and donors with a clear understanding of Terre des hommes' mandate for the sake of coordination and transparency.

This Shelter and NFIs in Humanitarian Crises Guidance serves as a reference document for all interventions carried out by Terre des hommes emergency unit or country delegations. It is intended to integrate with and be used in combination with other documents describing Terre des hommes emergency responses and the geographic zones's strategic orientation plans.

In addition, two methodological handbooks support the implementation of this guidance:

- The Shelter and NFIs in Humanitarian Crises Tool Kit details the responses to the various priority Shelter and NFIs issues in the context of a humanitarian crisis.
- The Shelter and NFIs in Humanitarian Crises Operational Methodological Manual focuses on the different phases of setting up and implementing Shelter and NFIs projects in the context of a humanitarian crisis.

This document adheres to an holistic programming vision with other Terre des hommes thematic policies<sup>1</sup>. It is also based on the inter-agency standards and best practices to which Terre des hommes adheres.

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<sup>1</sup> Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Thematic Policy; Child Protection in Humanitarian Crises Thematic Policy; Humanitarian Aid Guidance.

## Introduction

Over several years, Terre des hommes has developed a rapid response capacity to respond to the Shelter and NFIs needs of populations suffering from natural disasters or armed conflicts.

Terre des hommes inter sectoral approach allows for an initial response to the most urgent needs by organizing non-food items distribution, while simultaneously evaluating population's housing specific needs.

Shelter and NFIs responses cannot effectively meet all of the population's needs in humanitarian crises. However, they provide essential contributions to meeting the crucial needs for safety and survival, physical, psychological, emotional and social development and resilience capacity.

Thermal comfort, protection from the effects of the climate and personal safety and dignity are achieved by meeting a combination of needs at the level of the individuals themselves, the covered space they inhabit and the location in which their covered area is situated. Similarly, meeting these needs requires an appropriate combination of the means to prepare, cook and eat food; clothing and bedding; an adequate covered area or shelter; a means of space heating and ventilation as required; and access to essential services.

The shelter, settlement and non-food item needs of populations affected by a disaster are determined by the type and scale of the disaster and the extent to which the population is displaced. The response will also be informed by the ability and desire of displaced populations to return to the site of their original dwelling and to start the recovery process: where they are unable or unwilling to return, they will require temporary or transitional shelter and settlement solutions. The local context of the disaster will inform the response, including whether the affected area is rural or urban; the local climatic and environmental conditions; the political and security situation; and the ability of the affected population to contribute to meeting their shelter needs.

The provision of adequate shelter contributes to the health and well-being of displaced populations, while essential cooking and eating utensils and fuel for cooking are required to enable food assistance to be utilised and nutritional needs met. The complementary provision of an adequate water supply and sanitation facilities in areas where shelter assistance is being provided is necessary to ensure the health and dignity of the affected population.

Terre des hommes intervenes during the first days or weeks after a crisis situation, depending on its competencies and its mobilisation capacities. Regardless of the phase of intervention, Terre des hommes' approach remains holistic, addressing the population's needs as a whole, inclusive by integrating and mobilising all actors including the community in the response and the changes, and integrated by providing as much as possible an inter sectoral response to the population's needs.

Terre des hommes works through inter-agency coordination mechanisms, bringing up the capacities and skills Terre des hommes has acquired in Shelter and NFIs. Humanitarian Aid responses seek from the outset not only to prevent and respond to priority needs, but to support a medium and long term perspective (according to the country and crisis), such as developing mechanisms for the participation of local communities and other actors around the prevention of natural disasters at the community, local and/or national level.

*In this document, Section 1 briefly explains the Shelter and NFIs issues during a humanitarian crisis and presents the evolution of the inter-agency responses.*

*Section 2 concentrates on Terre des hommes' positions and particularities. It defines the aim and different response phases, as well as the three axes of intervention: (1) Material support, (2) Financial support, (3) Capacity development. This section also presents the key principles that guide Terre des hommes actions.*

## Section 1. Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs) in humanitarian crises

*This section introduces specific Shelter and NFIs needs in humanitarian crises. It describes the response of the various agencies within the context of international coordination in which Terre des hommes actively participates.*

**A humanitarian crisis is defined as a situation of armed conflict, international or internal, or as a natural disaster, affecting a country, a region, or a community, exposing the population to human, material, economic or environmental losses that exceed the capacity of the state system and the community to protect themselves and to respond to the situation<sup>2</sup>.**

### 1. Shelter and NFIs needs related to humanitarian crisis

Adequate housing was recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Tdh believes that everyone has the right to adequate housing and bases its interventions on the approach of “right” rather than “need”. This includes the right to live in security, peace and dignity, with security of tenure, as well as protection from forced eviction and the right to restitution. These instruments define adequate housing as ensuring:

- Sufficient space and protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, including structural hazards and disease vectors.
- The availability of services, facilities, materials and infrastructure.
- Affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural appropriateness.
- Sustainable access to natural and common resources; safe drinking water; energy for cooking, heating and lighting; sanitation and washing facilities; means of food storage; refuse disposal; site drainage; and emergency services.
- The appropriate siting of settlements and housing to provide safe access to healthcare services, schools, childcare centers and other social facilities and to livelihood opportunities.
- That building materials and policies relating to housing construction appropriately enable the expression of cultural identity and diversity of housing.

Shelter is a critical determinant for survival in the initial stages of a disaster. Beyond survival, shelter is necessary to provide security, personal safety and protection from the climate and to promote resistance to ill health and disease. It is also important for human dignity, to sustain family and community life and to enable affected populations to recover from the impact of disaster.

Non-food items such as clothing, blankets and bedding materials meet the most personal human needs for shelter from the climate and for the maintenance of health, privacy and dignity. Access to basic goods and supplies is required to enable affected populations to prepare and consume food, provide thermal comfort, meet personal hygiene needs and build, maintain or repair shelters.

Since 2004, the Minimum Standards for Shelter and NFIs in humanitarian response, developed by the Sphere Project, establish priority needs and minimum responses for Shelter and NFIs in humanitarian crises. They cover:

- **Strategic planning.**
- **Settlement planning.**
- **Covered living space.**
- **Construction.**
- **Environmental impact.**
- **Individual, general household and shelter support items.**
- **Clothing and bedding.**
- **Cooking and eating utensils.**
- **Stoves, fuel and lighting.**
- **Tools and fixings.**

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<sup>2</sup> Humanitarian Aid Guidance.

## 2. A recognized evolving inter-agency response

As a result of inter-agency advocacy carried out for several years, Shelter and NFIs are now fully recognised as “critical to survive”. From the emergency phase until durable solutions, it is necessary to provide security and personal safety, while protection from the climate also protects from ill health and disease.

- The **emergency** phase is the period during which individuals within the affected population are concerned primarily with survival.
- **Recovery** support ensures that the displaced population is supported to shorten the need for emergency sheltering and moves towards more durable housing solutions as quickly as possible. Reconstruction begins for non-displaced populations and those returning home.
- **Durable** solutions are sustainable options for settlement, both for those who were not displaced, and for those who were displaced but returned, resettled in the region that they displaced to, or relocated to another region or country.

The minimum standards for shelter and non-food items are a practical expression of the shared beliefs and commitments of humanitarian agencies and the common principles, rights and duties governing humanitarian action. Founded on the principle of humanity, and reflected in international law, these principles include the right to life and dignity, the right to protection and security and the right to receive humanitarian assistance on the basis of need. These policies and standards guide the Shelter and NFIs responses of different agencies in the field that coordinate and develop partnerships. Government bodies are involved in these coordination mechanisms, except when inexistent or party to the conflict. Humanitarian coordination resources should support the response strategy of the government, filling gaps in capacity where required.

Coordination is the responsibility of everyone involved in the response. It is essential that a collaborative culture is supported and achieved to counteract the tendency of organisations and institutions to think and act autonomously, without consideration of their wider role or impact in the wider response. It is the responsibility of government to support coordination in order to support its citizens. It is the responsibility of humanitarian organisations to support this coordination in order to meet their humanitarian mandates.

## Section 2. Terre des hommes intervention framework in humanitarian crises

*This section defines the priorities of Terre des hommes in terms of Shelter and NFIs interventions. It identifies the approaches and key principles that characterise Terre des hommes actions in Shelter and NFIs. The section describes the two axes of intervention that contribute to a holistic response to different Shelter and NFIs issues.*

### 1. Aim.

Terre des hommes has developed a rapid intervention capacity in response to the needs of populations suffering from natural disasters or armed conflicts.

Terre des hommes intervention on Shelter and NFIs in humanitarian crises is defined by the following aim:

**Within the context of natural disasters or armed conflicts, populations are assisted sustainably through Shelter and NFIs support on the site of their original homes (if possible) or on temporary communal settlement.**

### 2. Terre des hommes Shelter and NFIs intervention.

Terre des hommes determines its priorities in response to different Shelter and NFIs needs depending on the impact of the humanitarian crisis. As a first step, it seeks to assist the population most affected by the emergency. Terre des hommes then expands its "target group" progressively based on identified priority needs. Based on internal knowledge and collaboration with external experts and other Shelter and NFIs actors, Terre des hommes has defined its scope of action as the following:

Material support	Financial Support	Capacity development
Emergency Shelter	Cash transfer	Capacity building
Transitional Shelter	Vouchers	Technical expertise
Progressive Shelter	Contracted labour	Information centre
Shelter NFIs	Direct labour	
Household NFIs		

Terre des hommes is **part of an inter-agency** dynamic that promotes multi sectoral interventions within the same communities or populations and that focuses on the needs and priorities of the most vulnerable groups as identified and evaluated in the first weeks of a response.

Depending on the context and its prior presence (or not) in the country of the area affected by a humanitarian crisis, Terre des hommes will intervene at different phases and different levels of the emergency response:

- Through emergency measures to respond to immediate needs faced by the population whilst a community-based intervention strategy is put in place.
- Through medium-term responses to the impacts of the emergency according to the priorities identified, target groups, available resources and expertise.
- Through supporting recovery capacities of affected populations and/or to mitigate the consequences of a chronic crisis.
- Through prevention and preparedness measures to reduce and mitigate disaster risks for populations.

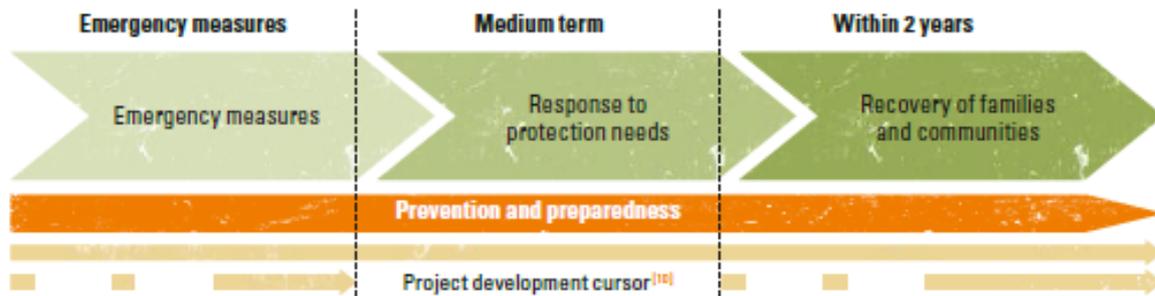


Figure 1. Child Protection in Humanitarian Crises – Operational Methodological Manual, Tdh, 2013

## 2.1 From emergency measures to durable solutions

### Emergency measures – Emergency Shelter and NFIs distribution

Emergency measures are implemented during the first weeks. They respond to the population most urgent needs and establish the foundation for Terre des hommes intervention. While offering solutions to deal with the initial shocks, these actions allow Terre des hommes to better understand the relevant issues and needs and to identify priorities. They also provide insights to be able to analyse community dynamics. Emergency measures are limited in time, up to six months<sup>3</sup>. The measures follow the principles of working with beneficiaries and not replacing actions of beneficiaries, communities and local authorities. Terre des hommes therefore aims to consult and involve them at all stages of its intervention. Terre des hommes emergency measures can consist of a range of actions. The choice for one or/and another depends on the needs and the context of the intervention.

If the crisis has caused large displacements or extensive destruction, Terre des hommes supports the distribution of Emergency shelters. They are intended as first response structures that provide life-saving protection from the elements ensuring safety, health and privacy. It has a life span of 1-6 months and conforms to Sphere standards. These structures are often tents, simple pole structures (timber, bamboo, steel) with tarpaulin covering, rope and pegs. The distribution of “emergency non-food items” to the most vulnerable families responds to their immediate survival problem and also facilitates the start of a rapid evaluation of child protection specific needs. It is conducted in coordination with other Terre des hommes sectors.

### Medium-term Recovery responses - Transitional shelter

Transitional shelters are “rapid, post-disaster household shelters made from materials that can be upgraded or re-used in more permanent structures, or that can be relocated from temporary sites to permanent locations. Transitional shelters can support disaster affected people between the emergency and the time when they are able to rebuild longer term housing. If well designed, the structure or materials from the transitional shelters should be re-used for permanent housing. Transitional shelters respond to the fact that post-disaster shelter is often undertaken by the affected population themselves, and that this resourcefulness and selfmanagement should be supported.

Transitional shelters:

- Are intended as more robust structures compared to emergency shelters.
- Conform to Sphere standards (particularly for Shelter, NFIs and WASH).
- Remain intact and inhabitable for approximately 6-24 months.
- Are constructed with structural and/or sheathing materials which are re-useable.
- Are either upgradeable to become permanent structures or can be disassembled for transport and re-use for program participants' permanent housing.
- Integrate construction techniques that improve resistance to natural hazards (i.e. more durable wooden structures, steel frame structures).

<sup>3</sup> Indicative average duration that can vary on a case by case basis.

## Medium-term Recovery responses - Progressive shelter

Post-disaster household shelters are planned and designed as permanent dwelling, to be part of future permanent housing, allowing and facilitating the future process of extension by the household following its own means and resources. The aim is to build one room providing safe shelter against reasonable future hazard by reaching permanent housing standards and facilitating development but not completing a full permanent house.

Progressive shelters:

- Are post-disaster rapid household shelters planned and designed to be later upgraded to a more permanent status.
- Are achieved by integrating future transformation and alteration possibilities in the structural basis of the unit.
- Are built on permanent sites with the goal of becoming part of permanent solutions.

## Durable solutions - Permanent housing

Permanent housing is a durable solution that provides long-term shelter. For construction of permanent housing, the security of land tenure is important, as the structures will tend not to be easily re-locatable and village or urban planning becomes essential. Many permanent housing projects have used concrete frame with brick or block infill. However, this is not necessarily the only solution. Successful housing design is specific to the climate, culturally appropriate and responds to the natural hazards of the area.

Permanent housing:

- Conforms to national housing standards and building codes.
- Remains intact and inhabitable for a minimum of 10 years.
- Is constructed with durable materials and construction techniques.
- Integrates construction techniques that are resistant to known natural hazards.

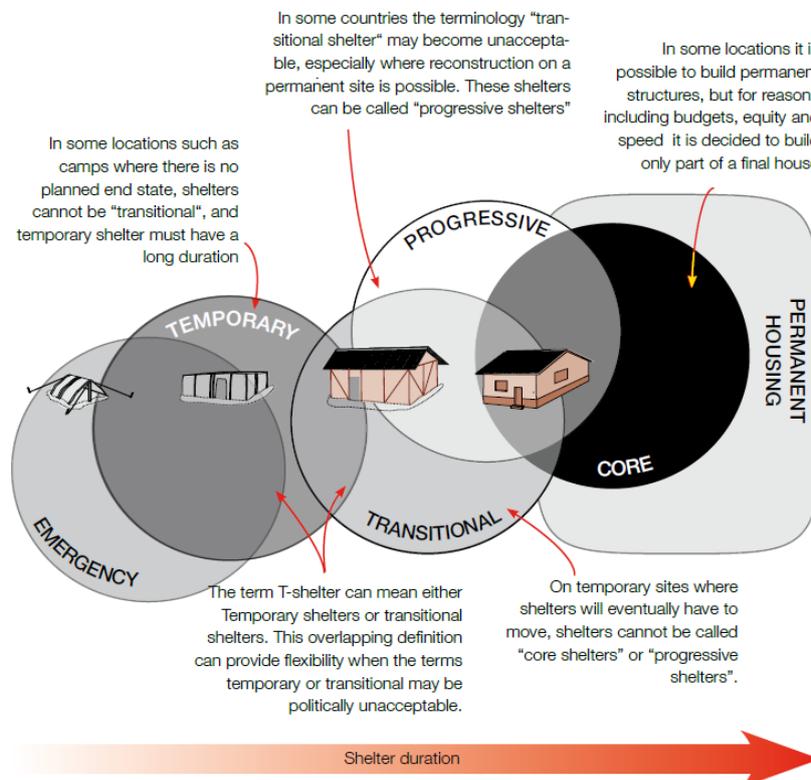


Figure 2. Shelter overlapping definitions – Post-disaster shelter, IFRC, 2013

## 2.2 A programmatic response

While implementing emergency measures or developing a longer term project (up to 24 months), Terre des hommes focus on three axes of intervention: **Axis 1 – Material support, Axis 2 – Financial support, Axis 3 – Capacity development.**

Depending on the context and priority needs, Terre des hommes Shelter and NFIs projects target one or more issues: (1) Emergency Shelter; (2) Transitional Shelter; (3) Progressive Shelter; (4) Shelter NFIs; (5) Household NFIs; (6) Cash transfer; (7) Vouchers; (8) Contracted labour; (9) Direct labour; (10) Capacity building; (11) Technical expertise; (12) Information centre.

The above actions are not all implemented in every context. Terre des hommes chooses to respond to certain issues in a geographic area based upon:

- Analysis of priority needs.
- Coordination with other actors.
- Phase of the crisis.

Field experience and work on Shelter and NFIs have led Tdh to reinforce its inter sectoral programme approach. This requires synergies and collaboration between the two main sectors of intervention of Terre des hommes: Health and Protection.

At a minimum, an inter sectoral approach should be taken in the following areas:

- Situation and needs analysis: either joint sector analysis or one sector analysis that includes elements of the other sector.
- Selection of a zone of intervention: act in the same priority zones of intervention for both sectors to the extent possible. Otherwise, each sector should have sufficient flexibility to integrate complementary activities from the other sector.
- Strategy development: synergies between the two sectors should be identified, planned and implemented from the beginning of the projects.
- Coordinated human resources: multidisciplinary teams informed of their respective projects and joint trainings promote their mutual collaboration. Some positions can be integrated into the other sector (with appropriate technical supervision and support from his own sector).
- Daily coordination of activities to assist beneficiaries.
- Partnerships and referral mechanisms to guarantee systemic care.
- Inter sectoral monitoring and evaluation systems.
- Inter sectoral advocacy for one population.

Terre des hommes does not advocate that all its projects be “integrated”. However, in situations where the two sectors (Health and Protection) are present, a synergy should be promoted coordinated, complementary interventions and training in order to optimise the quality of the intervention and increase the impact.

In line with the Foundation’s strategic orientation plan, Terre des hommes interventions in countries where it does not have prior country delegation are limited in duration, generally up to 24 months. Depending on whether or not it will plan to maintain a long term administrative presence, Terre des hommes may decide to either end a project or adapt its intervention strategy, according to the evolution of the situation:

- In chronic crises such as prolonged conflicts, situations involving permanent displaced people or refugees or countries facing recurring natural disasters.
- Through a development perspective and therefore long-term intervention.

### 3. Key approaches

#### 3.1 Coordination

Coordination with local authorities, other responding agencies and community-based and representative organisations is necessary to ensure that needs are met, that efforts are not duplicated and that the quality of shelter and non-food item interventions is optimised.

Coordination should enable all stakeholders involved to benefit from: common pooling and sharing of knowledge; common advocacy; and influence over the overall response plan with their own planning activities.

Humanitarian coordination should support the response strategy of the government, filling gaps in capacity where required. It should enable humanitarian stakeholders to understand the government's contribution to the response, its capacity and its processes. The objective of humanitarian aid agencies is to complement government and civil society efforts in achieving the strategic planning objectives.

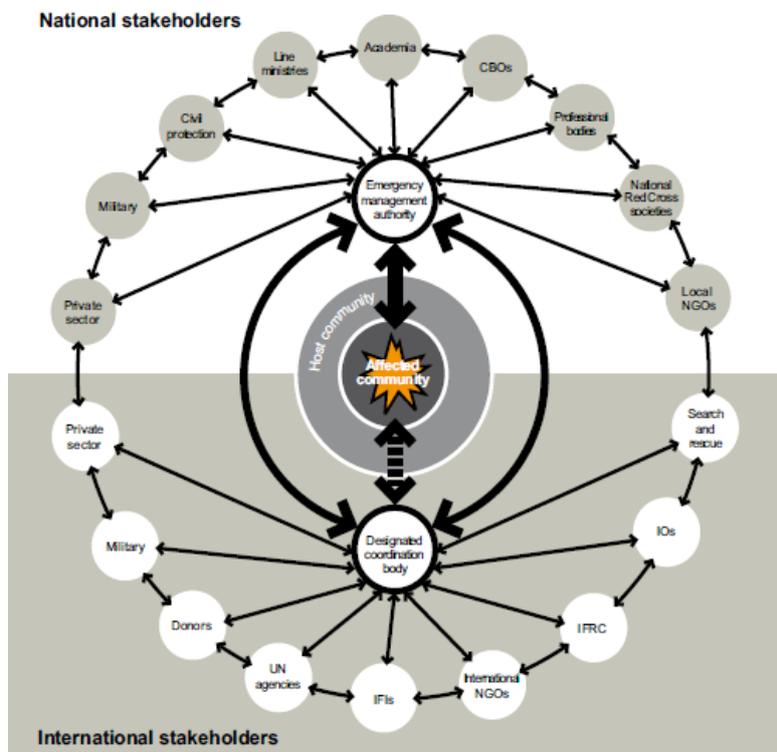


Figure 3. Example of coordination mechanism involved in the response to a disaster. From *Transitional settlement and reconstruction after natural disasters (2008)*.

The key tools needed for coordination include offering services, such as accurate information, to all stakeholders; supporting access to affected areas; and maintaining an up-to-date strategic plan as a framework for operational collaborations.

Effective coordination of sector activities requires access to the most reliable and accurate information available. Information management in an emergency situation is a fundamental component of the coordination process. It collates and disseminates much of the basic information that will inform implementation, such as:

- Developments in strategic, programme and project planning.
- The location of the affected population.
- Risk mapping.
- The location and levels of damage.
- The nature and size of capacities and resources.

- Changes in levels of access to affected areas.
- Appropriate law, such as building codes.
- Land use, cadastres and mapping.

Communities are the most important stakeholders at the grassroots level. All the other stakeholders participate with the support of communities. It underlines the need for an institutional mechanism through which community participation can be facilitated.

Any response should be informed by the steps taken by the affected population to provide temporary or permanent shelter using their own capacities and resources. Shelter responses should enable affected populations to incrementally upgrade and/or make the transition from emergency to durable housing solutions. Support for people's coping strategies, resilience and recovery capacities is essential. All members of each affected household should be involved to the maximum extent possible in determining the type of shelter assistance to be provided. The opinions of those groups or individuals who typically have to spend more time within the covered living space and those with specific accessibility needs should be prioritised. This should be informed by assessments of existing typical housing. Make households aware of the disadvantages as well as advantages of unfamiliar 'modern' forms of construction and materials which may be seen as improving the social status of such households.

### 3.2 Emergency – Recovery - Development continuum

Both governments and humanitarian organisations have tendencies to consider support offered to affected populations in phases, corresponding to handovers of responsibility within their internal structures. It is essential, however, that response is planned and implemented as a continuous, uninterrupted effort. It must take place within a strategic framework that covers the entire affected population, from immediate response to durable solutions.

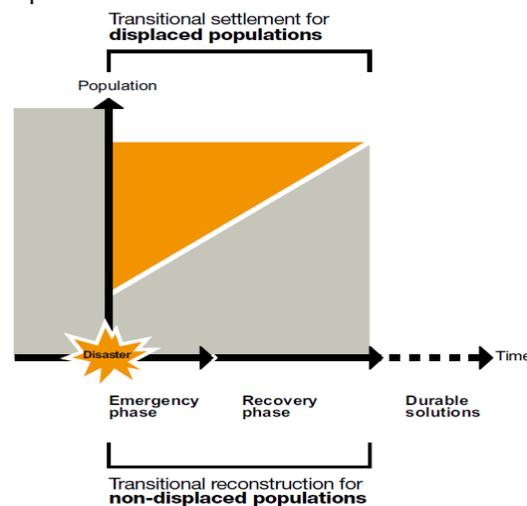


Figure 4. The phases of response within the transitional settlement and reconstruction strategy. From *Transitional settlement and reconstruction after natural disasters* (2008).

#### Emergency

In the early weeks of an emergency, it is therefore a matter of quickly identifying population facing life-threatening risks and providing them with emergency shelters and NFIs.

The **emergency phase** is the initial period of a disaster during which the immediate priority of the affected population is to ensure survival through obtaining shelter, food and safe drinking water. This phase also includes transit, where some of the affected population may be displaced and move away from their homes in search of safety in displacement options. The emergency phase may last a day or many weeks, depending upon:

- The type and severity of the disaster.
- How each household was affected.
- The resources available to them.

- The displacement and occupancy options available.
- The speed and level of assistance offered.

Affected populations are likely to be in a state of shock, and concerned with their own and their families' survival and safety. They will be concerned to protect or recover their home and possessions, which also may be essential to their livelihoods, as well as key documentation and valued personal effects. People at risk from a disaster often resist evacuation and may ignore the nature or extent of the risks that they face in staying. Consequently, even when warnings are given in good time, not all of the population at risk will evacuate prior to the onset of the disaster. People will displace as near to their homes as they consider safe, as they wish to stay as close as possible to their homes and possessions.

## Recovery

As the conditions for intervention gradually become more secure and stable and/or the Shelter and NFIs actors' capacities are developed, they can respond to the needs of the population in unstable environments, those unable to restore minimum protective environments and/or those who are exposed to new risks or violence. Emergencies often highlight chronic types of inadequate housing which are exacerbated by the humanitarian crisis within families and/or communities. Terre des hommes distinguishes itself from "emergency-focused" NGOs by developing a longer-term vision from the early days of its intervention. Using its expertise in development contexts, Terre des hommes approach and actions are aimed at restoring a long term secure environment, that can be progressively assured by the family, the community and the State. Even during humanitarian crises, as Shelter and NFIs mechanisms are developed or restored and more durable changes are initiated, beneficiaries learn to prevent disasters, and governmental and local entities prepare to take over.

The **recovery phase** follows on from the emergency phase, once survival needs have been met. During the period after a disaster the priorities of the affected population turn to achieving a durable solution to any displacement and beginning transitional reconstruction and sustainable livelihoods. Members of the affected population are likely to consider or take up different transitional settlement or reconstruction options, and move from one option to another, depending on their livelihoods and community coping strategies. Other factors in moving between options include the degree of assistance made available, as well as the hardship resulting from the length of time spent in the original option selected.

For those displaced, once survival is assured priorities turn to improving their living conditions and recovering livelihoods, before seeking transitional settlement options that will end their displacement. The displaced quickly seek to upgrade their shelter and they do not wait for formal assistance, which may sometimes arrive many weeks later. Some displaced families may consider migrating permanently to another area that they consider to be at less risk.

For those not displaced, repair and rebuilding begins very quickly after a disaster and does not wait until formal assistance begins, which may sometimes be many months later. Survival having been assured, those able to do so begin reconstruction activities immediately by clearing the site, recovering materials and adapting shelters for seasonal change. Displaced families, or individual members of such families, may return home and begin reconstruction activities.

### 3.3 Combining law, principles and standards

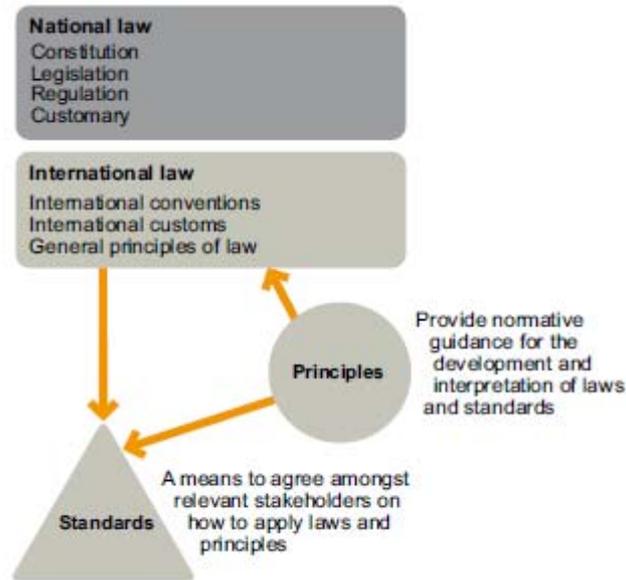


Figure 5. The relationship between laws, principles and standards. From *Transitional settlement and reconstruction after natural disasters* (2008).

#### Law

The reconstruction of every house and even temporary support to displaced populations are governed by national laws. National contract law and the regulations of humanitarian organisations must be followed to engage specialist services, skilled labour and equipment, for example through competitive tender. Failure to take into account these laws may delay the resolution of disputes, cause additional disputes, or result in legal proceedings. Humanitarian organisations often have little experience of contract management in construction, especially at a large scale, for which technical specialists should be consulted.

The sovereignty of the national government must be respected and an understanding formed of the legal framework and how it is used. The legal framework consists of national law, including religious and customary law, as well as relevant international law. The legal framework and its particular norms will directly affect operations, for example in the use of land for settlements. National laws may be insufficient for the exceptional requirements of the response. If gaps in the national legal framework are identified, specialist legal guidance on how to fill them with appropriate international human rights and humanitarian law should be sought.

Gaps and/or inconsistencies identified in the national legal framework should be drawn to the attention of the public authorities. The latter should be encouraged to fill them in line with international law and locally and internationally accepted principles and standards. International humanitarian and human rights law provides the normative framework and should ideally be translated into national legislation. In principle, the norm providing the greatest degree of protection to the affected population should be applied, be it national or international law. If national legislation gives less protection than international law, humanitarian organisations must apply international law.

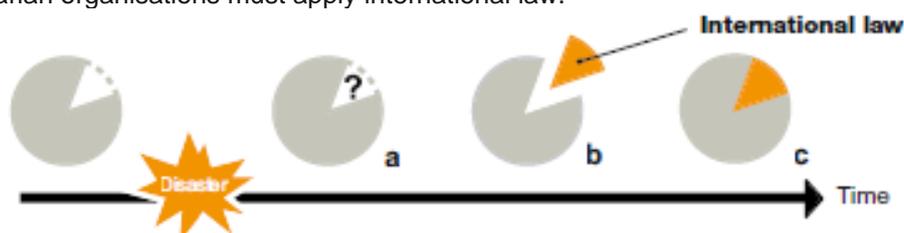


Figure 6. How appropriate international human rights and humanitarian law can be used to fill potential gaps in national law. From *Transitional settlement and reconstruction after natural disasters* (2008).

A sound legal basis in national and international **law** for the response and sector strategy is essential for the reasons outlined below:

- The entire response can be halted or undermined by legal issues, for example it is common for reconstruction to be delayed when proof of tenure cannot be established for affected families. However, if the legal basis for the response is understood and established correctly early on there should be far fewer obstacles to progress.
- A sound legal basis helps the government and local authorities of the affected country or countries to ensure that all involved in the response have a clear idea of their rights and duties, and of who is being supported to recover.
- The legal basis for the response contributes to making the response accountable and sustainable, for example in recording officially land tenure or rights.
- Basing the legal framework on existing national law supports the role of national governments, and improves opportunities for laws to be sustainable and enforced.
- National disaster law determines the entitlements of the affected population, such as criteria of eligibility for housing, and expropriation of land.
- A sound legal basis for the response contributes to risk reduction by contributing to risk management and laying the foundation for the response to any future emergency, such as through appropriate and enforced building codes.

## Principles

Principles developed from good practice learnt through countless responses are complementary to the legal framework: they offer practical normative guidance as to how similar problems have been approached in the past. The principles provide practical normative guidance as to how the affected population should be assisted in transitional settlement and reconstruction operations following a natural disaster. They may be used as a basis for establishing agreement amongst all stakeholders, including the affected population, local civil society and NGOs, the international community, and government, on principles for response in specific circumstances. Stakeholders must ensure that the agreed principles for response are complementary to and consistent with the legal framework in place in the country affected.

### **Principle 1. Support the affected community**

The first and main effort in responding to an emergency is always made by the affected community. The impact of the disaster on the community must be ascertained and appropriate support provided to local responses when these are appropriate and safe. Support must also be based on an understanding of the different roles and resources of individuals and groups within the community. Assessments (Principle 3) provide an understanding of these factors.

### **Principle 2. Coordinate and promote a strategy for response**

Coordination between governmental and international stakeholders must be based on a consensus strategy, developed and maintained with the participation of the affected population and government. A coordinated response strategy aims to support the government, filling gaps where necessary. The strategy should cover the entire response, from the initial crisis, to recovery, and to the point at which durable solutions are reached for every member of the affected population. Transitional settlement, reconstruction and risk reduction should be linked to or compatible with national planning mechanisms and programmes for sustainable development. The strategy must be consistent with international and national law, and with the standards and principles agreed among stakeholders. This should ensure that assisting groups respond to the needs of the affected population, regardless of whether or not they owned land or property, and include all vulnerable groups.

### **Principle 3. Maintain continuous assessment of risk, damage, needs and resources**

Emergency assessments, followed by ongoing assessments, monitoring and evaluation, are essential to a successful response. The strategy for response should be reviewed and updated according to the results obtained from this ongoing process.

#### **Principle 4. Avoid relocation or resettlement unless it is essential for reasons of safety**

Affected communities should not be displaced or resettled unless it is absolutely essential to avoid risks from physical hazards (see Principle 5). Displacement is likely to exacerbate the impacts that a disaster has on property, social connections and livelihoods, in both rural and urban environments. Remaining at home or close to home enables survivors to support themselves and recover their livelihoods, as well as helping to prevent problems arising over land tenure. Displacement must always be voluntary and the rights of the affected population respected.

#### **Principle 5. Minimise duration and distance, when displacement is essential**

If displacement is essential for reasons of safety (see Principle 4), the displaced population should be supported to minimise the duration of their displacement and the physical distance from their place of origin. Minimising the duration and distance of displacement enables people to recover their social connections and livelihoods as quickly as possible.

#### **Principle 6. Support settlement and reconstruction for all those affected**

Support must be offered to all affected persons, regardless of whether or not they are land or property owners or living in houses or apartment buildings. Families hosting displaced populations must also be included. Assisting groups should identify and monitor major problems facing the response so that the needs of all affected persons can be met, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender and age. This includes people who settle in a new location. A variety of solutions should be considered.

#### **Principle 7. Ensure rights and secure tenure for all those affected**

Security of tenure and property rights must be achieved for all those affected, whether they were previously illegal or informal occupants of their homes, tenants, or owners. Support must therefore be provided to the establishment of these rights for all members of the affected population, including those initially without property rights. This support must take place as early as possible, to ensure that displaced persons can return home as quickly as possible. The reconstruction of homes and communities can only begin once such issues are resolved. Displaced persons also require security of tenure while displacement lasts in the place where they are currently living.

#### **Principle 8. Support the affected population in making informed choices**

The affected population must be presented with a selection of transitional settlement options based upon their initial choices, where appropriate, with enough information to make informed decisions.

#### **Principle 9. Ensure that vulnerability to disasters is not rebuilt**

It is vital that the opportunity provided by disasters to raise awareness and undertake mitigation and measures which reduce people's vulnerability to future events is taken. Vulnerability must be reduced by incorporating specific risk reduction activities and measures into the transitional settlement and reconstruction response, for example, increasing the hazard resistance of buildings being reconstructed.

#### **Principle 10. Undertake contingency planning**

Contingency plans must be developed and/or previously existing plans updated in light of experience gained in the disaster. Contingency planning is most effective when it is a participatory process that includes all the actors who will be required to work together in the event of an emergency. It is a forward planning process, in which scenarios and objectives are agreed, managerial and technical actions defined, and potential response systems put in place to respond to an emergency situation.

## Standards

International standards for response provide benchmarks, often quantitative, against which the response can be measured, and which link national and international law to operational good practice. Standards can also be agreed or adapted locally. The minimum standards for shelter, settlement and non-food items are a practical expression of the shared beliefs and commitments of humanitarian agencies and the common principles, rights and duties governing humanitarian action. Founded on the principle of humanity, and reflected in international law, these principles include the right to life and dignity, the right to protection and security and the right to receive humanitarian assistance on the basis of need. In humanitarian action, shelter, settlement and associated non-food items are familiar terms that fall within the scope of the right to adequate housing, which is enshrined in human rights law.

Everyone has the right to adequate housing. This right is recognised in key international legal instruments. This includes the right to live in security, peace and dignity, with security of tenure, as well as protection from forced eviction and the right to restitution. These instruments define adequate housing as ensuring:

- Sufficient space and protection from cold, damp, heat, rain, wind or other threats to health, including structural hazards and disease vectors.
- The availability of services, facilities, materials and infrastructure.
- Affordability, habitability, accessibility, location and cultural appropriateness.
- Sustainable access to natural and common resources; safe drinking water; energy for cooking, heating and lighting; sanitation and washing facilities; means of food storage; refuse disposal; site drainage; and emergency services.
- The appropriate siting of settlements and housing to provide safe access to healthcare services, schools, childcare centres and other social facilities and to livelihood opportunities.
- That building materials and policies relating to housing construction appropriately enable the expression of cultural identity and diversity of housing.

The minimum standards are not a complete expression of the right to adequate housing as defined by the relevant international legal instruments. Rather, the minimum standards reflect the core content of the right to adequate housing and contribute to the progressive realisation of this right.

### 3.4 Preparedness

Better shelter, settlement and non-food items disaster response is achieved through better preparedness. Such preparedness is the result of the capacities, relationships and knowledge developed by governments, humanitarian agencies, local civil society organisations, communities and individuals to anticipate and respond effectively to the impact of likely, imminent or current hazards. Preparedness is informed by an analysis of risks and the use of early warning systems.

Transitional settlement and reconstruction sector response must maximise the safety of populations affected by natural disaster through integrating risk mitigation and management into transitional settlement and reconstruction response. This includes prevention and preparedness measures which help manage risk in future recurrent hazards. Vulnerability can be reduced in order to manage risk. For example, for a village on a low-lying coastal region vulnerable to cyclones: relocation to a safer area; construction of safer houses in the village; and building cyclone shelters. While some types of risk are very difficult to reduce or eliminate, it is possible to reduce vulnerability to them, especially by increasing capacities for disaster prevention and risk management.

From the emergency phase onwards, disaster response offers an opportunity to populations at risk, to governments, and to the humanitarian community to develop a culture of prevention and risk management, such as through developing and enforcing appropriate planning and building codes.

Effective risk mitigation and risk management include elements of prevention, preparedness and risk transfer. While responding to a disaster, from emergency to durable solutions, the goal is to build back better, which means safer, and reconstruction activities must be undertaken together with activities intended to strengthen individual and community coping strategies.

#### 4. Three axes of intervention

Following this geographic approach, Terre des hommes Shelter and NFIs strategy is structured around three axes of intervention:

**Axis 1 - Material support.**

**Axis 2 - Financial support.**

**Axis 3 - Capacity development.**

This holistic, systematic and progressive approach allows to:

- Respond to the population's critical needs in terms of emergency Shelter and NFIs.
- Develop **partnerships** with various governmental, community, and local actors in the Shelter and NFIs sector as well as other sectors, to reinforce local and national **competencies** and capacities.
- Sustain these actions through national disaster risk reduction **policies**.

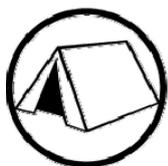
Depending on the contexts, the actions will be conducted simultaneously and progressively. The intervention according to these two axes is therefore **not sequential**, and evolves as:

- Primary needs are met, insecurity decreases and operational management measures are in place for the most affected population.
- Community networks are reactivated, governmental entities resume operations, and government officers are present and active.
- Political measures and decisions can be taken at the national level and reflected at the local level.

The following **assistance methods** are some of the common ways in which support is offered to both displaced and non-displaced households affected by natural disasters. These assistance methods are not alternatives, but should be combined in order to create assistance programmes supporting each transitional settlement or reconstruction option.

	Emergency measures	Recovery responses	Durable solutions
<b>Material support</b>	- Emergency shelter - NFIs distribution	- Transitional shelter - Progressive shelter - Shelter NFIs distribution	
<b>Financial support</b>		- Cash transfer - Vouchers - Contracted labour - Direct labour	- Contracted labour - Direct labour
<b>Capacity development</b>	- Capacity Building - Information centres	- Capacity building - Technical expertise - Information centres	- Capacity building - Technical expertise

##### 4.1 Axis I: Material support



**Emergency Shelters** are intended as first response structures that provide life-saving protection from the elements ensuring safety, health and privacy. These structures are often tents, simple pole structures (timber, bamboo, steel) with tarpaulin covering, matting, rope and pegs. Local materials such as bamboo sticks could be used for wall fencing, paddy straw and coconut or palm leaves for roofing and coir rope for binding the structure. All these materials are environment-friendly and fulfill the Tdh policy of

“DO NO HARM”.

In extreme weather conditions, where shelter may be critical to survival or, as a result of displacement, the affected population may be unable to construct appropriate shelter, rapidly deployable shelter solutions, such as tents or similar, will be required or temporary accommodation provided in existing public buildings. Displaced populations may arrange shelter with host families, settle as individual

households or in groups of households within existing settlements or may need to be temporarily accommodated in planned and managed camps or collective centres.

Shelter support items can include tents, plastic sheeting and toolkits, building materials and temporary or transitional shelters using materials that can be reused as part of permanent shelters.

Defined shelter solutions such as family tents, shelter kits, packages of materials or prefabricated buildings should be provided where local post-disaster shelter options are not readily available, are inadequate or cannot be sustainably supported by the local natural environment. Where reinforced plastic sheeting is provided as a relief item for emergency shelter, it should be complemented with rope, tools, fixings and supporting materials such as timber poles or locally procured framing elements.

Any such materials or defined shelter solutions should meet agreed national and international specifications and standards and be acceptable to the affected population. When only part of the materials for a basic shelter are provided (e.g. plastic sheeting), assess and mitigate any potential adverse impact on the local economy or natural environment of the sourcing of other materials needed (e.g. timber poles for framing). The technical and financial ability of the affected population to maintain and repair their shelter should also inform the specification of materials and technologies. Regular monitoring should be undertaken to ensure that the performance of shelter solutions remains adequate over time.



**Transitional shelter** provides a habitable covered living space and a secure, healthy living environment, with privacy and dignity, to those within it, during the period between a conflict or natural disaster and the achievement of a durable shelter solution.

An approach rather than a phase of response, the provision of transitional shelter responds to the fact that post-disaster shelter is often undertaken by the affected population themselves, and this self-management should be supported. Post-disaster shelter solutions that can be reused in part or in whole in more permanent structures, or relocated from temporary to permanent locations, can promote the transition by affected populations to more durable shelter.

For non-displaced populations on the site of their original homes, **progressive shelter** can provide a basic starter home, to be upgraded, expanded or replaced over time as resources permit.

For displaced populations, transitional shelter can provide appropriate shelter which can be disassembled and reused when the affected populations are able to return to the sites of their original homes or are resettled in new locations.

Transitional shelter can also be provided to affected populations hosted by other households who can accommodate the erection of an adjacent or adjoining shelter. Any such structures can be removed and reused when the affected populations are able to return to their original sites or elsewhere.



**Household Shelter Construction Support Items**, NFIs such as construction timber and tools, are usually distributed in standardised packages, the contents of which are determined by assessment and continual monitoring of the same factors as for household NFIs, as well as additional factors such as: appropriate hazard-resistant construction techniques; the types of rebuilding and repair works that will be undertaken and the construction techniques that may be employed; and construction traditions and skills.



**General Household Support Items**, NFIs such as cooking sets and blankets, are usually distributed in both the emergency and recovery phases to both displaced and non-displaced families affected by disasters. A series of standardised packages should be agreed, the contents of which are either standardised or determined by assessment and continual monitoring of factors such as: the survival and ongoing needs of different groups within the affected population; climatic conditions, including temperature and altitude; the resources and vulnerability of the affected populations; and the availability and price of the items in markets accessible to the affected populations. Combinations of different types of assistance may be required to meet the shelter needs of affected populations. Basic NFIs assistance can include personal items, such as clothing and bedding, or general household items, such as stoves and fuel.

## 4.2 Axe II: Financial support



**Cash transfer** may be made directly to beneficiaries within the affected population. It can be conditional (e.g. cash for work) or unconditional. To ensure that the cash is used for the purpose it was given, disbursement may be undertaken in phases, with meeting project goals as the condition of the next payment. To ensure that project goals are met, it is usual to combine cash disbursement with technical information, such as through building inspectors or damage assessors.



As an alternative to cash disbursement or distribution of materials, **vouchers** for materials or services may be given out. Vouchers can be exchanged for defined materials and services from traders, at distribution outlets, markets or special relief shop. The use of cash or vouchers to promote the use of local supply chains and resources should be considered, subject to the functioning of the local economy. Cash can also be used to pay for rental accommodation. Information or advice distributed through public campaigns or local centres on how to access grants, materials or other forms of shelter support can complement commodity-based assistance. Bank cheques/drafts are a corruption free option, alternative to cash transfer.



**Contracted labour** is often used for construction projects after the emergency phase.



Humanitarian organisations may hire and manage **labour directly** to undertake a small project, for example in the emergency phase when rapid response is essential.

## 4.3 Axe III: Capacity development



**Capacity building** should comprise medium-term support packages that integrate training and the training of trainers with participatory workshops and additional capacity. Clear capacity objectives and indicators should be agreed that define and measure impact upon transitional settlement and reconstruction, rather than upon the number of persons trained.



**Technical expertise** from humanitarian organisations or, more usually, nationally from the private sector may be made available to support all assistance methods for all transitional settlement and reconstruction options. Support or technical assistance should be provided to affected populations who do not have the capacity or expertise to undertake construction activities.



In addition to the outreach and public information campaigns that are critical to all assistance strategies, programmes and projects, local **information centres** may be established to offer a constant presence and service in affected communities over the duration of response.

## 5. Principles of Action

The principles presented below are in line with the general values and principles set forth in Terre des hommes Foundation strategic plan 2011 - 2015, thematic strategies, and inter-agency standards.

*Some key factors to be taken into account for any work on this axis: children, gender and respect for the environment.*

**During humanitarian crises, Terre des hommes respects in particular the following principles:**

### **Do no harm – not exposing children to further violence/risks**

Through an analysis and understanding of the context and the existing social, cultural, religious, and security factors, Terre des hommes seeks to guarantee a response that does not exclude, affect, or put children at risk.

In any crisis, children are particularly vulnerable and can represent an important part of the affected population, those most at risk. Tdh, with its focus on children, should take special measures for children to ensure them priority access to basic services. Particular attention should be paid to children under five. The main objective is to keep the sickness, mortality and malnutrition indications below the critical levels for this specific group, to bring psychosocial support to children and to assess the problems of protection with reference to Tdh's child protection policy.

### **Non-Discrimination – promoting fair and impartial access to relief measures**

The different opinions and needs of women and men should be considered at various stages of the project cycle. The role of women requires special care. The word «gender» refers to the differentiation between the responsibilities, roles, needs, interests, abilities and vulnerabilities of both men and women, as well as the aspects of a project which are influenced by social and cultural factors.

Tdh's aim with regard to gender is to ensure that the various programmes and projects set up benefit men and women fairly, in keeping with their specific needs, with fair participation and collaboration of both sexes, attempting to rebalance the existing gender relations (fairness, solidarity, justice) where participation, redistribution of resources and responsibilities are concerned. During the phase of situation analysis, it is important to understand the role and status of women within the community (specific vulnerability) as well as the role they could play in the project itself. Women being usually responsible for children's upbringing and for running a household, their involvement in the elements of the project are indispensable. It is important to create a place for women in the organization and implementation of a project and to encourage their participation by strengthening their abilities and know-how. Women are considered to be a priority when establishing criteria for choosing beneficiaries of interventions (e.g. widows, women running households).

### **Respect for the environment**

Projects always carry with them potential consequences on the natural environment. Environmental risks must be assessed prior to and during each intervention, and any possible impact should be minimised. In every case it is important to make the community affected and other local partners aware of the correct management of their resources and of environmental risk factors. It is especially important to avoid overexploitation of wood when setting up projects for shelters; available resources are to be systematically analysed in-depth.

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