

CAMP SET-UP AND CLOSURE



KEY MESSAGES

- ▶ Camps exist for the provision of assistance and protection to displaced communities. Fulfilling these objectives is the task of the Camp Management Agency at every stage of the camp life cycle, not least during camp set-up and camp closure. The priority is to ensure a safe, secure and healthy environment that is efficient to manage, supports participation and provides access to basic human rights.
- ▶ Camps may be established because of conflict or natural disaster, and they may be planned or self-settled. The camp's location, size, design and duration of existence are context-specific. The location of a camp can significantly impact the residents' protection and access to assistance, while also affecting decisions about camp closure and phase-out. Ideally, the Camp Management Agency is involved in selecting the camp's location, but in reality a large number of camps are self-settled.
- ▶ Setting up and closing camps requires a great deal of input from experts and other participants. The role of the Camp Management Agency includes ensuring that all stakeholders are involved and participating. The expertise of camp planners, technical staff, governments and authorities and the host community should all be employed.
- ▶ Camp closure should be linked to durable solutions and be planned from the very beginning of a camp operation. The Camp Management Agency must also ensure the effective management of the camp's site as well as its environment and assets.
- ▶ Situations resulting from conflict and natural disaster are unpredictable, and the need for a camp often lasts longer than is initially planned. Future eventualities and different scenarios need to be anticipated at the set-up stage, including provision for population growth, repairs and upgrades and supplies of sustainable resources.

! In all cases, the first question to be asked is whether or not a camp is the most appropriate transitional settlement option for the displaced population. Camps are a last resort, and they should be established only when other solutions are neither feasible nor preferable. This can be especially the case if people are removed from their livelihoods and homes and their displacement is reinforced unnecessarily when they are no longer at risk from the hazard, whether natural disaster or conflict. If groups within displaced populations are staying with host families or are self-settled in rural or urban areas, there must be consideration given to the rationale for these decisions, and to what extent supporting such alternatives might be more appropriate than establishing a camp. For the purposes of this chapter, it is assumed that Sector/Cluster Lead Agencies, along with government authorities and displaced populations, will consider the options available, bearing in mind the need for efficiency in providing goods and services, as well as concerns about protection and health risks, environmental degradation and the psychosocial impact of life in a camp.

►► *For a diagram on transitional shelter options, see the Tools section at end of the chapter.*

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide Camp Management Agencies with insight into best practice in camp set-up and closure. It provides an overview of what is required to ensure that camps are established with proper attention to site selection and site planning, and that camp closure processes are developed early to ensure the protection of the population and the management of the site and its assets. This chapter does not include exhaustive descriptions of every aspect of camp set-up and closure, but rather acts as an aide-memoire to help Camp Management Agencies ensure that the right questions are being asked and that their role and responsibilities in the various processes are clear.

The site of a camp and how it is planned have a critical impact on the health, well-being and protection of the displaced population, as well as on the ability to manage daily activities, ensure participation and develop relations with the

host community. Just as important as the physical location and layout of the camp is the process by which a camp is established, grows, changes and ultimately closes down. A great deal of information and technical skills are needed which can only be acquired by assembling critical stakeholders, capturing their knowledge and skills and coordinating outputs.

While camps are often set up with the expectation that they will be short-term arrangements, planning should always aim for longer-term needs and unexpected eventualities. Whilst the identification of durable solutions is always the ultimate aim, it must be recognised that short-term planning can negatively affect displaced populations and host communities in the longer term. For example, in site selection and planning, it is essential to thoroughly assess water resources, land access, the labour market and natural resources to cover the current and future needs of the host community and the displaced population. In addition, the needs of the host community should be considered in relation to the services, infrastructure and assets established for the camp. Services and concrete infrastructure – such as school buildings, community halls, roads, electricity cables or wells – may benefit local communities well after the displaced population has returned home. The eventual hand-over of such assets during camp closure should be defined and agreed with involved stakeholders from the outset. Best practice in camp management means that the planning of camp set-up and camp closure are interrelated from the beginning.

The Camp Management Agency has an important role to play both in the process of set-up and closure. While host-government authorities and the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency are ultimately responsible for higher-level negotiations, the Camp Management Agency is intimately involved in ensuring that the whole effort is comprehensive, inclusive and well-coordinated, and upholds the rights of the displaced population.

KEY ISSUES

CAMP SET-UP

Ideally, sites are selected and camps are planned before the controlled arrival of the displaced population. This is a rare occurrence, however, and in most cases, the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, the Camp Management Agency and other actors will arrive on the scene to find populations already settled and coping in whatever way they can.

Self-settled camps are often situated on poor and possibly hazardous sites, or situated too close to areas of insecurity, and permission to use the site chosen is usually informal and requires reconsideration. Self-settled camps are usually too dense and sometimes too large, requiring phased upgrading in order to meet international standards and local and international good practices, including introducing fire-breaks and surface water drainage and infrastructure such as schools, distribution centres, water supplies and recreational areas.

Reorganising Self-Settled Camps

Depending on the context, reorganising or relocating self-settled camps may not be as urgent as the immediate delivery of goods and services. If site planning is taking place after populations have settled at a site, some may be reluctant to relocate either to a new site or even within a site. Although they may seem chaotic, there may be some order and reason for why groups have settled in certain locations that may not be immediately apparent – perhaps they are divided by area of origin or along ethnic lines. It is better to find out what these reasons are and to work with the concerned individuals to find a solution rather than forcing people to move according to a master plan. High population density can be reduced by moving some shelters while leaving others where they are. People can still regroup according to underlying cultural arrangements and structures.

Relocating, reorganising or the phased upgrading of a self-settled camp requires additional capacity and expertise, and this must occur in parallel to the delivery of goods and services. On the other hand, reorganising will make management easier, more efficient, more participatory and safer. Urgent consideration must be given particularly to relocation or reorganisation if the population is in imminent danger due to where they are settled or if certain groups or individuals face protection issues as a result of how the camp area has been constituted.

The reorganisation of an existing camp may also happen due to new arrivals, or be the result of relocation if, for example, communities are evicted from collective centres, or when existing camps are consolidated during phase-out.

CAMP MANAGEMENT SET-UP RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of the Camp Management Agency involve them in both site selection and site planning activities as outlined below.

It is primarily the national authorities' responsibility to identify a site in which a camp should be located. In most scenarios the authorities will also take the lead in negotiating compensation for land that is privately owned. Some officials

may, however, not be aware of or concerned with site selection criteria, which can determine structural suitability, safety considerations or technical requirements for water and sanitation services. Equally important, some officials may have a political or financial interest in recommending certain locations for displaced populations. Sector/Cluster Lead Agencies usually negotiate with authorities in partnership with other key stakeholders, including the Camp Management Agency, which should be able to advise and give comment on technical assessments, and advocate for the needs and rights of the camp population.

Whether the camp area has already been settled or not, the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency may likely form a Site Development Committee (SDC) involving all relevant stakeholders. Although the composition of an SDC will vary a number of stakeholders should be represented: the Camp Management Agency, the planning and surveying authorities, service-delivery agencies, UN agencies, security forces, host community leaders and representatives of the displaced population. This will, among other things, create the highest feeling of ownership for all involved.

The Camp Management Agency in the SDC will contribute with its professional expertise on the issues of planning and set-up and assist the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency with analysis and decision-making based on the data presented. Once the camp is officially established, the SDC may either disband or refocus on planning the phased development of the camp. The duties for the Camp Management Agency are to continue to monitor how the camp set-up is working for the residents, staff and host community and adapting and coordinating things as necessary.

It is essential that the displaced people and their hosts have opportunities to contribute to camp set-up. Failure to include these groups can lead to poor relations, unrest, and even violence. Site selection and camp planning should be seen as the beginning of a dialogue amongst all those affected by the event of displacement so that in the future, opportunities are realised and disputes are resolved. It must be noted that the views of community leaders may not always represent the views of the community as a whole. Insofar as possible, women, minorities and groups at risk or with specific needs should be represented on the SDC. If the SDC cannot work as one unit, sub-committees may be formed which then feed into wider discussions.

In addition the Camp Management Agency has the responsibility to contribute their knowledge of the community and their activities, and their knowledge of the on-going management requirements of the camp. Planning for the effective distribution of goods and services will require an understanding of

livelihoods, cooking and hygiene practices. Similarly there needs to be a shared understanding at the planning stage of how distribution centres, social buildings and infrastructure such as roads and drainage channels will be used, managed and maintained.

SITE SELECTION FOR PLANNED CAMPS

The selection of a camp site is dependent on a myriad of factors, including the size and conditions of the site and the availability of resources; the safety, security and protection it offers; and cultural and social considerations. In addition, the site's location involves concerns about access, the geology and topography, trees and vegetation, the potential impact on the environment and potential risks due to environmental causes of disease or other public health issues.

! The first consideration in site selection is safety from hazards. 'Integrated hazard mapping' is required, regardless of whether the camp is established as a result of a conflict or natural disaster. Sites are often made available for displaced communities simply because they are inappropriate for human habitation.

Location

Security

The camp's location in itself could enhance the protection of the displaced population, or it may jeopardise protection. Protective factors include host communities with strong ties to the displaced population, the proximity of responsible security forces, and ample resources. Negative factors include proximity to hostile communities—whether across a border or not – proximity to military or rebel bases, and areas where there are already strained resources. In general, a camp should be located at least 50 kilometres or one day's travel on foot from any front line, border, mined area or other hazard. Setting camps away from security threats or natural hazards may be costly and complicated; however, failure to do so adequately may destabilise entire regions and undermine all subsequent humanitarian response.

Access

Any site must be easily accessible in all seasons. Accessibility is not only of importance to ensure the regular provision of relief supplies, but ensures a population's mobility to pursue livelihoods and access to essential services, such as health

care. Proximity to town may be desirable in order to reach resources such as a referral hospital, but such proximity must be balanced against any possible friction with the host community. In cases where the camp is located in a town, negotiations will be required with the host government and community to ensure that the camp population has equal access to essential services.

Environmental Impact

As a general rule, sites should never be identified near national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation areas or potentially vulnerable ecosystems, such as lakes, forests or in watershed catchment zones. Ideally, each camp should be situated at least 15 kilometres or a day's walk from such a site. If no alternative option is available, then precautionary measures need to be planned, such as supporting rangers to prevent incursions. Equal care regarding distance should be considered for areas of particular importance for religious or traditional festivals, monuments, historic buildings, memorial sites and cemeteries.

Not all aspects of a site are visible or otherwise easy to identify. In areas where land is scarce, it is likely that the site has been abandoned or never used for a good reason such as the presence of landmines or contamination. Advice should be sought from local planning offices, rural development institutions and agricultural ministries.

Dealing with waste – solid or liquid – is another main concern, although many solid wastes are actually recycled within the camp. Attention needs to be given to ensuring that surface and underground water sources are not polluted and that the disposal of solid waste is carried out properly, either in designated pits within the camp, or off-site if necessary. Waste from hospital or small-scale industry might need special treatment such as incineration.

▶▶ *For more information on waste disposal, see chapter 14.*

Displaced people are sometimes accompanied by their livestock, which often represent an important source of livelihood. Therefore consideration needs to be given to the space required for potentially large herds of livestock, in terms of grazing as well as access to water. This can potentially be a source of conflict with local communities – as well as an occasion for disease transmission – so careful mediation may be required between the various stakeholders. Large, uncontrolled numbers of livestock can quickly lead to competition for scarce resources, as well as soil compaction and erosion.

Raising awareness of some of the most common recurring environmental

issues of human displacement can help alleviate tensions and contribute to overall environmental management during all phases of an operation. Local rules and regulations need to be respected by all those involved, from the Camp Management Agency to the displaced population.

►► *For more information about the environment, see chapter 6.*

Conditions

Availability of Resources – Water, Fuel wood and Construction Materials

The availability of water is probably among the most important criteria to determine a site's suitability. Such is the vital importance of water that short supply can cause not only outbreaks of disease and death, but conflict as well.

Water in sufficient quantities must be available and accessible year-round. Groundwater and surface water levels may be deceptively high in wet seasons, but extremely low in dry seasons. The use of water tankers or pumping water over long distances should be avoided if possible because it is costly and vulnerable in terms of breakdowns and security.

In general, water quality is less of an issue during site selection than water quantity since many effective treatment options are available to cope with sedimentation and purification. However, this is not the case with rarer sources of contamination, such as heavy metals.

Before a site is selected, it is important to calculate as closely as possible the daily water needs of the camp to ensure that this quantity can be provided 365 days a year. The following table and example are based on Sphere (2004):

| Examples of Water Use per Person per Day | |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Domestic Use | 15–20 litres per person per day (minimum requirement for survival: 7 litres) |
| Health Care Facilities | 5 litres per out-patient per day and 40-60 litres per in-patient per day |
| Feeding Centres | 30 litres per in-patient per day, 15 litres per caregiver per day |
| Schools | 3 litres per pupil per day |

The estimated population of a planned camp is 20,000 people. School-age children make up 35% of the population and the acute malnutrition rate at the start of the operation is 3%. It is estimated that the health centre will need to accommodate 1% of the population as out-patients and .05% as in-patients per day. How much water will there have to be available and distributed every day?

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 20,000 people x 15 litres/person/day = | 300,000 litres/day |
| 20,000 people x 1% out-patients/day = 200 out-patients/day x 5 litres/out-patient/day = | 1,000 litres/day |
| 20,000 people x 0.05% in-patients/day = 10 in-patients/day x 60 litres/in-patient/day = | 600 litres/day |
| 20,000 people x 20% under the age of 5 x 3% acute malnutrition rate = 120 feeding centre in-patients/day x 30 litres/in-patient/day = | 3,600 litres/day |
| 120 caregivers x 15 litres/caregiver/day = | 1,800 litres/day |
| 20,000 people x 35% pupils = 7,000 pupils x 3 litres/pupil/day = | 21,000 litres/day |
| Total = | 328,000 litres per day |
| Please note that this is only the start of such a calculation. See Sphere for more guidance on cholera centres, mosques and livestock needs. | |

►► *For information on standards and indicators for water supply, see chapter 14.*

The other major resource which must be considered during site selection is fuel for cooking and/or heating. If wood is the main fuel source that camp residents are familiar with, a survey may be required to assess expected needs of the population, the capacity of the local environment to meet these needs, and the way in which wood harvesting should be organised – supervised or free-to-gather. In most situations, fuel-saving stoves and energy-saving practices should be introduced and other wood-saving alternatives explored.

The wider environment extending 15 km/one day's walk – return journey – from the camp should be assessed for the availability of fuel wood.

! Approximate fuelwood use per person per day: 0.6–2.8 kilograms depending on climate, food sources, and culture.

! **Fuelwood and Sexual Violence**

In insecure environments, fetching fuelwood is often a dangerous daily exercise for women and girls. The lack of sufficient firewood near the camp site is normally the reason for women to travel longer distances, often risking abuse, sexual violence or harassment. Alternatives include the introduction of fuel-saving stoves, which can help to minimise this problem and are outlined in chapter six.

The availability of construction materials is another potential difficulty which must be assessed when selecting a site. It must be determined what traditional materials are used, their availability at the new site or, if those materials are not available, what the options are.

Typical building materials that fall into this category are tree poles and thatch or leaves, but even suitable mud may be difficult to find in sufficient quantities, especially when considering the amount of water necessary.

It should be determined if the immediate environment can handle the additional strain of procuring building materials locally. If the assessment shows that it will not be environmentally destructive, the Camp Management Agency should organise the procurement of building materials from the host community, which will likely be more organised than if the displaced population gathered materials themselves. Such a scheme can also cut costs and build a good relationship with the host community through economic support. If, however, this is not possible, then materials should be sourced elsewhere. Caution should be exercised to ensure that materials for construction have been obtained from a sustainable supply or supplier, and ideally, that wood is certified by a credible agency.

►► *For an example see the Forest Stewardship Council – FSC www.fscus.org which promotes responsible management of the world's forests.*

Size

The recommended minimum surface area per person is 30 m², including public space, such as roads and paths, market areas, health care facilities, schools and administrative buildings. If conditions and culture allow for agricultural activities such as maintaining garden plots or raising small animals, 45 m² is considered the minimum surface area per person.

In general, camp populations should not exceed 20,000 people. However, large-scale displacement and/or a lack of suitable land may require that camps accommodate significantly more individuals, even if temporarily. Therefore it is incumbent that the SDC create a growth strategy to create new “neighbourhoods” or “phases”, as necessary. An absolute maximum population size for the suitable land area should be determined. It should be made clear to the authorities early on that this is the maximum and when a certain trigger point is reached – such as 75% of the capacity – efforts should be stepped up to ensure a new location is identified and prepared for new populations.

Natural population growth should also be taken into account, which will typically be an increase of 3–4% per year.

Geology and Topography

A gentle slope between 2–6% gradient will facilitate natural drainage and agricultural activities. Flat sites may face drainage problems where water is abundant and could become marshy in the wet season. This can also lead to the accumulation of standing water bodies which, in turn, can become breeding centres for disease-carrying vectors such as mosquitoes. Very hilly areas – above a 6% gradient – are also not acceptable due to the lack of suitable building surfaces, the risk of landslides and run-off problems.

▶▶ *For more information on vector-borne diseases and vector control, see chapter 14.*

Soils which absorb surface water easily are preferred, in particular for the construction and proper functioning of latrines. If soils are too sandy, latrines and other structures could collapse. Excessively rocky ground will hinder shelter and latrine construction, and make gardening difficult.

In general, the main structures of the camp should be at least three metres above the rainy season water table.

Trees and Vegetation

Trees, vegetation and topsoil at the site should be preserved to the extent possible in order to provide shade, reduce soil erosion, cut down on dust and speed the eventual rehabilitation of the site.

▶▶ *For more information, see chapter 6.*

Environmental and Disease Risks

Sites that are vulnerable to flooding, high winds, significant snowfall and other environmental risks should be avoided. In some cases, these risks may not be evident until a new season approaches. Consulting with local ministries can help prevent or at least predict environmental risks.

Certain sites may pose health risks which may not be immediately evident, such as malaria or river blindness. Health agencies involved in the SDC should visit local clinics to identify possible health risks typical for the area.

▶▶ *For more information on health-related issues, see chapter 16.*

Cultural and Social Issues

The cultural and social context of the displaced population should be an important factor in site selection. However, it is recognised that these issues are often secondary to the need to find a suitable site that will be made available by the host government. It is important for staff in the camp to understand the strangeness or stress a community may experience on relocation to a new and unfamiliar area.

Examples of cultural and social issues are pastoral groups who normally live several kilometres from their nearest neighbours, who are now forced to live in a communal environment; urban populations who now find themselves living in a semi-rural camp environment; or ethnically or religiously different groups who do not normally live near one another but who are now sharing space and resources. Allowing for cultural and social considerations may require ensuring that the displaced community provide their input on how the layout of the site can be made as culturally and socially appropriate as possible; allowing for familiar norms, behaviours and rituals to continue in the camp; and where appropriate, providing psychosocial support or training for camp staff.

Relations between displaced and host communities may be both competitive and productive. There may be competition over resources but communities often benefit from each other's existence through business, labour exchange and

trade. It is advisable not to place overwhelmingly large camps besides smaller host communities. In any case, an assessment should be carried out regarding the host community's ability to cope, as it may rapidly increase in size and economic activity if the camp creates a "boomtown" situation. Cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic differences may have a major impact on how the displaced population is received. Particular caution should be taken where conflicts are ethnically-fuelled.

Access to livelihoods for camp residents should be considered during site selection. Livelihoods might constitute the opportunity to establish vegetable gardens, small-scale farming or animal husbandry, handicraft making and – most importantly – a marketplace for trade or nearby job opportunities in the local community. It is important to remember that many camps are not rural and that the realities of livelihoods in a collective centre are very different to those where there is access to land.

▶▶ *For more information see chapter 18*

Availability of Land

National and local authorities often have their own interests in identifying certain sites and avoiding others. Displaced populations are frequently settled in rather isolated, remote or unsuitably rocky or swampy areas for reasons of security, in order to avoid conflict over real or alleged scarce local resources or even as a shield between warring parties. Some options may be unacceptable as the security and protection of the camp population are a priority. The eventual site identification will usually be based on a compromise between the interests of all stakeholders and the land available. Some potential conflicts over land may be seasonal and not immediately apparent at the time of assessment -including access needs for seasonal pastoral herd movement or grazing. The two questions that should be asked are:

1. If the land is not already being used for settlement, why not?
2. If the land is being used for some purpose, what will happen if a camp is set up instead – for example, if land is lost for grazing?

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) must be prepared by the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency and the government to outline the rights and responsibilities of all parties – such as the Sector/Cluster Lead, government authorities, landowners, the Camp Management Agency, camp population and host population – regarding the establishment of a camp. All issues pertaining to the establishment of a camp

should be fully discussed with the local community so that there is a common understanding of what the camp community will need and how this will impact on the host community. Where appropriate and required, all agreements should be outlined clearly in the MoU. Local protocols, including norms and values that host community members abide by should also be articulated, if necessary.

If possible, the Camp Management Agency should participate in preparing the MoU and should, in all cases, have available a copy of it. Additionally, the Camp Management Agency should make sure that its staff and the camp population understand what is outlined in the MoU.

SITE PLANNING

Even as different sites are being considered and the legal issues worked out, the SDC must start to plan the actual camp. Again, this is a complicated process which requires the input of many experts and stakeholders.

Starting with the Family

While it may seem counter-intuitive, the key to effective site planning is starting with the smallest building blocks of the camp – the individual and household – and building upwards. If one starts with the larger picture of the camp area and tries to work downwards, critical issues such as spacing and placement of shelters and services will be left with few options.

Using this decentralised community approach, the SDC would first discuss with the community their smallest unit – usually family or household – and then expand to whom they normally relate to and live near, until a clear pattern evolves. This is not to imply that a rigid grid pattern is used, as that may lead to isolation and overcrowding. Rather, a U-shaped or H-shaped cluster pattern is preferred as it promotes neighbourliness and communication with other communities, encourages ownership of shared facilities and resources, increases access to facilities and services and decreases hazards associated with over-crowding. Family units may be centred and surrounded by shared facilities such as latrines and wash/laundry areas or recreation and meeting spaces.

The table below shows an example of how family units are clustered to become communities, blocks, and larger units, up to the camp level. This is for a maximum size of 20,000 people, but may have to be modified depending on the predicted size of the camp and perhaps other factors such as different groups occupying the same camp.

Community building blocks (modified from UNHCR 2007):

| Smaller Unit | Larger Unit | Approximate No. of People per Unit |
|---------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------|
| 1 family or household | = | 4-6 people |
| 16 families or households | → 1 community | = 80 people |
| 16 communities | → 1 block | = 1,250 people |
| 4 blocks | → 1 sector | = 5,000 people |
| 4 sectors | → 1 camp | = 20,000 people |

Address Systems

As the general layout of the camp becomes clear, an address system should also be developed; being able to identify sectors and blocks, down to family shelters that will facilitate planning on both a large and small scale. Eventually, this becomes critical in being able to identify persons with specific needs and community leaders, and so on. Using symbols, pictures or colours in conjunction with written names or numbers will make it easier for children and non-literate people to find their way around the camp.

An example of an address system is as follows:

Sector – Latin numerals (1,2,3...)

Block – Capital letters (A, B, C...)

Family Shelter – Latin numerals (12,13,14...)

So that addresses do not consist of too many divisions, “communities” are generally skipped in the address system.

Thus a family’s individual shelter may be 3-C-54 (Sector 3, Block C, House 54).

Whilst Roman numerals – I, II, III, IV – are sometimes used, it should be noted that they are not recognised as numbers when put into databases.

Site Planning in Relation to Persons with Specific Needs and Groups at Risk

Every society has ways of coping with persons with specific needs, such as older people, small children and babies, those with impaired mobility and others at heightened risk, such as women. It is for the Camp Management Agency to identify what those mechanisms are and help support them. Likewise, the Camp Management Agency must identify and fill gaps in provision for those who may be marginalised and therefore especially vulnerable. In many situations, vulnerable individuals such as unaccompanied minors are cared for by host families, who may require additional support.

In some situations, it is culturally more appropriate for groups at risk to be settled in special shelters – for example, female-headed households in one cluster. In general, however, this is discouraged as it isolates these groups and leaves them without the protection of the community at large.

In cases where persons with specific needs are not being adequately cared for, it is the role of the Camp Management Agency to work with protection agencies and camp committees to help find solutions.

Use of GIS (Geographic Information System) Technologies in Camps

GIS technology is used in camp management to map the geography of the camp site in relation to information about, key infrastructure and population data. For example, GIS enables a camp planner to map the relationship between a water point and the shelters within 500 meters of that point. This then shows which sections of the camps are not meeting minimum standards for access to water. (Sphere key indicator – ‘the maximum distance from any household to the nearest water point is 500 metres’)

GIS is a very visual and powerful tool with capacity to map detailed demographic information about where in the camp groups or individuals live. When using population data, it is therefore essential to consider protection issues and ensure that data is sufficiently aggregated so that persons at risk remain anonymous.



For example, mapping survivors of GBV at the shelter level would show the precise location of the survivors' shelters even though their names would not be available. It is therefore crucial that the usefulness of the information mapped with GIS is weighed against programming needs, principles of data confidentiality and the privacy of the persons concerned.

Demarcation of Larger Features

After family units and communities have been roughly planned for, and any urgent reorganisation of existing shelters has taken place, the family shelters and communal features are mapped against existing features such as rivers, rocky areas or existing roads. Where possible, stakeholders involved should try to make use of the positive aspects of what are otherwise seen as limitations imposed by infrastructure needs. For example, non-toxic and unpolluted waste water can be diverted to underground 'soakaways' and can support vegetable gardens.

Site assessments should take place as soon as possible to identify potential future problems and prevent key services such as health, education, water and sanitation facilities being established in unsuitable locations. Assessments could identify the need for drainage, fire-breaks and possible expansion areas and assess the sustainable use or possible overuse of local natural resources.

The following table gives general guidance with regards to communal camp-wide features. These are merely for reference, as other chapters carry more specific information that experts need when actually planning and constructing individual features. While national standards will be used in some cases, these are taken from Sphere, UNHCR, UNESCO and the USAID Field Operations Guide (FOG) manual.

Guidelines for Site Planning

| TYPE OF FACILITY | | NO./PERSON | OTHER NOTES |
|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Camp Area | Total Open Space | 30–45 m ² per person | |
| Living Area | Covered Space | 3.5 m ² per person | |
| | Firebreaks | 50 metres of empty space every 300 metres of built-up area | |
| | Water Points | 1 per 80–500 people depending on type and flow rate | 100-500 metres from any one dwelling; gravity-fed systems on higher ground |
| | Latrines | 1 per household to 1 per 20-50 people | 6-50 metres away from house if too far away won't be used, 30 m from water sources |
| | Washing Facilities | 1 per 100–250 people | |
| | Refuse Bins | 2 per community | 1 100-litre per 10 families where not buried, 100 metres from communal areas |
| Health Care Facilities | Referral Hospital | 1 per 10 camps (200,000 people) | |
| | Health Centre | 1 per camp (20,000 people) | |
| | Latrines | 1 per 10–20 beds and 1 per 20–50 outpatients | Centralised, but with adequate access for ambulances and other transport |
| | Medical waste facilities | | |
| Feeding Centres | Feeding Centre | 1 per camp (20,000 people) | |
| | Latrines | 1 per 20–50 adults and 1 per 10–20 children | |

| TYPE OF FACILITY | | NO./PERSON | OTHER NOTES |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Schools | School Block | 1 per sector (5,000 people) | |
| | Classroom size guidelines: | in general the standard size for a classroom for 40 students should be: 6.20 x 5.75 metres to 6.20 x 6.50 metres | |
| | Pre-primary classes | up to 40 students= 1m ³ /student; up to 48 students= 0.74m ³ /student | |
| | Classes 1-3 | up to 40 students= 1m ³ /student; up to 48 students= 0.83m ³ /student | |
| | Classes 4-6 | up to 40 students= 1m ³ /student. | |
| | Tent classroom guideline | 55 square meter tent can accommodate 40-45 children | |
| | Latrines | 1 per 30 girls and 1 per 60 boys | |
| Markets | Market | 1 per camp (20,000 people) | |
| | Latrines | 1 per 20-50 stalls | |
| Distribution Points | Distribution Point | 4 per camp (20,000 people) | on higher ground to facilitate walking with heavy items |
| Graveyards | Graveyard | | 30 metres from groundwater sources; determine if space is available within host community |
| Reception/ Transit Area | Latrines | 1 per 50 people (3:1 female to male) | |
| Administration Area | including offices for government authorities/security, UN agencies, NGOs, meeting areas and warehouses tracing service | | |
| | usually near entrance so trucks are not driving in the camp and for warehouse security | | |
| | Latrines | 1 per 20 staff | |

In addition to these features, the following should also be taken into consideration:

Roads and Pathways

Besides the main access roads, a camp needs to have various internal roads, crossings and pathways, which connect the various sectors, blocks and communities. Paths and roadways are often the places where most of the population will communicate with each other and establish informal markets, but they also act as the entry and escape routes for any persons committing any crimes or acts of violence. Trade-offs should be made between networks of roads which allow privacy and protection and those which allow quick access to emergency vehicles and good lines of sight for security patrols. All roads and pathways need to be cleared of surrounding bushes and should, where possible, be provided with some lighting during the night for security reasons.

Camp communities situated near centralised facilities or larger infrastructure will have proportionally greater amounts of traffic from the camp population passing their shelters. Communities further away from central facilities may feel isolated, and have a greater turnover in population or more abandoned shelters. In both cases, the different security risks may need to be addressed through different community or road layouts.

Communal, Commercial and Recreational Areas

From the outset, extra surface area must be identified for communal areas such as open spaces and recreation fields, general meeting areas and space for religious gatherings. Sufficient space should be considered for markets, including margins for future expansion. Children and adolescents need sufficient playgrounds or child-friendly spaces, which must be easily accessible for all, including children with disabilities. It is advisable to focus specifically on the needs of adolescents, such as football fields or social clubs. If possible, playing fields should be located at a lower height than shelters, because there will be an increased run-off of surface water as a result of necessary removal of vegetation. For security reasons, recreational areas should be relatively centrally located, cleared of surrounding thick bushes and at safe distance from roads used for heavy traffic.

Agriculture and Livestock

Additional land for livestock keeping or large-scale agriculture must be considered where a community has active agriculturalists or a strong tradition of

keeping animals. Livestock is usually placed outside the camp, as keeping it in crowded camps could pose serious health risks. Special efforts must be taken to provide separate water points, ensure hygiene at such sites, prevent animals from wandering uncontrolled through the camp and prevent disease transmission to and from local herds.

If local and government rules permit, facilities should be arranged for people to engage in agriculture. This can benefit the region through enhanced trade, but may also help to diversify food rations available. Some technical assistance might be required to enable farmers to diversify their crops or to help them adapt to environmental conditions with which they may not be entirely familiar. Informal arrangements between displaced people and host communities are also commonly observed. These may not require any intervention on the part of the Camp Management Agency.

CAMP CLOSURE

Like camp set-up, the closure of a camp is a context-specific process, which can take place for a variety of reasons, and in a diversity of ways or stages – from planned and orderly closure influenced by organised return movements or dwindling donor support, to abrupt and chaotic closure due to security threats or government coercion. The identification of durable solutions is an essential goal of best practice in camp management, whether this is:

- return to the area of origin
- integration into the area of displacement
- resettlement to a third location (neither the area of origin nor of displacement).

It may sometimes be the case that whilst assistance and service provision phase out, the camp itself does not ‘close’, in terms of the removal of its infrastructure or its function as a community. It may itself become a viable permanent settlement, town or site of economic or social activity.

Whatever the circumstances around phase-out and camp closure, careful planning and extensive coordination is crucial and should be carried out by the Camp Management Agency in collaboration with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, the government authorities, local and international service providers, the camp population and the host community. The people of main concern are the displaced, and involving them in the process is imperative. Also, it is important to prepare the ground for an orderly closure with contractors and

other involved stakeholders. Even with careful planning, the Camp Management Agency should be prepared for eventual negative reactions and challenges in the closing of a camp.

This part of the chapter will focus on actual camp closure, while cross-border activities or reintegration and rehabilitation assistance are only touched upon in connection to groups at risk.

! Camp closure can be a particularly challenging phase for a Camp Management Agency. It occurs at the end of what has often been a long and complex process. It is usually a time when people are tired, when camp residents and staff are anxious about the future, and when other agencies and support are in the exit phase, or may have already left. It can also be a time when budgets and resources are low, and everyone's focus is on wrapping up and going home. Once it is announced that a camp and/or a camp management operation will close and phase-out will begin, there may be an almost immediate downturn in energy and focus. At a time when renewed focus is needed to ensure that camp closure is carried out responsibly, the Camp Management Agency may find it particularly challenging to care for assistance and protection of the community and the management of the site in this final phase.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

A principal task of a Camp Management Agency is to work with key stakeholders in the camp response, to ensure the identification of durable solutions for the camp population. The term ‘durable solution’ is used to describe the process when displacement comes to an end. Different durable solutions exist for refugees and for IDPs:

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For refugees, the following durable solutions should be pursued, whenever possible as part of a comprehensive approach: | Achieving a durable solution to internal displacement means that IDPs enjoy their full spectrum of human rights and, as a result, they are able to rebuild their lives. A solution can be achieved through one of following three choices: |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• voluntary repatriation to the place of origin• local integration in the country of asylum• resettlement to a third country. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• return to the place of origin• local settlement in the area where displaced persons have taken refuge• settlement elsewhere in the country. |

Conducting training and/or disseminating information at the camp level about durable solutions, the right to voluntary return and the corresponding duties of the government authorities, is the responsibility of a Camp Management Agency, in coordination with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency.

States have the primary duty to establish conditions which allow displaced persons to benefit from durable solutions. Whatever the solution is, it must be ensured that it is done voluntarily, in safety, security and with dignity.

Assessment

Perhaps most crucial in return exercises is to assess whether return is voluntary. Assessing the degree of camp communities’ free will to return is a responsibility of all stakeholders, including the Camp Management Agency.

The decision to return needs to be based on free and informed choices, both about the situation within the area or country of displacement, and the conditions of the area or country of origin. Voluntary choice – derived from the principle of *non-refoulement* (the stipulation in international refugee law preventing the involuntary return of refugees) – implies the absence of any pressure, as in physical force or threats against safety. Material pressure may involve ambiguous promises of land upon return or financial compensation. Psychological pressure may involve repeated warnings or threats, or disseminating hate messages.

The Camp Management Agency must collaborate with the authorities and the humanitarian stakeholders involved, such as the Sector/Cluster Lead Agencies, in verifying that people return voluntarily. The Camp Management Agency's community mobilisers should make house visits and interview individuals and households to identify the camp residents' interests and key motivations for return. The Camp Management Agency should use all forums, such as youth, women's and older persons' committees to discuss motivations for return. Focus group meetings could be effective in identifying motivations and possible 'push' and 'pull' factors.

! The terms “push” and “pull” factors are often used in the humanitarian field. In the context of a camp:

A 'push' factor would be a feature or event that pushes a person away from or encourages a person to leave the camp environment. Reasons for this may be community conflicts, unfavourable conditions, oppression, the disregard of human rights or a lack of assistance and services.

A 'pull' factor would be a feature or event that attracts a person to the camp. Reasons for this may be better living conditions and service provision, protection issues, and family or community reunification.

Voluntary Return

In order to be considered voluntary, a decision to return must be free and informed. It is essential that the displaced population have access to information about the situation in their place of origin, or resettlement that is accurate, objective and updated. Voluntary return is often spontaneous, and once the decision to leave the camp has been made, it can take place en masse very quickly or in smaller numbers over a longer period of time. Voluntary return may also be an organised effort planned by authorities and humanitarian agencies when conditions for return are considered conducive for the population.

The return or repatriation of IDPs and refugees is dependent upon the situation in the country or areas of origin, and the necessary pre-conditions – voluntariness, safety, security and dignity – for both groups are the same. Voluntary return or repatriation in safety, security and dignity involves a range of conditions that should be met. Safety and security conditions must be ensured both during and after return, and are measured against the following criteria:

- physical security, such as protection from armed attack or any physical threats

- material safety, such as access to land, property and access to a means of livelihood
- legal safety, such as equality before the law, not being discriminated against as a result of having been displaced and having full access to resources and restoration of previously held rights.

Whilst there is no universally accepted concept of the term dignity, in practice, it means that the thoughts and wishes of displaced communities are respected. It means that displaced populations are free from harmful or degrading treatment, and are treated in accordance with international standards and laws.

It is the role of the Camp Management Agency to coordinate closely with government authorities and the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, and to advocate for the conditions for an appropriate voluntary returns process, and to inform the camp community of the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

During voluntary return, freedom of movement must be guaranteed throughout, which implies that displaced people should be allowed to either return or to resettle voluntarily in another part of the country. Displaced people must be able to return unconditionally and travel at their own pace. Family unity must be considered at all times. Where necessary, special consideration should be given to groups at risk. Displaced people should be permitted to bring their moveable possessions with them. Planning for voluntary return should also consider schooling and planting seasons.

A Voice from the Field –

Sri Lanka Reports the Following on Returns

“Due to the returns process dominating the context of our work and return being a main concern for many IDPs, the camp management staff delivered one-off training sessions on return. These sessions took place in the sites, usually with a varied selection of the population sitting in, as they took place in a communal place and with an open invitation to the community. The team also worked closely with the Protection Monitoring Team and assisted with disseminating information regarding return, including rights related to return; local procedures and practices during previous returns to be aware of; and the site consolidation process – as sites were consolidated as a result of return. Some IDPs were asked to



relocate from less suitable sites to sites that were assessed to be more suitable for longer-term accommodation. IDPs have the right to remain on IDP sites without being deregistered and having assistance cut.”

Although the Camp Management Agency must always liaise with community leaders on return and repatriation issues, consulting leaders alone is not sufficient. Their views may not represent the aspirations of all and there is a risk that collective decision-making in terms of security or livelihoods may overrule individual needs. This can be particularly true with groups at risk who fear being left behind.

Spontaneous Return

The spontaneous return of displaced people may happen quite unexpectedly. Spontaneous return may be triggered by sudden changes in the home areas or may be provoked by a change in security in the areas of displacement. The Camp Management Agency may provide transport support where required if conditions for return are conducive. The transport needs of those most at risk should not be forgotten, nor should the needs of persons with specific needs who may be left behind during the first phase of return.

Displaced people may decide to return home or depart for other areas even when conditions along the road or at the selected destination are insecure. The Camp Management Agency should aim to identify motivations for return or departure. This may identify other issues, such as political or military motivations or increased tensions. It may, however, also indicate that certain groups feel discriminated against or made insecure by the presence of other groups within the camp. Overall conditions of continued hardship, such as lack of sufficient food and water or other services, may also force people to leave.

In collaboration with authorities and service providers, issues around hardship, security and increasing tensions must be addressed by the Camp Management Agency. Whether or not to advise against return is context-dependent and should be decided in consultation with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, service providers and authorities.

The term “spontaneous return” may also be used to describe people choosing to return on their own rather than as part of agency-organised return programmes.



Movement and Voluntary Return in Northern Uganda: A Report by Human Rights Focus

“The Acholi (people) want to go home, and they are going home, despite a lack of water, roads, building materials, tools and information. Voluntary return is their right for as the National IDP Policy states, ‘Government commits itself to promote the right of IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence.’ It is therefore the responsibility of government and intergovernmental organisations (IGOs), and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide an enabling environment for return without trying to control the process. Recommendations for movement and voluntary return include:

1. Government needs to provide the unequivocal message that forced displacement is over for good.
2. Government needs to guarantee the right to voluntary return and provide clear and consistent messages to this effect.
3. Government and IGOs/NGOs must avoid doing anything intentionally or unintentionally that might hinder people from or bias people against returning home.
4. A regular professional police presence should be established throughout Acholiland to deal with crime and other threats.
5. The approach to infrastructure and service provision, in particular water and roads, should be one of rehabilitation and not emergency aid to displaced populations.
6. IDPs need to be provided with accurate information about security, infrastructure, service provision and food aid distribution in order to effectively plan their return.
7. The accountability of aid providers to aid recipients should be ensured by replacing the camp management paradigm with an accountability paradigm. Open discussions among IDPs/IGOs/NGOs and government in public meetings should be the basis for the engagement of humanitarian actors with the community.”

Forced Return or Relocation

When pressure by authorities is exerted to have people return or relocate to unsafe areas, the Camp Management Agency has to rely on its advocacy role. Advocacy must, however, always be an interagency initiative and be closely

coordinated with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency. Forced return or relocation furthermore calls for a strong international response and senior UN-level interventions and is therefore beyond the scope of this chapter. Relocation of displaced people may be necessary in certain circumstances, provided that peoples' safety and security in relocation areas can be guaranteed. Any relocation process of displaced people must at all times take place under similar conditions of voluntariness, safety, security and dignity.

Closure of Collective Centres – Voice from the Field

“The priority in Serbia is the closure of the remaining collective centres. This process has been delayed because of the government’s lack of acknowledgment of local integration as a durable solution for IDPs and its preference for promotion of return. Privatisation of previously state-owned companies has meant new owners have been keen to reclaim land and buildings being used as collective centres.

There are now a number of strategies that have been adopted by the government to help IDPs to move out of the collective centres and integrate into the local population. While many of these strategies have been open to refugees for a number of years they have only been recently extended to IDPs, particularly social housing. Overall only a small number of IDPs have moved out of collective centres and without a fairer system in place they are likely to persist for a number of years. Current strategies include:

- providing a small financial incentive and allowance to help IDPs move into private accommodation
- giving building materials for those IDPs that have started building their own home, but who lack resources to finish them
- including IDPs in social housing schemes aimed at providing subsidised accommodation for vulnerable groups
- relocating vulnerable IDPs into specialised institutions, including elderly homes
- supporting foster family arrangements involving IDPs
- conversion of the collective centres into either specialised institutions or subsidised housing.’

Phase-out and Exit of the Camp Management Agency

In some situations, even where a durable solution cannot be identified, the Camp Management Agency and other service providers may withdraw, and the camp may continue to exist. This may be due to either improved or deteriorated situations.

The decision for a Camp Management Agency to phase out and the timing of an exit must be based on a comprehensive assessment. When all indicators point toward an exit, the welfare of the camp population must still be safeguarded and the Camp Management Agency should make sure that all stakeholders are involved and working to support the decision. Careful planning and coordination of the exit phase is crucial.

Indicators of the feasibility of the exit of the Camp Management Agency could include:

- identification of durable solutions which can be implemented
- camp residents no longer needing the protection of the Camp Management Agency
- the situation in the area/country of origin improving to the extent where return is possible
- the camp residents refusing the offer of durable solutions and the Camp Management Agency being unable to continue to run the camp, for financial and/or ethical reasons
- drying up of donor support to run the camp, whether justified in the eyes of the Camp Management Agency or not
- safety and security factors, such as threats against the life and property of humanitarian workers working in the camp
- the presence of aid workers or particular groups of aid workers putting the population at more risk of harm than proportionate risk warrants
- access to the displaced population is no longer available or made extremely difficult
- another transitional settlement solution is required.

In this situation, some of the measures mentioned in this chapter that are also necessary in the case of camp closure, will be relevant as well. This includes liaison with the authorities and with other stakeholders for the promotion of protection and future provision for the remaining camp population.

Phase-out and Exit Strategies- Voice from the Field

‘Despite on-going construction of permanent homes, and the return or resettlement of many tsunami-affected families, there were still displaced communities resident in camps eighteen months after the disaster in Southern Sri Lanka. Some were eligible according to government lists for houses being built by the government, international agencies and local community-based and religious organisations. For them it was only a matter of time and patience.

For others, who were ‘renters’, ‘sub-families’ or ‘squatters’, there was no clarity on durable solutions. These people had either rented or squatted in homes prior to the tsunami – which had since been destroyed, rendering them homeless – or were extended family members who were unable or unwilling to cohabit – as they had previously – in the new permanent houses. Their eligibility status for housing remained unclear, and they remained in the camps, which were fast emptying out and had minimal or no service provision. Some remaining camps in the south of Sri Lanka had been consolidated, and others had been closed. Landowners were calling for the return of their land, and the government wanted the coastline clear of camps. There was still much work to be done but limited capacity to do it.

Meanwhile, in the east of Sri Lanka, the security situation that had displaced so many families before the tsunami began to deteriorate once again. The resources of the Camp Management Agency were needed in response to the new emergency further north. After considering its options, the Camp Management Agency implemented a two-month phase-out project with three main objectives:

1. to complete one final update of the cross-sector camp database, to give remaining service providers and the authorities a clear overview of who and what remained in the camp sites
2. to complete the training and coaching programme in the camps that had aimed to build self-management capacity; leaflets were distributed with the names and details of government departments and municipal council service providers
3. to hand-over responsibility for emergency care and maintenance in the sites to a national NGO.’

CAMP MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of a Camp Management Agency during phase-out and closure of the camp it is operating in include the following tasks – which are outlined in more detail below:

- planning for exit and camp closure from the beginning
- assessing the voluntariness of return or resettlement
- coordinating and ensuring the participation of all stakeholders in the process
- liaison and dialogue with the government authorities and with the Sector/ Cluster Lead Agency
- implementing information campaigns around camp closure and durable solutions
- promoting the particular protection of persons with specific needs and groups at risk
- administration and termination of contracts and agreements
- managing the documentation and data, including confidential personal records
- managing the distribution or decommissioning of the camps assets
- promoting the protection of and future provision for any people staying behind in the camp
- ensuring that the site is left fit for the purpose it was used for prior to camp set-up
- ensuring that environmental concerns are addressed.

Planning for Exit from the Beginning

As previously mentioned, planning for exit and the eventual closure of the camp should be seen as an integral part of the set-up process. Documentation and agreements made during the camp set-up phase, including all relevant legal documents, can be very important during closure. Hand-over plans with government partners or other service providers should be in place from the beginning, as should agreements with the host community and camp residents about camp infrastructure and assets.

Likewise, the Camp Management Agency must develop its relationship with the camp residents in such a way that from the beginning, whilst feeling safe, secure and motivated to participate in the life of the camp, the camp population is aware that it is a temporary measure and are focused on opportunities for the future and finding durable solutions. Working with the camp population from the start on issues of durable solutions can help reduce the shock of a camp closing, and also support hope and anticipation within the population. Likewise,

the active development of participation, skills and self-management strategies within the displaced community can help to decrease their dependence and reduce vulnerability, therefore empowering the camp population to retain and develop independence and self-reliance.

Coordination and Participation

Ensuring participation and coordination among all stakeholders in the camp during its closure is the Camp Management Agency's responsibility. This responsibility also includes monitoring, information sharing, negotiating and facilitating the movement of displaced people from the camp site. The Camp Management Agency should initiate the formulation of an exit strategy as soon as possible after establishment of a camp, including continuous focus on looking for durable solutions to the displacement of the camp population.

Because many actors are involved in return strategies, it is recommended that a working group be established. Roles should be clear and where necessary, formalised. Certain areas of responsibility may be tense, in particular between the Camp Management Agency and local authorities. Coordination meetings should function as a forum for continued sharing of information on the voluntary nature of the return according to agencies' information from camp residents.

Dialogue with the authorities on return issues should be initiated as soon as possible. The authorities should at all times be part of in-camp coordination mechanisms – such as the working group on return – unless the government acts against the interests of the displaced.

Where required, in close cooperation with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, the Camp Management Agency may initiate or conduct training days/workshops at camp level, and as appropriate, for NGOs and government officials interested in protection concerns specifically related to voluntary return. As such, workshops may cover gender-specific issues, the concept of voluntary return and the IDP *Guiding Principles* related to return, resettlement and reintegration.

In its coordination role, the Camp Management Agency has a responsibility to work closely with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency and advocate with service-providers and their donors to provide reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance as appropriate. Where possible, cross-border programmes at the place of origin of the displaced should be initiated by the Sector/Cluster Lead Agencies and supported by the Camp Management Agency, who may provide information on community needs, and the link between relief, early recovery and longer-term development. This is crucial if durable solutions are to be sustainable.

Information Campaigns

One of the main tasks of the Camp Management Agency is to provide as much accurate, objective and up-to-date information as possible to camp residents. This can include information about the situation at the place of origin, down to what shelter materials, documentation and other assets they should take when they leave.

People must have access to unbiased information on the security and safety situation, including concerns such as landmines, access to shelter, land, livelihoods, health care and schooling. Reconnaissance missions, sometimes called ‘Go and See visits’, may be undertaken by the authorities and/or the displaced. Often, information will most likely come from individuals who travel back and forth to assess the overall situation before returning with their families.

Many displaced people will base their decisions to return on a variety of push and pull factors. These factors can be based on security or political motivations, material needs or a combination of these.

Go and See Visits – Voice from the Field

A camp manager reports an example of best practice in Go and See visits: “Planning Go and See visits is an activity where camp residents exercise their right to participate in and be informed about the return process. These visits need to be a confidence-building activity and should be well-planned. However, the visit itself is only one part of a Go and See visit. The ‘return to the camp and share information’ part is also a crucial aspect of the exercise. In planning the feedback phase of Go and See visits, established camp committees are often well-positioned to play a key role in chairing meetings and disseminating information about the visit to the community as a whole. Those participating in Go and See visits can also join inter-agency meetings and report back first-hand on what they saw. The dissemination of the information after the visit is as important as the visit itself.”

Initiating camp-wide information campaigns on return is a Camp Management Agency’s responsibility, in close collaboration with the local authorities. The Camp Management Agency must ensure that information campaigns are organised through outreach initiatives to reach all households. Channels of communication could involve radio, theatre, schools and educational facilities, religious institu-

tions and through showing videos of home areas. In reaching out to different groups, existing in-camp committees and women's groups should be addressed individually. Schools and teacher-parent associations are ways to reach children. Children, like adults, should have the opportunity to raise questions and express their aspirations and insecurities about return.

The Camp Management Agency has a role in providing information on return procedures and transportation arrangements. Where local transport companies or international humanitarian organisations are responsible for transport, responsibilities must be defined and put in writing. Information on the return process must be disseminated in ways allowing for all to access the information and ask questions where needed. Information must, at a minimum, cover:

- registration procedures for those willing to return
- procedures and arrangements for persons with specific needs, such as pregnant women, those with impaired mobility, older people and those with disabilities
- procedures and options for those who do not wish to return
- information on roles and responsibilities of agencies involved in return
- time, means of transportation and departure procedures
- procedures on transporting property
- procedures upon arrival in home areas
- details of any return or compensation package on offer
- deregistration from the regular registration database.

Persons with Specific Needs and Groups at Heightened Risk

Older people, those who are chronically ill, people with disabilities and those with impaired mobility need additional support. Special referral systems for these groups should be available throughout the return process. Occasionally, displaced people and humanitarian organisations may decide to leave individuals belonging to groups at risk behind and organise their return once reintegration assistance is forthcoming. Preferably, however, return of persons with specific needs should not take place after fellow camp residents have returned. Leaving people temporarily behind in a camp which is largely empty may have major negative effects on their psychosocial and physical well-being. Continuing care and assistance within the camp cannot always be guaranteed. Agencies will scale down or phase out completely, while authorities may decide to dismantle the camp after mass return operations have been completed.

Where these individuals travel entirely on their own, such as a single older

person with impaired mobility, a carer needs to be identified to assist the individual during the full journey. Carers should be identified with caution, preferably from the existing pool of trained social/protection workers, and appropriate compensation should be considered. Trained social/protection workers should identify people with specific needs or most at risk, and assess the special care they require during return. Departure zones should have a separate area designated for groups at risk and their family members. Following the identification of vulnerable persons, mobile registration teams should register those unable to show up for return registration and deregistration.

To reduce vulnerability or separation, people should be encouraged to return in groups of extended family members, women or groups of families accustomed to living together. Special arrangements for travelling in groups should be guaranteed and incorporated into the return and registration process.

The Camp Management Agency has a responsibility to monitor departure and all departure zones. Teams of trained monitors should focus in particular on the safety of single women, girls and children. Security during departure is a responsibility of the local authorities and local law enforcement agencies. The Camp Management Agency should coordinate with health agencies on return arrangements for persons in need of special medical arrangements.

The lead agency on child protection will likely assume a major responsibility in establishing appropriate arrangements for unaccompanied children. This agency should assess whether unaccompanied children are interested in return in the first place. Irrespective of a child's age, the child should always have the chance to express his or her views or anxieties. The lead agency on child protection is equally responsible for ensuring care of unaccompanied children upon arrival. Arrangements should be made with the societies to continue tracing activities upon return. The Camp Management Agency must coordinate all activities with the lead agency and provide support where needed. The different roles between the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, protection agencies and the Camp Management Agency should be formalised and clear to all.

The Camp Management Agency must ensure that all unaccompanied children are properly informed about the return process and that they are registered for return in their own name. An effective system must be established to ensure that return packages or other return benefits are provided to all unaccompanied children.

Carers should be appointed to assist unaccompanied children throughout the journey. Carers should be instructed on their responsibilities and selected with caution. Copies of all relevant documentation of the child (such as tracing

documentation and health and education certificates) should travel with the child and, where required, be kept with the caretaker.

The lead agency on child protection should identify whether the foster family is willing and capable to continue to care for the child during and upon return. Likewise, the child should indicate whether s/he would like to stay with the foster family. Where possible, protection/social workers should assess whether the relationship seems stable and whether continuation of care is likely or unlikely. Family support in return for fostering will cease to continue, which may trigger a family to separate from the child upon or sometime after return.

In addition, the foster family and the child may originate from different areas. The child must always be consulted whether he or she wants to return to the foster families' area of origin.

Special Programmes

If camp residents are to return to mined areas, mine risk education must be organised for all. A number of information strategies can be used, including training workshops, posters, leaflets and children's theatre.

►► *For more information on mine risk and mine risk education, see the International Mine Action Best Practice Guidebook in the Reading and References section of this chapter.*

Documentation and Data Records

Population Data

The government, the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency and the Camp Management Agency normally maintain databases of the camp population. It is important that the data are correct, as they have direct implications for the planning of the logistics of movement, for security, food distribution and more. As the camp closes, these records must be handled with care as they contain personal information about the camp residents.

Other Confidential Records

In some cases, displaced people experience grave threats and imminent danger as a result of their status as displaced. These threats may also affect their immediate family members who are left behind in their place/country of origin. In these cases, it is vital to maintain an international presence in the camp all the time. The identity of the displaced should be kept confidential, and during the movements, itineraries and movement plans should be kept secret and limited to as few people as possible.

Personal Records

These documents have to be carefully and efficiently managed, secured and transferred in the phase-out process. Correct data have to be provided to ministries of various agencies such as the Immigration Department and the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health in order to ensure that the returning displaced population are able to obtain proper identification documents, access to education, health care and basic social services upon return. School records from the camp must be correct so that testing for skills and the competence level of students is properly and efficiently administered as part of their reintegration. Hospital and medical records, most importantly those of vaccinations and immunisations, have to be carefully managed and transferred to ensure proper follow-up through medical interventions. Medical records should remain with the displaced during transfer.

Administrative Documents

Operations reports, books of accounts and financial records are some of the vital administrative records that need to be kept for at least five years based on sound accounting practice.

A lessons-learned document should also be produced, which tells the history of the camp, including successes and how they were achieved, and challenges and how they were addressed.

▶▶ *For more on information management, see chapter 5.*

Deregistration

The deregistration of people leaving in an organised and phased way can be straightforward. Deregistration can be linked to the transportation manifests which record all returning individuals. Likewise, people must deregister prior to receiving return packages or transportation allowances. Deregistration becomes more difficult when people decide to return spontaneously on their own. People may decide to keep ration cards in order to allow return to the camp when deemed necessary, or leave their cards with others.

Environmental Considerations

Camp closure will produce large amounts of waste of different kinds, such as shelter materials, left-behind belongings and damaged items of various kinds. Also, chemicals, batteries, expired drugs and other health-sector related waste will most likely have to be dealt with. Preparing for camp closure includes the

clean-up and proper disposal of all kinds of waste – whether removal, on-site burial or incineration. The risk of contaminating soils and water sources should especially be taken into consideration. The camp site should be left in a safe state so that there will not be any future consequences such as from leaving pit latrines or waste pits open, or not removing hazardous waste.

Recycling of materials should be encouraged as far as possible, as some waste materials may be useful to local inhabitants. Many existing structures such as school buildings and clinics might also prove useful for the host community. An assessment should be done of the extent and condition of infrastructure and existing services – such as water pumping and treatment facilities – with community members and local authorities, ahead of camp closure. Some degree of infrastructure repair might need to be envisioned ahead of closure.

The existence of a camp may have caused many environmental changes. Some negative environmental impacts are probably inevitable, such as a degree of deforestation or land clearance, and a programme of environmental rehabilitation may be required. This should be carried out in close collaboration with host communities and local authorities, and not merely imposed by external agencies. Livelihood security options should be encouraged as part of any rehabilitation programme. All rehabilitation initiatives require funding – although this is not always necessarily an expensive undertaking – which is why planning and estimating costs, as well as fundraising, should be carried out in advance of any camp closure.

Some changes which may have taken place however, may actually benefit and be regarded positively by the local communities, who may wish to see the site remain as it currently is, instead of undergoing rehabilitation to restore some of its former qualities. This is especially true where unproductive lands have been converted to productive arable or grazing lands, or where productive fruit or hardwood trees have been planted. Such positive changes need to be identified and ways sought of working with local authorities and communities to maintain them.

Burial grounds used by the camp population during the time of displacement should be clearly marked and remain as such upon eventual return/resettlement of the camp population. This may be difficult if people have buried their dead at scattered locations rather than in one common place.

▶▶ *For more information on related environment issues, see chapter 6.*

Asset Management

The Camp Management Agency is responsible for ensuring that all material assets in the camp are distributed through inclusive and transparent processes, and in coordination with all stakeholders. Exactly how this is achieved depends on the context. For example, shelters are often taken apart by the family and valuable materials taken with them, such as non-food items given in distributions – cooking pots or blankets – which are now their property. Water tanks may be collected by the service providers concerned, and electrical wiring in the site may need to be safely dismantled by the authorities. Wires and fittings may be the property of a municipal council. The camp buildings, such as schools, community halls, playgrounds or sports fields may be handed over to the host community and/or government authorities. Similarly, any communal furniture, such as desks, benches or filing cabinets, must be distributed equitably. The Camp Management Agency is responsible for the termination of any service contracts set up – such as with water delivery contractors – and must hand over the future maintenance of infrastructure – such as fences, paths, roads or drainage channels – to the appropriate authorities.

Most importantly, sanitation facilities need to be decommissioned or made safe. Latrines and defecation pits should be safely filled-in, latrine basins removed, and concrete bases around washing facilities and under shelters broken up and removed. In some circumstances, this infrastructure may be left safe but in place for future emergencies.

People Staying Behind

The Camp Management Agency is responsible for advocating that any remaining residents in the camp – sometimes called the ‘residual’ population – are protected and provided for. They may need to be relocated within the site into neighbouring shelters for reasons of safety or psychosocial health, and any contracts needed for their assistance should be modified and extended accordingly. Community workers should identify the needs and aspirations of those households and provide support for return when required.

Dealing with Uncertainty

Return in conflict or post-conflict settings, or following a natural disaster, can be a very sensitive exercise, which may involve high levels of anxiety and uncertainty. Uncertainty about what lies ahead can be extremely stressful, particularly with doubts about safety and security, and leaving behind shelter, food, livelihoods, health services and education. To some, it may not seem like leaving the camp

would be the best option, because in the camp aid has been forthcoming, and most households will have found some ways of coping, at least to some extent. An empathetic and understanding attitude from all camp staff, and the employment of community workers to offer assurance, advice and practical support as appropriate, is therefore important.

One-to-one counselling may be necessary. It may therefore be recommended to have ongoing counselling days on return issues for those individuals and families who have questions or who seek additional information.

CHECKLIST FOR A CAMP MANAGEMENT AGENCY

SET UP

- The Camp Management Agency works with the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency in establishing a Site Development/Camp Planning Committee.

- Representatives on the Site Development Committee (SDC) include:
 - host government/authority representatives
 - Sector/Cluster Lead Agency
 - Camp Management Agency
 - men and women from the displaced population
 - men and women from host population
 - representatives from programmatic and operational sectors – i.e., health, WASH, shelter, security, logistics, education and livelihoods – and from appropriate government ministries and/or UN agencies and/or NGOs
 - surveyors, GIS experts, hydrologists, public health engineers and other technical experts.

- Information is analysed about the pros and cons of the site(s), based on considerations of:
 - safety, protection and security
 - social and cultural considerations
 - the location and conditions of the land, including size, access, distance from the border and available resources.

- Future changes and uncertainties are planned for such as new arrivals and camp expansion.

- The camp is planned and set up in line with international standards and indicators.

- Ways forward are decided upon to best use positive aspects and mitigate the effects of unfavourable ones of the site.

- Pros and cons of selected sites and the reasons behind final decisions are documented.

- ❑ The environmental impact of the camp is considered and plans are made to limit environmental damage.
- ❑ Planning for the site is approached from individual households upwards, paying special attention to groups at risk and those with specific needs.
- ❑ Protection concerns are assessed (including the vulnerability of women leaving the camp to collect fire wood).
- ❑ Guidelines, standards and the expertise of individuals and agencies are used to make for an efficient and safe camp in line with international law and standards.
- ❑ In situations of self-settled camps, decisions are made about the need to reorganise or resettle the community or parts of the community as appropriate.
- ❑ The Site Development Committee stays together to address issues around the phased development of the camp as appropriate.
- ❑ As part of a larger monitoring and evaluation system, key actors (many of the same from the SDC) are brought together to get feedback on how camp location and layout is working for the residents, staff and host community.
- ❑ If a growing disparity exists between the living conditions of the camp residents and the host population, the Sector/Cluster Lead Agency, the authorities, the Camp Management Agency, UN agencies and NGOs consult on the possibility of implementing projects or sharing goods or services.
- ❑ An address system for the camp is planned, taking into account the needs of non-literate camp residents.
- ❑ Plans for phase-out, exit and camp closure are considered from the start, including land agreements, service contracts, documentation storage and confidentiality, asset management, and the assessment of possible durable solutions.

CLOSURE

- Phase-out, exit and camp closure is considered and planned for from the beginning.
- Assessments to ascertain whether return is voluntary are made.
- Participation and coordination is ensured among all stakeholders.
- Information campaigns are developed and implemented to ensure residents have accurate, objective and up-to-date information available regarding the situation, logistics and other procedures.
- Groups most at risk and vulnerable individuals are supported and protected throughout the process. Special information or awareness-raising programmes and links with longer-term development projects are developed, which will help camp residents integrate back home.
- Administrative procedures ensure that all documents are either with their owners before they leave, with lead agencies (Sector/Cluster/Protection), NGOs or are destroyed.
- The deregistration process is facilitated.
- The monitoring of the returns process is in place to ensure safety, security and dignity.
- Any camp residents staying behind have been provided with adequate assistance and protection.
- The camp assets and infrastructure are distributed fairly and transparently with due regard for the host community.
- The future maintenance/care of infrastructure is handed over to the authorities or appropriate people.
- Latrines, rubbish pits, and washing facilities are safely decommissioned.
- Service contracts and agreements are modified or terminated appropriately.

- ❑ A list of environmental concerns is made and plans developed concerning how they are going to be addressed.
- ❑ Information and support is provided to help camp residents deal with uncertainty: their questions are answered and they are given advice about the future.

TOOLS

! Almost all the tools, publications and other documents referred to are available on the **Toolkit CD** attached to every hardcopy binder. Weblinks are provided for downloadable online resources.

! A camp's lifecycle can be illustrated as follows:



The Camp Management Toolkit's chapter on Camp Set-Up and Camp Closure highlights important key issues and recommends appropriate action and best practice in relation to the roles and responsibilities of a Camp Management Agency. It gives general holistic guidance on the most relevant aspects and concerns of the sector rather than providing detailed and inclusive technical and in-depth sector knowledge – this would go beyond the scope of this work. Hence, it is important that camp management staff access more references, essential readings and tools from other sources, such as those listed at the end of every Toolkit chapter.

Two new guidelines are currently under development which can be used alongside the Camp Management Toolkit. Their aim is to broaden and extend technical and sector expertise. Once they are finalised in 2008, camp management staff should equip themselves with:

1. *The Camp Planning Guidelines* developed by Shelter Centre and initiated in cooperation with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) that will offer illustrated guidance on:
 - transit support, including way-stations, transit centres and reception centres
 - self-settled and planned camps, including differences between camps for those displaced by conflict and by natural disasters, layout, extensions and phased upgrading to meet international standards

- site selection, including determining the viability of self-settled camps, hazard mapping, assessing both displaced and host populations and natural resource management
- site preparation, including surveying, marking out, ground works, surface water drainage and environmental protection
- site development, including the phased construction of accommodation and communal infrastructure and services, such as distribution centres and water supplies.

▶▶ *To download digital versions or order copies, see www.shelterlibrary.org or email campplanning@sheltercentre.org*

2. *The Camp Closure Guidelines*, developed by ProAct Network and CARE International, in collaboration with all partners of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, that will cover the following broad areas:

Relevance of camp closure, roles and responsibilities. Management decisions, including methodologies, consultation processes, logistics, protection and information dissemination. **Legal and policy requirements**, such as documentation, security, administration, property rights and compensation. **Landscape and livelihoods**, which examines **key issues** relating to camp infrastructure, waste and the environmental footprint of a camp.

For more information about when final drafts are available, contact: info@proactnetwork.org

- Quick guidelines for transitional settlements or camp site selection from Sri Lanka
- Primer for the design of refugee camps
- RedR. Latrine Decommissioning Training Notes (South Asia earthquake)
- Suggested technical processes for the decommissioning and closure of IDP sites from Sri Lanka
- Decommissioning procedure checklist from Sri Lanka
- Best practice guidelines for the on-site decommissioning of emergency and semi-permanent raised-level latrines from Batticaloa, Sri Lanka
- Shelter and settlement standards matrix from Sri Lanka

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