



SAFE HAVEN: Sheltering Displaced Persons from Sexual and Gender-based Violence

**A 4-country study by the Human Rights Center
University of California, Berkeley**

2012-2013

Study Aims and Objectives

To improve understanding of potential protection options for refugees and internally displaced persons fleeing sexual and gender-based violence, the Human Rights Center at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law launched a four-country qualitative study in 2012.

The research had three main aims: to identify and describe models of temporary physical shelter available to displaced persons in humanitarian settings; to shed light on challenges and strategies relevant to the provision of safe shelter to members of displaced communities; and to identify critical protection gaps.

Case study countries included: Colombia, Haiti, Kenya, and Thailand.

Sample

The following table captures the number and nature of interviews conducted during our 2012 fieldwork:

	Colombia	Haiti	Kenya	Thailand
Shelter programs studied	8	6	10*	15
Shelter staff interviews**	10	8	15*	27
Shelter resident interviews	7	5	7	6
Key informant interviews	28	9	21	31

* Not including Dadaab surveys conducted in 2011 or follow-up communications in 2012.

** Some interviews included more than one respondent, as is explained in the country reports.

Individual country reports and final comparative report are available at
<http://www.law.berkeley.edu/hrc.htm>

Kindly address questions and feedback to ktseelinger@berkeley.edu

Recommendations from the Comparative Report

1. Promote community buy-in, especially in camp settings.

Building community support for shelters is critical to improving resident and staff security, service utilization, and exit strategies, particularly in camp settings. Shelter providers should seek community input into shelter design, increase community awareness of services, and engage in regular dialogue with community leaders and advocates.

2. Ensure the security of both residents and staff.

Assess the security needs of both shelter residents and staff and develop site-appropriate security measures to ensure safety (e.g. guards, alarm systems, rules, and partnerships with law enforcement). Individuals fleeing sexual and gender-based violence should be referred to appropriate shelters according to their security needs.

3. Provide support for both residents and staff.

Through further assessment, identify and adequately fund context-specific priorities of residents and staff. Residents requested increased access to counseling, health care, vocational training services, while staff routinely expressed the need for emotional support services, training in counseling and other skills, and additional staffing.

4. Consider appropriate placement and exit strategies from the beginning.

As early as possible, shelter providers should work with residents to identify transition strategies in order to foster recovery and independence. Residents should have meaningful engagement in all levels of decision-making about their transition readiness and options.

5. Explore and develop a diversity of shelter options.

A diversity of shelter options can help providers to accommodate residents' varying security needs and desires for community connection. Policymakers, coordinating bodies, and funders should explore and support a wide range of safe shelter possibilities within a single camp or community.

6. Conduct shelter mapping, coordination, and exchange.

Effective referral systems are necessary to take advantage of all appropriate shelter options. A coordinating body could map all shelter services, bridge gaps between state and private programs, connect refugee communities to shelters catering to the general public, and organize convenings to exchange information and resources.

7. Identify and close protection gaps, including for marginalized victim groups.

Safe shelter should be available to all, including male survivors, LGBT individuals, and persons with serious health conditions. Specialized programs may be ideal where possible, even outside of camps. With sufficient training and support, mainstream programs may be also be viable options for marginalized refugees and non-refugees alike.

8. Assess macro-level barriers to, and implications of, safe shelter protection in displacement settings.

Facilitators and barriers to protection, such as government policy regarding displaced communities and sexual and gender-based violence, should be evaluated in order to identify areas for advocacy and strengthening. The impact of funders' shifting priorities in humanitarian settings should also be assessed, with feedback from local groups.

9. Evaluate program impacts.

Funders should support the evaluation of shelter programs' impact in context-specific, commonsense ways. Measures of success should be flexible, according to local context; evaluators may find it helpful to gather views from staff, former residents, staff, and community members about successes, challenges, and progress.

10. Support or conduct further research.

Policymakers should support additional research about: the impact of SGBV prevention efforts; special needs of refugees and IDPs fleeing SGBV; the possibility of community-based safety, shelter resident's priority services; transition experiences of former residents; the protection preferences of marginalized victim groups; the impact of shelter benefits on those seeking or staying in safe shelter; and best practices in evaluating safe shelter impact.