

# Poo, Pee, Periods and Privacy

## Shelter and WASH integrated programming

**A coordinated and integrated approach to displaced people's Shelter and WASH needs and priorities will prompt better long-term health and well-being outcomes for people recovering from crises.** This approach, guided by an understanding of environmental health, will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

**The Global Shelter Cluster and the Global WASH Sector support greater collaboration and integration in order to improve well-being outcomes for people living through humanitarian crises.** This aligns with both sectors' ambitions to engage with the **humanitarian-development nexus** and contribute to sustainable outcomes whilst also being mindful of the compounding crises of climate change and conflicts which are stretching humanitarian resources.

**Adequate housing is a foundational and enabling human right.** Adequate housing goes beyond the basic protection that emergency shelter provides. Access to clean water and household level sanitation facilities are crucial elements of adequate housing, which contributes to recovery from disaster and displacement. People's living conditions during humanitarian crises affect their physical and mental well-being as much as the initial crisis or disaster. **Overcrowding, poor ventilation, inadequate and unsafe toilets, inadequate or non-existent menstrual health management facilities, inadequate water supply, waste management and washing facilities** induce considerable stress and increase risks of **gender-based violence**.

Shelter and WASH interventions can together have a huge impact on living conditions and **public health** in humanitarian settings, contribute to **environmental health** and the achievement of **healthier homes and healthier communities**. Healthier homes are particularly important for the physical and mental health and well-being of women, children, people living with disabilities and others who are housebound or simply spend more time in inadequate housing.

Building back better after disaster should aim to result in healthier homes that include:

- Access to sanitation facilities and increasingly access to household toilets and facilities to enable dignified menstrual hygiene management
- Access to safe and adequate water supply
- Ventilation and other measures to improve indoor air quality
- Measures to mitigate temperature extremes
- Vector control
- Adequate waste water drainage and, where appropriate, rainwater harvesting

Progress towards environmental health and healthier homes in displacement and post-disaster settings requires **greater Shelter and WASH integration than is routine**. There are currently **barriers to integrated working** which include:

- Gaps and blurred boundaries between siloed sectors
- Priorities at different phases of emergency responses: timescales of Shelter and WASH activities
- Coordination pressures, including pressure of many 'crosscutting' issues and emerging themes such as climate change
- Different delivery modalities of WASH and Shelter activities
- Sector-specific language, terminology, and indicators used for monitoring and evaluation
- Agency specialisms and institutional internal silos
- Siloed funding and requirements of different donors

- Politics: emergency shelter, transitional and permanent housing
- Lack of specific guidance for Shelter/WASH integration

There is a need to be realistic regarding Shelter/WASH integration in different phases and contexts. Certain contexts make Shelter/WASH integration more logical to prioritise, for example post-disaster situations with high levels of **devastation of the built environment**, such as following an earthquake or cyclone. **Urban responses** and **area-based approaches** also offer opportunities for integrated programming.

### **Moving Forward: how can integrated Shelter/WASH programming be achieved?**

- **‘Easy wins’ for integrated programming** include:
  - Joint multi-sectoral assessments to inform multi-sectoral household items kits and distributions
  - Multi-sectoral cash/vouchers supported by combined messaging on healthier homes (including WASH hygiene messaging and Shelter ‘Build Back Safer’ messaging)
  - Improved linking of household and community scale interventions
  - Shared referral pathways via help desks, one-stop-shops and ‘urban hubs’
  - Updated training materials to include Shelter/WASH cross-referencing
- **Self-recovery approaches** and other community-led programming which aims to foreground affected populations’ agency and choice as they recover from crises align with multi-sectoral cash/vouchers and also market-based integrated programming. Households may choose to prioritise healthier home aspects of their recovery; this will require **information-sharing**.
- **Innovation in monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning (MEAL)** is needed to allow multi-sectoral impacts and outcomes to be reported rather than (or in addition to) purely single-sector outputs.
- **Sharing expertise and experience** between currently separate Shelter and WASH teams at different organisational levels will be valuable. The ‘soft’ skills of community engagement can be as important as construction skills in order to create positive outcomes.
- **Case studies** of integrated WASH/Shelter programming can help to disseminate best practice.
- **Advocacy with donors** is required to enable flexible funding and multi-sectoral programming and reporting.

The humanitarian Shelter and Settlements sector should be recognised more widely as a crucial pillar of public health and well-being, alongside the WASH sector, in both acute emergencies, recovery and in protracted situations. **Climate change** increases the relevance of tackling the existing links between inadequate living conditions and health for those in forced displacement settings. **Integrated WASH and Shelter and Settlements programming that monitors and evaluates physical and mental health and well-being outcomes can start to bridge emergency response and recovery.**

#### **Unanswered questions** include:

- What would it take to achieve ‘one house, one toilet’ in humanitarian settings?
- What would a minimum integrated ‘Shelter/WASH package’ look like in different phases of response and in different contexts?
- What are the priority aspects of healthier homes in different contexts? How can practitioners know?
- What ‘soft skills’ can Shelter teams learn from WASH specialists, for example skills related to community engagement and community uptake of ‘healthier home’ messaging?
- What are the risks of pursuing greater integration of Shelter and WASH?