

# THE WIDER IMPACTS OF HUMANITARIAN SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS ASSISTANCE

## Annex B: Methodology

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This publication summarizes the key findings of the research undertaken by an independent consultant, **Fiona Kelling**. The accompanying advocacy toolkit and infographics were designed and produced by **Alex Glynn** and **Timothy Harcourt-Powell**.

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This project was managed by **Mohamed Hilmi**, with the support of InterAction Humanitarian Policy and Practice and Communication Units. Infographics, Videos, and detailed ranking of evidence are available upon request. Please contact [mhilmi@interaction.org](mailto:mhilmi@interaction.org).

## Annex B: Methodology

### Methods

Research to determine both direct and indirect impacts of shelter and settlements assistance comprised a wide-reaching desktop review. The process set out to produce a narrative summary of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research. Initial sources were found through internet searches of humanitarian databases, individual organizations' websites, and academic journals. A full list of websites consulted can be found in Appendix A.

Relevant information was sought from published reports, evaluations, and reviews, as well as gray literature from organizations including lessons-learned exercises, base- and end-line assessments, after-action reviews, and impact assessment tools. In addition, national and local government policy and planning reports, housing and slum upgrading reports, social housing surveys, and advocacy reports were reviewed. Sources included the U.N., International Organizations (I.O.), the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), national housing organizations, relevant civil society organizations, and a wide range of research and policy institutions. No limitation was put on the timeframe. A full list of documents and sources can be found in the accompanying bibliography.

Desk-based research was supported by a small number of key informant interviews carried out over Skype with sectoral experts from health; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); and livelihoods to gain additional information and insights. These were identified through recommendations from InterAction and carried out subject to availability. Key Informants also provided additional documentation, as did shelter experts contacted through the author's professional network who were able to share unpublished evaluations and reviews.

### Documentation selection and inclusion

As this research was not intended to be an academic synthesis, there was no specific inclusion criteria or limitation put on the type of documentation or report, other than being available in English. However, as the quality and reliability of sources varied considerably, an effort has been made to reflect this in the findings.

Due to the inductive nature of the research, it was not possible to carry out a string search to obtain an absolute number of documents. Several exploratory combined searches were carried out both through academic databases and Google search. For examples of search terms used, see the list of search terms later in this Annex. An initial screening was undertaken during the search process, which consisted of reading the abstract and executive summary online to judge whether relevant information was likely to be included. The second screening consisted of reviewing the whole document to extract relevant information. Documents were excluded at this stage if they did not provide details on the outcomes, effects, or impacts of the intervention; did not specify the type of assistance provided; or included multi-sectoral support or multi-purpose cash assistance where the outcomes could not be attributed to shelter assistance. When documents referenced additional reports, these were sought out and included where possible. An inductive approach was taken to the extraction of data and analysis of the outcomes, effects, and impacts of assistance provided and then grouped under relevant sectoral headings.

In total, 287 documents were reviewed. Of these, 191 were found to have relevant information.

### Document ranking

Many of the included documents can be criticized in terms of the robustness of the data collection, analysis, or level of detail of reporting. A ranking system was therefore applied that assessed the source and reliability of the documents, taking into account the type of data gathered, methodology, the purpose of the document, and the likelihood of bias. This is laid out in the table below. The quality rating provided is not intended to be an objective measure but is a guide to assess the overall validity of a claim.

Ranking	Description
1	Systematic review or meta-analysis (of level 2 data)
2	Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT)/quasi-experimental or controlled study
3	Meta-analysis/review (of level 4 data)
4	Result from primary research (non-controlled/survey/case study)
5	Research Study (e.g. dissertation, research report, policy paper)
6	Claim based on experience, lessons learned, discussion paper, opinion piece, promotional or publicity document

Table 1: Evidence hierarchy

To assess the overall strength of evidence in each sector, a weighted average ranking of reliability of documents per sector was cross-referenced with the number of documents per sector, where the frequency was defined as Very Low (less than 20 documents), Low (21-40 documents), Medium (41-60 documents), and High (61+ documents).

		Strong	Fair	Weak	Very weak
		Reliability (ranking of sources)			
		Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Frequency (number of sources)	High	Health			
	Medium			Livelihoods	
	Low		Society	DRR/ Environment	
	Very low		Education Food		Gender

Table 2: Matrix of strength of evidence

### Document analysis

To carry out a comparison of sources, each document was additionally assigned an intervention type (Humanitarian, Development—including Slum Upgrading—or Housing). Given the justification of there being a continuum of shelter assistance, it is possible some documents may have been able to be placed in an alternative category. Where there was ambiguity, the author's judgment of the primary topic of discussion and context determined the categorization.

## Ranking

Of the 191 documents, 59% were rated as category 4, 5 or 6—in the lower half of the reliability scale. A third (63/33%) were rated as Category 2, coming from a controlled trial (with the vast majority published in an academic journal). Only 15 of the documents were meta-analyses, six of RCTs and quasi-experimental/controlled studies (four from housing and two from development), and nine of non-experimental studies (five from humanitarian, four from development).

## Interventions

50% of the total documents come from the housing sector, with documents from the humanitarian sector comprising only 28% of the total study (54 documents), and 21% from development and slum upgrading (41 documents). Of the humanitarian documents, 43% (23) were Category 4, primarily post-assistance evaluations. A further 43% were from Category 5 and 6 (20/3), with only three documents from Category 2 (6%) and five from category 3 (9%). In comparison, from the housing sector, over half (51%/49) were from Category 1, 2, or 3, the same as in development and slum upgrading (51%/21). The overall trends between housing and development and slum upgrading were very similar regarding the sources of documents, with the primary categories being 2 and 5.

## Region

As half of the included documents have come from housing interventions, there is a slight bias towards information from developed nations (U.K./Europe, U.S./Canada, Australia, and New Zealand). These nations comprise 88% of the housing studies, and 46% of the total study. Across humanitarian interventions, Global, Middle East, and North Africa (MENA), South Asia, and Southeast Asia are all represented relatively evenly (13-19% each). While in humanitarian interventions, Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) and Africa are only represented in 13% of studies, in development, these two regions constitute 56% of the total documents, with the remaining made up mainly of multiple countries and South and Southeast Asia. Only 2% of development studies are of MENA.

## Source

As is to be expected, there is a strong correlation between the sources of information and the category distribution. Overall, the number of documents from academic journals (41%) is not far from the number of Category 1 and 2 documents. Almost one-quarter of documents are from research and policy institutions (24%), while 25% are from NGO or United Nations (UN)/international organizations (IO) sources, with 9% from donor and governmental sources. Unsurprisingly, while representing a tiny percentage of housing and sources, NGOs and UN/IOs made up almost three-quarters of humanitarian documentation (73%) but were only 14% in development documentation. Only 13% of humanitarian sources were found in academic journals. For both development and housing, the primary sources were academic journals (56% and 51%, respectively) and research or policy institutions (17% and 36%, respectively). Government sources were mainly found concerning housing interventions.

## Date

Overall, 45% of documents are from the last five years, with 90% from the last 15 years. In humanitarian interventions, this is even more pronounced (67% from the last five years, 96% from the last 15), with double the number of humanitarian studies in the previous five years than in development or housing interventions.

## Sector

(Note: these percentages amount to more than 100% because almost a quarter of documents (23%) referenced two or more sectors).

By far, the most represented sector is health, with 47% of the total documents containing information regarding health. However, while 55% of housing studies were health-related and 37% in development documentation, in the humanitarian documentations reviewed, health represented only 12% of studies. Livelihoods and education were second-most represented in housing, both with 12%. In development assistance, livelihoods was the second-most represented at 24%, while society (including crime, social cohesion, governance) was third at 18%. In documents related to the humanitarian sector, livelihoods was most represented at 29%, with disaster risk reduction constituting 21% of documents and health third 12%.

In the humanitarian documentation, the two most represented sectors of livelihoods and DRR together make up 50% of the total humanitarian studies. Education and Food were only mentioned in three studies (together 5% of total humanitarian documentation). Documents discussing education were primarily from housing interventions—only one humanitarian study discussed education. No development study discussed education. Food security was underrepresented in all interventions. There was also a surprisingly low inclusion of gender, given the push for gender mainstreaming in recent years, which may indicate a limitation with the research approach. Although specific searches were carried out, little information was found on the specific impacts of shelter or settlements assistance on gender-based violence or intimate partner violence.

## Scope and limitations

This review does not intend to be an exhaustive academic evidence review, given the limited timeframe and broad content. Rather, it is intended to be an initial exploration into the range of impacts that shelter and settlements assistance has, and identification of areas where information is particularly weak, to inform selected infographic communications and to direct further research efforts.

This report does not look at the impact of shelter assistance in regards to the population in need or overall response. This is partly because this information was often lacking from documentation or inconsistent across documents dealing with the same response, but also posed a problem in gathering similar information from development or housing interventions. In addition, the focus of the research was on the impact on other sectors rather than on impact in comparison to the overall needs more broadly, which has been discussed elsewhere.<sup>116, 110</sup> Likewise, the type of emergency (where relevant: conflict, disaster, complex) and the program cost of the intervention were not considered. This research also does not distinguish between impacts as a result of the provision or repurposing of assistance (e.g., where the house or materials have been sold rather than used for their intended purpose), although in general, this was minimally mentioned in the included interventions.

Given the very limited timeframe for such a broad scope of work, there was a finite number of documents that could be reviewed and included within the required timeframe and resources available. More time would undoubtedly have thrown up additional documentation, and this should be taken into account when considering the overall findings of the research.

Additional limitations result from the strength of the evidence base itself. Shelter and settlements remains a woefully under-researched aspect of humanitarian response, despite claims that shelter is a

catalyst for recovery in other areas.<sup>110</sup> While program evaluations are now common-place, the ‘evidence’ in the humanitarian shelter sector often relies on case studies, which tend to focus on process issues, rather than whether the intervention brought about the intended results, and how (Alexander and Bonino 2015: 1).

Within humanitarian interventions, the information available in the majority of documents has already been processed by the organizations providing the assistance, and therefore may not be entirely objective. A number of studies were excluded as they focused more on outputs and processes than the outcomes or impact of the programs. In addition, the majority did not provide adequate information on the sampling strategy or statistical accuracy, did not clearly detail the limitations of the research, and did not set out any ethical considerations. Many of the studies were highly context-specific without controlling for or even mentioning external factors, and the results included were not standardized and sometimes inconsistent.

Despite expanding the search to include housing and development interventions, the gathered data still posed several challenges to finding conclusive results. The highest quality and most reliable studies in housing and development were also most likely to have the least clear and transferable outcomes. Systematic reviews noted a number of challenges and limitations in assessing and synthesizing data.

Some of the limitations mentioned in the included documents are:

- Lack of adequate controls for family characteristics and selection issues, resulting in difficulty disentangling the effects of poverty from inadequate housing.
- Lack of longitudinal design that would have overcome selection issues or variable bias.
- Do not unbundle what aspect of housing has made the contribution (stability, quality, affordability, location?).
- Do not adequately describe the housing models.
- Risk that the effect found in the study may be a result of the way the sample was selected and is unlikely to hold outside the included group.
- Absence of baseline data.
- Some were focused on outputs over effected social or economic opportunities.
- High risk of bias, heterogeneity, and evidence gaps prevent firm conclusions.
- The nature of the research base (small quantitative studies) made it more difficult to reach general conclusions.
- No consistent timeframes and the need for more longitudinal, not just cross-sectional studies.

A set of examples from the literature reviewed related to health include:

- Numerous associations are there, but the direction of causality is unclear.<sup>191</sup>
- Health problems created by poor housing may be more indicative of social inequality, and poor conditions exacerbate health problems.<sup>117, 85, 153</sup>
- Poorer people live in worse housing and are exposed to more health risks.<sup>23</sup>
- No evidence was found for the preventative effects of housing improvements. However, there is some evidence for curative effects.<sup>41</sup>
- Lack of randomized controlled trials in evidence is not unique to green space, and many accepted interventions in health are not based on RCT evidence.<sup>28</sup>
- Impacts are hard to discern as few studies have focused on the impact of improvements.<sup>117</sup>

- Because of methodological limitations, it is impossible to specify the nature and size of health gain from a specific housing improvement due to small sample sizes and a lack of controls or standardized evaluation indicators.<sup>168, 169, 121</sup> Few studies articulated a logic model to show relationships and were not longitudinal enough; if location changed, gains might be offset by adversely perceived changes in social networks.<sup>28, 117</sup>

In addition, many of the research and policy reviews are subject to the criticism made by Hwang et al.: “most of the literature provides no original data on the connection between health and housing, and little or no data to support the effectiveness of particular housing strategies for improving health” and is as relevant if not more so for other sectors. (Hwang et al. 1999: iv)

As a result of these limitations, this research provides a summary of some of the recorded impacts of shelter and settlements assistance. Due to the low generalizability based on the data quality, the transferability of the findings is limited. As with the information available, it is very difficult to judge how any particular finding may be replicated in another location or context, regardless of the type of assistance or whether it is a humanitarian, development, or housing intervention.



## Statistical overview of documentation

### Intervention by ranking

	Documents		Humanitarian		Dev/SIUp		Housing	
1	6	3%	0	0%	2	5%	4	4%
2	63	33%	3	6%	19	46%	41	43%
3	9	5%	5	9%	0	0%	4	4%
4	39	20%	23	43%	6	15%	10	10%
5	42	22%	3	6%	11	27%	28	29%
6	32	17%	20	37%	3	7%	9	9%
TOTAL	<u>191</u>		54	28%	41	21%	96	50%
x or n/a	96							
Total documents	287							

### Entries by Region

	Documents		Humanitarian		Dev/SIUp		Housing	
Europe	7	4%	3	6%	0	0%	4	4%
Global	12	6%	9	17%	1	2%	2	2%
Latin America & C	14	7%	3	6%	10	23%	1	1%
Middle East & NA	10	5%	9	17%	1	2%	0	0%
Multi	23	12%	10	19%	9	21%	4	4%
Oceania	9	5%	0	0%	0	0%	9	9%
North America	46	24%	0	0%	1	2%	45	46%
South Asia	11	6%	7	13%	3	7%	1	1%
South-East Asia	14	7%	9	17%	4	9%	1	1%
Sub-Saharan Africa	21	11%	4	7%	14	33%	3	3%
United Kingdom	27	14%	0	0%	0	0%	27	28%
TOTAL	<u>194</u>		54		43		97	

### Entries by Source

	Documents		Humanitarian		Dev/SIUp		Housing	
Academic Journal	79	41%	7	13%	23	56%	49	51%
Donor	9	5%	4	7%	4	10%	1	1%
Government	8	4%	0	0%	1	2%	7	7%
Masters Dissertation	1	1%	1	2%	0	0%	0	0%
News Article	1	1%	0	0%	0	0%	1	1%
NGO	28	15%	23	43%	3	7%	2	2%
Research/Policy Inst.	45	24%	3	6%	7	17%	35	36%
UN/IO	20	10%	16	30%	3	7%	1	1%
TOTAL	<u>191</u>		54		41		96	

### Entries by date

	Documents		Humanitarian		Dev/SIUp		Housing	
2015-19	85	45%	36	67%	15	37%	34	35%
2010-14	62	32%	11	20%	15	37%	36	38%
2005-09	24	13%	5	9%	6	15%	13	14%
2000-04	13	7%	1	2%	4	10%	8	8%
1999 and Older	4	2%	0	0%	0	0%	4	4%
No Date	3	2%	1	2%	1	2%	1	1%
TOTAL	<u>191</u>		54		41		96	

### Entries by sector

Entries by sector	Documents		Humanitarian		Dev/SIUp		Housing	
Health	90	47%	8	12%	19	37%	63	55%
Education	15	8%	1	2%	0	0%	14	12%
Food	9	5%	2	3%	1	2%	6	5%
DRR/Environment	23	12%	14	22%	5	10%	4	3%
Gender	12	6%	1	2%	4	8%	7	6%
Livelihoods/Economic	45	24%	19	29%	12	24%	14	12%
Society	22	12%	5	8%	10	20%	7	6%
Multi	10	5%	10	15%	0	0%	0	0%
Other	5	3%	5	8%	0	0%	0	0%
TOTAL		231	65		51		115	
Documents with multiple sectors discussed	44	23%						
191								

## List of websites searched

Academic databases	
Brookes library database	<a href="https://oxfordbrookes.on.worldcat.org/discovery">https://oxfordbrookes.on.worldcat.org/discovery</a>
UCL library database	<a href="https://ucl-new-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?vid=UCL_VU2">https://ucl-new-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/search?vid=UCL_VU2</a>
Westminster library database	<a href="https://library-collections-search.westminster.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44WST_INST:WST_VUA">https://library-collections-search.westminster.ac.uk/discovery/search?vid=44WST_INST:WST_VUA</a>
Academia.edu	<a href="https://www.academia.edu/">https://www.academia.edu/</a>
Cochrane Library	<a href="https://www.cochranelibrary.com/">https://www.cochranelibrary.com/</a>
DOAJ	<a href="https://doaj.org/">https://doaj.org/</a>
JSTOR	<a href="https://www.jstor.org/">https://www.jstor.org/</a>
Researchgate	<a href="https://www.researchgate.net/">https://www.researchgate.net/</a>
Sage journals search	<a href="https://journals.sagepub.com/">https://journals.sagepub.com/</a>
Science direct	<a href="https://www.sciencedirect.com/">https://www.sciencedirect.com/</a>
Tandfonline.com	<a href="https://www.tandfonline.com/">https://www.tandfonline.com/</a>
Websites	
Affordable housing institute	<a href="https://www.affordablehousinginstitute.org/">https://www.affordablehousinginstitute.org/</a>
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute	<a href="https://www.ahuri.edu.au/">https://www.ahuri.edu.au/</a>
Active Learning Network for Accountability and Partnership	<a href="https://www.alnap.org/help-library">https://www.alnap.org/help-library</a>
Centre for Affordable Housing Finance in Africa	<a href="http://housingfinanceafrica.org/">http://housingfinanceafrica.org/</a>
CARE	<a href="https://www.careinternational.org.uk/">https://www.careinternational.org.uk/</a>
Cold Climate Housing Research Centre	<a href="http://cchrc.org/">http://cchrc.org/</a>
The Centre for Health Design	<a href="https://www.healthdesign.org/">https://www.healthdesign.org/</a>
Centre for Global Development	<a href="https://www.cgdev.org/">https://www.cgdev.org/</a>
Cities Alliance	<a href="https://www.citiesalliance.org/">https://www.citiesalliance.org/</a>
CRS	<a href="https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications">https://www.crs.org/our-work-overseas/research-publications</a>
Enterprise	<a href="https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/">https://www.enterprisecommunity.org/</a>
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence	<a href="https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/">https://www.evidence.nhs.uk/</a>
Feinstein International Center	<a href="https://fic.tufts.edu/">https://fic.tufts.edu/</a>
Food Research and Action Center	<a href="https://frac.org/">https://frac.org/</a>
Habitat for Humanity	<a href="https://www.habitat.org/">https://www.habitat.org/</a>
Health Affairs	<a href="https://www.healthaffairs.org/">https://www.healthaffairs.org/</a>
Homes For All	<a href="https://homesforall.org/">https://homesforall.org/</a>

Housing Matters	<a href="https://housingmatters.urban.org/">https://housingmatters.urban.org/</a>
Humanitarian Practice Network	<a href="https://odihpn.org/">https://odihpn.org/</a>
Humanitarian Library	<a href="https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/">https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/</a>
IFRC	<a href="https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document-library/">https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/document-library/</a>
Knowyourcity.info	<a href="http://knowyourcity.info/">http://knowyourcity.info/</a>
Lincoln Institute of Land Policy	<a href="https://www.lincolninst.edu/">https://www.lincolninst.edu/</a>
Macarthur Foundation	<a href="https://www.macfound.org/programs/how-housing-matters/">https://www.macfound.org/programs/how-housing-matters/</a>
NCBI	<a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/</a>
Norwegian Refugee Council	<a href="https://www.nrc.no/">https://www.nrc.no/</a>
Overseas Development Institute	<a href="https://www.odi.org/">https://www.odi.org/</a>
Oxfam	<a href="https://www.oxfam.org/en">https://www.oxfam.org/en</a>
Professionals in Humanitarian Assistance and Protection	<a href="https://phap.org/">https://phap.org/</a>
Policy Link	<a href="https://www.policylink.org/">https://www.policylink.org/</a>
Office of Policy Development and Research	<a href="https://www.huduser.gov/portal/home.html">https://www.huduser.gov/portal/home.html</a>
Reall	<a href="https://www.reall.net/">https://www.reall.net/</a>
Relief Web	<a href="https://reliefweb.int/">https://reliefweb.int/</a>
Rethink Housing	<a href="https://www.rethinkhousing.org/">https://www.rethinkhousing.org/</a>
Save the Children	<a href="https://www.savethechildren.net/">https://www.savethechildren.net/</a>
Strategic Growth Council California	<a href="http://sgc.ca.gov/">http://sgc.ca.gov/</a>
Shelter England	<a href="https://england.shelter.org.uk/">https://england.shelter.org.uk/</a>
UN-Habitat E-library	<a href="http://mirror.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=463">http://mirror.unhabitat.org/categories.asp?catid=463</a>
UNHCR – Refworld	<a href="https://www.refworld.org/">https://www.refworld.org/</a>
UN-Women	<a href="http://endvawnow.org/">http://endvawnow.org/</a>
Urban response portal	<a href="https://www.urban-response.org/">https://www.urban-response.org/</a>
Urban Institute	<a href="https://www.urban.org/">https://www.urban.org/</a>
USAID DEC	<a href="https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx">https://dec.usaid.gov/dec/home/Default.aspx</a>
World Bank library	<a href="https://elibrary.worldbank.org/">https://elibrary.worldbank.org/</a>
World Habitat	<a href="https://www.world-habitat.org/">https://www.world-habitat.org/</a>
3ie	<a href="https://www.3ieimpact.org/">https://www.3ieimpact.org/</a>

## List of search terms

Measuring impact / Measuring impact AND housing / Measuring impact AND shelter

Impact+shelter / Impact+housing / Impact+slum upgrading / Impact+evaluation / Shelter+evaluation

Housing AND ... health / livelihoods / education / GBV / crime / mental health / DRR / social capital / social cohesion / community relations / peacebuilding / food / food security / nutrition / increase income / sleep / climate change

Intersection+housing AND health / livelihoods / education / GBV / crime / mental health / DRR / social capital / social cohesion / community relations / peacebuilding / food / food security / nutrition / increase income / sleep / climate change

“Why housing matters”

## HOW DOES SHELTER AFFECT HEALTH?

The strongest impacts of shelter were found to be on health, including **improved physical and mental health**, particularly for children, as well as **enhanced well-being and morale**. Poor quality housing has a substantial impact on the risk of **ill health and life expectancy**, especially on women and children who spend more time in the home.

"Substandard housing contributed to children's poor health at ages 6, and developmental delays by age 2".  
MacArthur Foundation

Housing interventions can reduce doctor's visits, and lower healthcare spending and hospitalization rates.

Housing deprivation increases the risk of disability or severe ill health over the course of life by **25%**.

Improved shelter and settlements reduce risks of diarrheal disease and water-borne illness.

In Nigeria, the rate of under 5 mortality in adequate housing was **40% lower** than those living in inadequate housing.

#SHELTERHELPS HEALTH  
InterAction.org | @InterActionOrg

Sources: Anderson et al (2017), MacArthur (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).

## HOW DOES SHELTER AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH?

Shelter and settlements **improve mental health and well being**. Those who receive post-disaster shelter assistance are more likely to experience a return of their mental health to similar levels as before the crisis.

Affordable and adequate housing assistance can lead to:

Fewer doctor's visits

Reduced emotional stress

Increased happiness

Losing their home in a disaster or conflict had a **profound psychological impact** on people over 80.

By improving shelter, people reported their mental health returning to **similar levels as before the crisis**.

"We had no security before, we had lived for 2 years with a broken main door, my psychological state improved so much after the renovation, I am happier and more at ease."  
Syrian recipient of shelter assistance in Jordan

After receiving shelter, people **feel more in control** and have **better decision-making capacities**.

#SHELTERHELPS MENTALHEALTH  
InterAction.org | @InterActionOrg

Sources: Brown (2017), MacArthur (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).

## HOW DOES SHELTER AFFECT LIVELIHOODS?

Affordable and stable shelter can **provide opportunities for financial stability and employment**. Ongoing construction and maintenance of shelter and settlements can be an opportunity for **employment and skills growth**. Transitional shelters can be used for **small businesses** and income saved from affordable shelter can be redirected and spent on food and education.

Building 1 affordable home creates **5 direct jobs** and as many as **8 indirect jobs**.

**36%** of IDPs in Ukraine who received stable housing said it **significantly improved** their access to livelihood opportunities.

After the 2004 Indonesian Tsunami, **10%** of people in one resettled area used their transitional shelter for **business purposes**.

**46.2%** of IDPs on shelter recipients saw a **increase in income** and better access to food.

A house can be a **financial institution**.

A house can be a **meeting place**.

A house can be a **factory**.

A house can be a **granary**.

#SHELTERHELPS LIVELIHOODS  
InterAction.org | @InterActionOrg

Sources: MacArthur (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).

## HOW CAN SHELTER HELP REDUCE RISK FROM HAZARDS?

Improving shelter and settlements can **reduce vulnerability and build resilience**. It can **reduce the cost of shelter repairs and stress on local economy** and can make people **more self-reliant**.

New and improved shelters in Pakistan experienced **50% less damage** than older shelters that were not improved when faced with extreme weather conditions.

Improving settlement level infrastructure in Haiti **reduced the intensity of impacts and duration of emergency** after Hurricane Irma 2017.

"Our new house is definitely an upgrade in terms of security when there is a typhoon. And because the property is ours, we can put our effort into making it more resilient."  
Survivor of Typhoon Haiyan, Philippines

None of the shelters built for a project in Vietnam collapsed over a ten year period, including during extreme weather events...  
...whereas other houses in the community did.

People with shelter assistance are **safer and more self-reliant** when faced with future extreme weather events.

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Sources: MacArthur (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).

## HOW CAN SHELTER HELP SOCIAL COHESION?

Shelter and settlements can **improve social cohesion and community engagement**. Improved public spaces foster social inclusion. Livelihoods benefit refugee and host communities to **recover and prosper**.

46% of residents in Lebanon, who benefited from housing upgrading, reported:

- +1%** reduced community tensions
- +1%** increased empathy and trust

In Syria, **75%** of people said restored social services and infrastructure after conflict had a **positive effect on relationships** between IDPs and host communities.

"We have good relationships with the hosts, we feel at home."  
Male shelter recipient, Ethiopia

Shelter and the larger concept of settlement are **inextricably linked** and should be addressed as a whole rather than separately.

Affordable housing and settlement upgrading can increase:

- Involvement in neighborhood activities
- community leadership roles
- community connectedness

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Sources: Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).

## WHAT IMPACT DOES SHELTER HAVE ON GENDER AND SOCIETY?

People **feel, and are, safer** when given shelter assistance - especially women. Housing vulnerability increases risk of sexual and physical abuse and domestic violence, and **female-headed households** are more likely to be **affected by poor housing conditions**.

Women in India who own land are up to **eight times less likely** to experience domestic violence than those who don't own land.

One study estimated that **28%** of female-headed households with children have critical housing problems.

Considering the location, set-up, spacing, socio-cultural and economic considerations in the design of emergency and transitional shelter and camps can **reduce gender risk**.

are paying more than 50% of their income on rent

and/or are living in substandard or overcrowded conditions

After receiving improved shelter, people internally displaced in South Sudan reported **feeling an average of 40% safer**.

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Sources: MacArthur (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017), Callaway (2019), Brown (2017).