

NRC Solutions from the Start toolkit

Tool 4 – Activity Examples by Core Competency

Activity Examples by Core Competency

These activity examples are not a list to choose from but are intended to inspire thinking. Activities should be designed according to the context – based on NRC's analysis of the situation, capacities, barriers, and needs, including whether NRC is the best-placed actor to respond.

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When designing the response, aim to:

1. Start from people's intentions and preferences, not only their needs.

Design responses based on what displaced people want and plan for their own futures, not just immediate gaps and needs.

2. Map and build on existing plans, community capacities and self-organisation.

Understand existing capacities within local authorities and displaced and host communities, including self-protection, coping mechanisms, first response, mutual aid, and community leadership. Identify how NRC can reinforce these community-led capacities rather than replace them. Assess early the legislation, policies, local actors, and structural barriers shaping inclusion and service access, and align support with local and national plans.

3. Use market- and cash-based approaches where possible.

Prioritise market-based and cash approaches and support market functionality rather than defaulting to in-kind assistance.

4. Address barriers to accessing existing services, systems, and rights.

Address legal, administrative, protection, documentation, access barriers that prevent people from using local systems (e.g. education, housing).

5. Act as an enabler, not a parallel service provider, where feasible.

Work through and with local actors and systems (*government authorities, local service providers, civil society, private sector*) where feasible and respecting humanitarian principles & protection. If NRC direct delivery is the best immediate option to deliver assistance, work to reduce this over time.

6. Design for sustainability and exit from day one.

Integrate environmental and climate considerations, avoid reinforcing dependency, integrate NRC programmatic, advocacy, and coordination strategies, and plan early for realistic exit or transition pathways.

7. Design an integrated response

Design your response across Core Competencies, along with program, advocacy, coordination and partnership aspects, layering interventions for greater benefit of displaced people.

The example activities are divided between three levels:

- **Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level:** *Assisting host governments at national, regional, or local levels in including displaced persons in national systems, policies, development plans, and budgeting to improve economic, financial, legal, and social inclusion.*
- **Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector:** *Supporting national, regional, or local institutions, including civil society organisations (NGOs and community-based organisations), to expand capacity and extend services to displaced persons, removing barriers to inclusion and improving their integration into existing economic, financial, legal, and social systems and structures.*
- **Community / Household / Individual Level:** *Facilitating displaced persons' social, economic, legal, and financial inclusion, supporting their ability to access and utilise national systems, build sustainable livelihoods, and achieve independence from humanitarian aid.*

Education

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated with
<p>Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector</p>			
<p>Preparedness: Analyse barriers to formal education and livelihood/ job opportunities (if possible, as part of preparedness planning)</p>	<p>Identify barriers for displacement affected children (boys / girls) and youth (young women / young men) to access, integrate, and learn in the formal education system (e.g. enrolment policies, legal documentation required, language of instruction, curriculum requirements etc.)</p> <p>Identify barriers for displacement affected youth to access livelihood and job opportunities (e.g. legal barriers to accessing formal work, language barriers, skills barriers etc.)</p> <p>Identify community-based actors already addressing or relevant for addressing some of the identified barriers, specifically Parent Teacher Associations, Student Clubs, Youth-Led Organisations, local NGOs</p>	<p>As per our First-Line Education Response (FLER) guidance and package, a first-line education response always aims to work towards transition of displacement affected children and youth into more structured and longer-term education and livelihood pathways.</p> <p>Transition pathways can be into non-formal education first, such as catch-up classes, bridging classes or accelerated education, or immediately into the formal certified education system, depending on the learner's profile and specific context.</p>	<p>ICLA, Local Actors, Cash & Market Systems</p>
<p>Preparedness: Advocacy with local authorities (Ministry of Education) and the EiE sector (if possible, as part of preparedness planning)</p>	<p>Advocate with the Ministry of Education and at sector level for the inclusion of displacement affected children and youth into the formal education system (primary/ secondary/ tertiary), including waiving enrolment requirements posing a barrier for access.</p>	<p>As per our FLER guidance and package, a first-line education response always aims to work towards transition of displacement affected children and youth into more structured and longer-term education and livelihood pathways.</p>	<p>Advocacy, ICLA</p>

Where inclusion is not (yet) possible, especially due to existing learning gaps, advocate with the Ministry of Education and at sector level for non-formal education provision (basic literacy and numeracy, catch-up, bridging, accelerated education etc.) as a pathway into formal education and/ or livelihood opportunities

Advocate for displacement affected children and youth to sit for their exams so they can obtain their certificate and likewise, facilitate obtaining certificates that were earned/finalized prior to displacement so that they can enter into appropriate grade levels and/or livelihood opportunities.

Advocate with local authorities and the private sector for inclusion of displacement affected youth into the local/ formal labour market.

Transition pathways can be into non-formal education first, such as catch-up classes, bridging classes or accelerated education, or immediately into the formal certified education system, depending on the learner's profile and specific context.

Preparedness: Alignment and relevance of curriculums *(if possible, as part of preparedness planning)*

Where non-formal education is relevant and necessary, ensure curriculums adopted for non-formal education and first line education programmes refer as much as possible to national education sector plans and development objectives.

For youth life-skills trainings in all NRC youth education and training programming, including in first-line response, curriculums should be based as much as possible on labour market

As per our FLER guidance and package, a first-line education response always aims to work towards transition of displacement affected children and youth into more structured and longer-term education and livelihood pathways.

Transition pathways can be into non-formal education first, such as catch-up classes, bridging classes or accelerated education, or immediately into the formal certified education system, depending on the learner's profile and specific context.

Cash & Market Systems

requirements or designed to facilitate community engagement.

Similarly, for language acquisition for youth, aim at functional literacy (e.g. *language skills required for further learning, livelihood and/ or community engagement opportunities*)

**Please refer to NRCs phased approach to first-line education response (FLER) to assess when it is appropriate to start more structured NFE in a first-line response. NRC FLER phased approach introduces activities gradually to promote emotional stabilization, acquisition of key lifesaving learning messages, and long-term recovery, before any academic content is introduced.*

***Similarly, vocational training is typically not part of FLER for youth but comes later, after emotional stabilization, acquisition of key lifesaving learning messages and long-term recovery*

Support to local authorities/actors to absorb additional learners

Identify opportunities for NRC to support local authorities and local actors to absorb learners affected by the crisis/displacement in formal and non-formal education:

- Rehabilitate formal classrooms or set up temporary learning spaces, including WASH facilities, to absorb additional learners (in support of both non-formal as well as formal education)
- Identify and recruit teachers, including from the displaced population, to absorb

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WASH, S&S, Local Actors

additional learners (in support of both non-formal as well as formal education)

- Train teachers and facilitators on classroom based psychosocial support techniques (BLP 1), recreation, life-saving learning etc. (in support of both non-formal as well as formal education)
- Provide teaching and learning materials to support both non-formal as well as formal education provision.

Work with authorities and the private sector to map what skills are required on the (local) labour market (e.g. technical skills, life skills, language skills etc) to inform (formal) education and training provision to youth

Community / Household / Individual Level

Local markets

Try as much as possible to work hand in hand with the local community to rehabilitate schools, using locally available materials and workforce. When possible, provide cash grants to Parent Teacher Associations so they can directly carry out needed works (*e.g. set up a temporary learning space with locally available materials through community members rather than procuring and setting up a tent - this is also cheaper and faster*).

Always prioritize using local materials for teaching and learning materials, keeping in mind quality and relevance.

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Transition pathways can be into non-formal education first, such as catch-up classes, bridging classes or accelerated education, or immediately into the formal certified education system, depending on the learner's profile and specific context

NRC FLER activities are designed to be low-resource and flexible. Many activities benefit from simple materials to

Cash & Market Systems

Train facilitators on identifying free or low-cost materials from their local environment that could be used in FLER activities.

help students express themselves, work in groups, or bring ideas to life.

Identify integrated programming opportunities within NRC

Establish a holistic response by collaborating as needed with other NRC CCs. E.g. on climate-sensitive school rehabilitation and construction, hygiene promotion, menstrual hygiene management, school feeding, civil documentation support, referrals, paid work /incentive worker opportunities for youth.

Holistic response by NRC - with multiple actions being taken - that together aim to support more sustainability of response and a pathway to self-reliance.

All CCs, Climate & Environment, Local Actors, Cash & Market Systems

Work with other CCs to identify vulnerable households, including young fathers and mothers, and parents/ caregivers who themselves or whose children cannot access education due to financial barriers, distance from schools, legal documentation barriers etc.

Work with other NRC CCs to develop integrated programme approaches to support youth transition into livelihood (job or self-employment) opportunities as early as possible

Information Counselling and Legal Assistance (ICLA)

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated approach
Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level			
Assessment/Analysis (Preparedness activity & response activity)	Assessment and analysis of legal frameworks, policies, and procedural access to basic rights, e.g. <i>civil documentation, HLP rights, access to free legal aid etc, identifying gaps, barriers, implementation challenges affecting displaced populations.</i>	Generates the evidence needed for NRC to address legal / regulatory barriers to self-reliance early in displacement. Helps to ensure that interventions target structural constraints rather than symptoms.	Advocacy, PfV
Advocacy for policy change/change in practices	Engage in and inform discussions on policies and practices to protect the rights of displaced populations. <i>E.g., identifying emerging policy opportunities to elevate and address the justice needs of displaced populations; and promoting accountability of duty-bearers for equitable, fair, and timely administrative and justice procedures.</i> <i>Can be achieved through: advocacy events (e.g. meetings, briefings, and workshops); development and dissemination of advocacy products (e.g. briefing notes, and policy recommendations); formation, participation in, or strengthening of advocacy coalitions and coordination platforms.</i>	Addresses structural and systemic barriers to self-reliance early in displacement, rather than focusing solely on individual and/or short-term needs	Advocacy, PfV
Coordination	Facilitation of dialogue between displaced communities and duty-bearers to improve responsiveness and accountability.	Reinforces local systems through structured dialogue, helping duty-bearers respond more effectively to displacement-related needs and reducing long-term reliance on humanitarian intermediaries.	All CCs

Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector

Assessments & Analysis	<p>Conduct participatory assessments + use secondary data to ensure a solid understanding of the legal, administrative, and practical barriers that affect people’s ability to claim their rights.</p> <p>Map existing capacities and responses, including community coping mechanisms, available legal aid or protection services, and the roles of state institutions and other actors.</p>	<p>Generates evidence on systemic (beyond legal framework) barriers, local capacities, and existing services, so that NRC can plan interventions that strengthen systems and community coping mechanisms – so displaced people can access rights and services independently and sustainably.</p>	PfV
Partnerships	<p>Map local actors and networks, including community-led and refugee organisations, to continue/restart service delivery of legal and para-legal services related to legal identity, HLP rights etc. and identify referral opportunities / pathways.</p>	<p>Strengthens local leadership and ownership of legal and justice services, fostering trust in the justice system and enabling displaced people to access self-reliance pathways through sustainable local systems rather than long-term humanitarian provision.</p>	PfV, Partnerships
Capacity building	<p>Develop and provide capacity building activities for local authorities and other duty-bearers (civil registrar, local / community leaders etc.) to strengthen accountable and equitable delivery of state services and improve administrative and justice procedures. <i>(Depending on ICLA capacity)</i></p>		S&S, WASH, Education, PfV
Due Diligence technical support	<p>DD is a support service provided to other CCs/actors. HLP DD is compulsory for all projects implemented by NRC which require access to buildings, land, property, or natural resources, as a concrete way to ensure that NRC’s interventions “Do No Harm” and promote tenure security.</p> <p><i>E.g., in Central and West Africa, ICLA conducts site due diligence to identify ownership claims or disputes over</i></p>	<p>Strengthens local systems, prevents harm, and secures tenure rights, enabling displaced populations to access land and property safely and independently without long-term reliance on humanitarian intervention.</p>	S&S, WASH, Education

land where new displacement camps are established. This process includes analysis of applicable HLP laws and practices; identification of current owners or competing claims; and the generation of documentation that can be used in both customary and statutory justice systems.

Coordination	Participate in (and position NRC to co-lead) relevant coordination forums (Protection Cluster, HLP/Legal Identity Working Group, Legal Task Force).	Fosters collaboration with local actors and partners, harmonising legal aid services, and strengthening systems that allow displaced people to access rights and services more independently and sustainably.	PfV, S&S
Coordination	Coordinate with other legal aid providers, NGOs, and civil society organisations to harmonise approaches, referral pathways, and standards.		
Eviction monitoring and tracking	Establish a systematic eviction monitoring system to track prevalence, causes, and types of evictions – to facilitate rapid response and inform advocacy efforts to prevent further displacements.	Provides evidence on eviction risks that strengthens local response systems and informs preventative measures.	S&S, Site Management, PfV

Community / Household / Individual Level

Information provision	<p>Deliver accurate, timely, and accessible information to affected populations - directly by NRC or through partners - on access to basic services, civil documentation, HLP rights, the right to seek asylum, protection from refoulement, safeguards against arbitrary detention, pathways to self-reliance etc.</p> <p><i>E.g., through on-site information sessions, community centres (including shared centres with other service providers), digital information platforms (including KOBLI), social media channels, targeted messaging campaigns, disseminating printed information materials.</i></p>	Enables people to navigate systems independently and reduce reliance on direct humanitarian support.	Site Management
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Counselling	<p>Provide individual legal advice on civil documentation, HLP, access to services and other relevant rules and procedures, including available options and the specific requirements associated with each option.</p> <p><i>Assistance can be provided in person or remotely by phone, by NRC or through partners, at legal aid centres, community centres, through mobile teams, including those deployed near border crossings.</i></p>	Helps with securing rights and enabling access to basic services, livelihoods, and self-reliance pathways.	
Legal Assistance	Focus on supporting displaced people to navigate legal and administrative procedures (e.g., <i>legal identity or stay</i>)		
Legal Assistance (Collaborative Dispute Resolution)	Focus on resolving disputes between landlords and tenants, preventing evictions, and ensuring security of tenure for displaced persons.	Enables displaced people to secure tenure, maintain housing, and pursue self-reliance through local systems.	S&S, PfV
Building community-based capacity	Support displaced and host community members to deliver information on issues related to HLP rights, legal identity etc. and the services ICLA provides	Enables displaced people to access rights and services independently, fosters sustainable self-reliance.	PfV
Referrals	Connect displaced persons with specialised services internally and external of NRC		All CCs
Cash and Vouchers Assistance (CVA) and Financial Assistance	<i>Should only be used complementary to counselling and legal assistance services, to: address financial barriers to accessing documentation or procedures (admin fees, translation and certification fees, other costs involved in procedures and processes, such as court fees), support people at risk of eviction (cash for rent to prevent people being evicted (emergency shelter), provide for 'enabling services' to allow access to documentation (transportation, including overnight/accommodation, childcare etc).</i>	Helps with securing rights and enabling access to services in the short-term. If this is combined with a longer-term advocacy plan to reduce the financial barriers for displaced people, it supports a systems approach and self-reliance. <i>Examples: Ukraine and Palestine</i>	Cash & Market Systems

Shelter and Settlements

- **Look at a more holistic Settlements-based Approach:** Shelter responses should not be isolated but integrated with other sectors such as protection, WASH, health, and livelihoods. This helps ensure that the shelter solutions contribute to the overall well-being and self-reliance of the affected population.
- **Community Participation:** Engage both the displaced and host communities in the planning and implementation of shelter solutions. This helps leverage local skills and ensures that the solutions are culturally appropriate and sustainable.
- **Local Integration:** Promote the use of local materials and construction techniques. This not only supports the local economy but also ensures that the shelters are more likely to be accepted and maintained by the community in the long term.
- **Environmental Considerations:** Incorporate environmental and cultural sustainability into shelter design, by using locally available, sustainably sourced materials and the simplest construction methods. This includes using eco-friendly materials and considering the environmental impact of shelter construction and maintenance.

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated with approach?
Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level			
Advocacy	Advocate for location of sites in terms of protection issues and hazards risk, asking for early engagement transition from emergency to recovery.	To facilitate recovery and re-establishment of social and family connections, routines, and livelihoods.	
<i>Key advocacy within FLR toward Solutions from the Start should focus on ensuring we can support where people have chosen to settle, and that managed camps are a last resort.</i>	For legislation/regulations/policies allowing responses which facilitate transitional shelter options, and allow us to work with all displaced and host communities.	To quickly move away from 'life saving' basic shelter to more robust and longer lasting shelter options that give families time to recover and build self-reliance	
	On access to Safe Land and Security of Tenure and access to adequate emergency shelters suitable for the anticipated length of displacement, within an HLP framework	To improve security or tenure and reduce threats of eviction so that displaced people can concentrate on recovery, feel settled, and make plans for the future without being forced to start again in another location.	ICLA

Promote suitable response modalities which support self-reliance, especially cash-based approaches to emergency shelter support.

Promote shelter response options which support early recovery, self-reliance, and displacement-affected people's own choices.

Cash & Market Systems

Support national, regional, and local authorities in adopting and implementing globally recognised standards, e.g. *SPHERE standards nationally*, including for emergency/temporary housing.

Ensures safe, dignified, and liveable conditions for displaced and/or affected populations.

Promote the use of local materials and construction techniques in any guidance or legislation linked to the shelter response where possible.

Supports a more sustainable and locally owned response.

Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector

Preparedness: review baseline assessment - local settlement systems, local gov't and private sector actors, local markets, HLP systems

- Understand:
- Capacities and limitations of local service providers (staff and systems, whether local authority or private sector) for regular service provision and to deal with shocks (such as energy).
 - Availability of household shelter/NFI commodities, and shelter materials in local markets

Identifies what local capacities that NRC could work in collaboration with, or work to boost in an emergency.

Cash & Market Systems

Preparedness: community engagement

If NRC is already present assess the level of community engagement and participation in shelter activities prior to the emergency. Or, understand the existing community structures and potential channels for community engagement.

Identify what community capacities that NRC could work to boost in an emergency

Preparedness: local civil society capacities

Identify existing partnerships and capacities of local organisations, community groups, and other local humanitarian actors. Assess the potential for strengthening these partnerships and leveraging their resources and networks.

Identifies if NRC can work with or in support of local civil society actors - including as an Enabler (not necessarily through setting up implementing partnerships).

Local actors, Partnerships

Preparedness: environment and climate	Analyse the environmental factors that may affect shelter and settlements interventions, such seasonal variation, vulnerability to natural hazards.		Climate & Environment
Assessment & analysis	<p>To understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Capacities of main local actors for response. - Community capacities relating to shelter, and positive coping mechanisms. - Functionality of markets for shelter commodities, and if they are not functioning, why. - Environmental and climate factors that might affect shelter interventions. - HLP rights or barriers for displaced people 	<p>To identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If it is possible for NRC to work with or through local systems to help restore or extend these, rather than through NRC direct delivery. - If direct delivery is necessary to meet immediate basic needs, how quickly this can be move to local systems. <p><i>This analysis might continue while NRC is doing initial direct delivery, to enable a quicker shift toward solutions.</i></p>	Cash & Market Systems, ICLA, Local actors, Climate & Environment
Shelter Market and Systems Assessment	<p>Conduct a rapid, participatory assessment to map shelter market actors, material supply chains, service providers, and infrastructure constraints.</p> <p>Identify key disruptions and opportunities for immediate interventions to restore shelter market functionality and ensure access to safe, dignified, adequate temporary housing.</p>	<p>To inform the feasibility of cash. Market support is needed for the feasibility and effectiveness of CVA or to ensure displaced populations have access to and information on critical S&S markets (<i>location, price, availability, quality etc.</i>)</p> <p><i>Based on the findings of the rapid market assessment, NRC's Global Modality Choice Tool can be used to help select an appropriate modality, based on factors of security, accessibility and social cultural dynamics.</i></p>	Cash & Market Systems
Support Access to Credit	Support increased knowledge and understanding of financial institutions and the private sector related to credit requirements for local actors and challenges for local traders in the shelter sector to access credit, e.g. required documentation based on community needs and market assessments.	<i>Requires sufficient NRC capacity in Cash and Market Systems. May be an activity started during emergency response phase, continued during transitional phase.</i>	Cash & Market Systems, ICLA

Engage with Local Authorities and Landowners	Engage with local authorities and landowners to secure legal agreements, ensuring access to land for shelter, food security, and livelihoods to prevent eviction and maintain occupancy of emergency shelters or settlements until longer-term solutions are found.	To support self-reliance and reduce risk of further displacement.	ICLA
<i>Settlement Based Approaches</i>	<i>Look at a more holistic Settlements-based Approach: Shelter responses should not be isolated but integrated with other sectors such as WASH, ICLA, PfV, and Education. This would ensure that the shelter solutions contribute to the overall well-being and self-reliance of the affected population.</i>		All CCs
<i>Community Participation</i>	<i>Engage both the displaced and host communities in the planning and implementation of shelter solutions. This helps leverage local skills and ensures that the solutions are culturally appropriate and sustainable.</i>		
Community / Household / Individual Level			
Emergency rehabilitation of essential community structures	Support individuals and businesses to repair and upgrade critical community facilities, including marketplaces, health facilities, educational and psychosocial support spaces, to restore functionality and support the well-being of affected populations.		S&S (Site Man.), Education, WASH, Cash & Market Systems
Support community integration in temporary shelter	Promote shelter solutions in sites that allow families to stay within their social networks, fostering belonging and community cohesion.	Facilitates recovery, social and family connections, routines and livelihoods and retain support networks.	PfV, S&S (Site Man.)
Community-led shelter management	Support the establishment of community-led committees to manage shelter repairs, maintenance, and upgrades (<i>through partnerships and consultation with communities and local authorities</i>).	Working to boost community capacity and ownership supports sustainability.	
	Provide technical training for local contractors and community members on shelter rehabilitation techniques, including the use of non-traditional materials, e.g., sandwich panels, particularly in contexts where traditional materials are scarce.		

Climate-shelter and energy integration	<p>Use local low cost sustainable materials.</p> <p>Promote energy efficiency and shelter design to reduce energy costs for the household.</p>	<p>Integrates climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. Initial investments will likely yield long-term cost savings and enhance shelter resilience against climate-related issues and disease outbreaks.</p>	Climate & Environment
Progressive / transitional housing solutions	<p>Support the provision of emergency shelters that meet immediate needs while providing options for future upgrades. Consider the use of local materials, energy-efficient designs, and minimal environmental impact.</p>	<p>Sustainable design from the outset that anticipates progression to future upgrades puts families on a path to self-reliance.</p>	Climate & Environment
Preserve Functionality and Privacy in Emergency/Temporary Housing	<p>Support housing solutions to maintain key functionalities from families' original homes, such as designated sleeping areas and cooking facilities, while also ensuring privacy and respecting traditional practices regarding shared and personal spaces.</p>		
Cash for urgent shelter needs	<p>Through existing partnerships, local networks or reliable referrals support access to targeted cash assistance that aligns with local market conditions, enabling households to meet urgent shelter needs while supporting the stability and growth of local markets.</p>	<p><i>Could involve Cash for rent - but it is hard to set up a rental market intervention that would support more than 3 months in FLR</i></p>	Cash & Market Systems
Cash & Clean reliable energy	<p>NFI Solar Kit Distribution: Consider including solar kits (individual/household/community level) in NFIs to support daily household and community energy/lighting needs, including access to water and sanitation.</p>	<p>Provides access to renewable energy, contributing to self-reliance.</p>	WASH, Environment & Climate
Local materials	<p><i>Promote the use of local materials and construction techniques. This not only supports the local economy but also ensures that the shelters are more likely to be accepted and maintained by the community in the long term.</i></p>		
Environmental Consideration	<p><i>Incorporate environmental and cultural sustainability into shelter design, by using locally available, sustainably sourced materials and the simplest construction methods. This includes using eco-friendly materials and considering the environmental impact of shelter construction and maintenance.</i></p>		

Shelter and Settlements (Site Management)

Consider how to utilise Site Management expertise and activities to support NRC integrated response focused on a Solutions from the Start approach.

- Utilise site management's information management, assessment, and community engagement activities (and tools), to understand community intentions and preferences, barriers to these, and barriers to access services – to inform NRC planning.
- Utilise NRC's UDOC expertise to support NRC area-based approaches, in urban displacement scenarios.

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated with
Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level			
Advocacy on camp establishment	Advocate against establishment of camps, where appropriate, as an unsustainable solution to displacement.	Camps are an unsustainable solution to displacement	Advocacy, S&S
Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector			
Engage with Local Authorities and landowners on land use	Engage with local authorities and landowners to secure legal agreements for use of the land for formal camps and informal sites, to prevent eviction until long-term solutions are found. <i>Likely conducted with, or in support of, the humanitarian 'camp coordination' actor.</i>	Minimises risk of eviction. Important basis for extension of municipal services to the site. If land permissions are long-term, opens up option for site to become an option for families to remain, if they wish, with integration of the site into the local community and municipal services	ICLA
Engage with Local Authorities on camp/site location	Advocate for establishment of formal camps/displacement sites adjacent to existing communities, to allow for extension/expansion of services to the camp population	Increases possibilities of access to livelihoods and easier access to services provided to the host community. Opportunity to increase services to the host community.	Advocacy, S&S

Advocacy on service connections	Advocate to Local Authorities for services connections to displacement sites from the outset. Integrate these service connections into site planning and humanitarian service provider response plans. Design away from reliance on humanitarian actors and humanitarian funding (e.g. hand over O&M as soon as possible).	Makes services more sustainable and able to support the host community in the future.	S&S, WASH, ICLA, Education, PfV
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Community / Household / Individual Level

Site Management Support	<p>Consider this as a preferred, more sustainable, option than NRC direct implementation.</p> <p>Understand how local authorities function and identify which entity might be the best actor to take on management (e.g. local municipality, with the long-term aim of integrating in their regular work, rather than the entity tasked with displacement management).</p> <p>Advocate for integration of SM responsibilities in local authority budgets instead of reliance on external funding.</p>	Aim for earlier handover of full Site Management responsibilities, and integration of management and service provision into existing local systems (municipal management and municipal services)	
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Community-led site management	<p>In small displacement sites, explore options for community self-management - working with existing representatives/community leaders and supporting the establishment of community-led committees where needed, and linking these with appropriate local authorities or host community leadership. <i>In consultation with communities (first understanding existing leadership, networks, and group organisation) local authorities, and other local (non-government) actors.</i></p> <p>In larger sites, support the establishment of community-led committees to manage site maintenance and organisation, empowering members to actively maintain their environment and promote sustainable practices.</p>	Look toward sustainability of structures, avoiding creating financial motivations for participation.	All CCs
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UDOC	Utilise NRC's UDOC expertise to support NRC (and other humanitarian actor) area-based approaches, in urban displacement scenarios.	Promotes an integrated approach to Solutions from the Start.	All CCs
Support community integration	Promote shelter solutions in displacement sites that allow families to stay within their social networks, fostering belonging and community cohesion.	Facilitates recovery, social and family connections, routines and livelihoods and retain support networks.	PfV, S&S
Support community networks	Support informal and formal community networks by strengthening community-driven mitigation measures to reduce or alleviate the risks they face. Explore how to utilise these for community self-management. Consider, <i>e.g., use of NRC micro grants to support their short-term work</i> . Identify community networks and bring these to other NRC CCs.	Supports community capacities and self-reliance.	PfV, All CCs

WASH

When designing WASH infrastructure with a Solutions from the Start approach:

- **Conduct institutional mapping for potential O&M management.** Identify all potential management stakeholders, assess their resources and capacity against required tasks, and apply a subsidiarity principle (choose the most local option that can realistically do the work).
- **Apply a technology ladder when selecting technical options.** Technologies can be roughly ordered from simple/low-cost/quick to implement (with lower service level) to more complex/high cost (with higher service level). Higher-level technologies require more complex O&M but usually provide a better level of service. Select options that match the capacity of likely long-term operators, and your findings from the institutional mapping
- **Calculate whole-life costs, not just capital costs.** Include operational expenditure over the expected service life. This helps justify higher upfront investment for lower running costs, and supports evidence-based decisions on when to transition from temporary to permanent solutions.
- **If NRC direct delivery is the best immediate option to provide lifesaving WASH assistance, plan and budget for handover/exit from day one.** Include costs of training, equipment transfer, and ongoing support in initial budgets. This prevents us from being trapped in service delivery.

Detailed guidance on the above can be found in NRC's '*Facilitating effective management of sustainable WASH systems*' self-guidance.

See also NRC WASH guidance for use on infrastructure lasting longer than six months:

- Operation and Maintenance of Humanitarian WASH Services
- Finance for Humanitarian WASH Services
- Management of Humanitarian WASH Services [*all forthcoming*]

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated with
Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level			
Preparedness + response: Policy review	Review of local WASH policy to understand legal requirements, integrate with regional efforts, leverage community knowledge for better plans, and	Helps NRC to align planned response with specific local risks to develop plans that are practical, compliant, and build local resilience.	
Preparedness: advocacy to relevant authorities	<i>Advocacy on any regulatory and operational barriers affecting WASH responses, including access restrictions to reach people with WASH assistance, importation constraints linked to WASH items, and the protection of WASH infrastructure and personnel.</i>	Clearly defined advocacy objectives, with target audiences, and allies can help unlock timely, solutions from the start approach. Help NRC select acceptable approaches that are in line with local regulation	Advocacy, All CCs
Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector			
Preparedness: review baseline assessment – local WASH systems, local gov't and private sector actors, local markets	Understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existing WASH infrastructure functionality. - Capacities and limitations of local service providers (staff and systems, whether local authority or private sector) for regular service provision and to deal with shocks. - Functionality of the local markets for availability of household WASH commodities, and WASH materials 	Identifies what local capacities that NRC could work in collaboration with, or work to boost, in an emergency.	Cash & Market systems
Preparedness: community engagement	Assess the level of community engagement and participation in WASH activities prior to the emergency. Understand the existing community structures and potential channels for communities engagement.	Identifies what community capacities that NRC could work to boost in an emergency	

Preparedness: local civil society & private sector capacities	Identify existing partnerships and WASH capacities of local organizations, private sector actors, community groups, and other humanitarian actors. Assess the potential for strengthening these partnerships and leveraging their resources and networks.	Identifies if NRC can work with or in support of local civil society and private sector actors - including as an Enabler (not necessarily through setting up implementing partnerships)	Local actors, Partnerships
Preparedness: environment and climate	Analyse the environmental and climate factors (using the Risk Assessment tool) that may affect WASH interventions, such seasonal variation, vulnerability to natural hazards, bacteriological and chemical (i.e. arsenic, salinity or fluoride) contamination in groundwater.	Helps in designing from the beginning safe and sustainable WASH solutions rather than temporary fixes.	Climate & environment
Assessment & analysis to understand: impact on services & systems, local actors, community capacities, market systems, environment and climate	<p>Understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact of the shock on existing WASH infrastructure and service provider capacities. - Barriers for displaced people to access local infrastructure/systems. - Capacities of main local actors involved in regular service delivery. - Community capacities relating to maintaining WASH services, and positive coping mechanisms. - Functionality of markets for WASH commodities, and if they are not functioning, why. - Environmental and climate factors that might affect WASH interventions. 	<p>To understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If it is possible for NRC to work with or through local systems to help restore or extend these, rather than setting up alternative service provision through NRC direct delivery. - If direct delivery is necessary to meet immediate basic needs, how quickly can this be shifted back to local systems. <p>This analysis might continue while NRC is doing initial direct delivery, to enable a quicker shift toward solutions.</p>	Cash & Market Systems, ICLA, Local actors, Climate & environment
Use of local markets	Use of tools like “spotlight” to do a quick analysis of the market, and “MARKit” to monitor the market at regular intervals. <i>[Available in the Market Systems emergency response guidance: T1MA - Spotlight & T1MA - MARKit]</i>	If possible, we should always use a market-based approach to provide WASH services. Ask if you can support the market to provide this service rather than supply it directly.	Cash & Market Systems
Water treatment plants	Rehabilitation, typically when there is a disruption or contamination of the regular water supply system. This should only be led by a WASH Specialist or PDM.	Rehabilitation and connection to existing infrastructure is preferable to short-term unsustainable parallel delivery by humanitarian actors.	

<p>Water quality monitoring - support to local authorities</p>	<p>Support monitoring by local authorities, rather than by NRC – or have in place a clear exit strategy for handover back to local authorities as early as possible.</p> <p><i>If local authorities lack capacity, it is critical that NRC WASH teams are trained in routine water quality testing and monitoring using mobile water testing kits. This enables early identification of contamination risks and timely coordination with authorities and partners to mitigate public health impacts and support safer, more sustainable water services.</i></p>	<p>If direct delivery is the only safe option, NRC exit (and any parallel capacity transfer) should be planned at the start of the intervention.</p>	<p>Local actors</p>
<p>Operation and Maintenance of systems - support to local authorities, water committee, or another organisation</p>	<p>Even in an emergency an O&M system should be in place. Preferably managed by local authorities or private sector.</p> <p><i>Conduct institutional mapping for potential O&M management. Identify all potential stakeholders, assess their resources and capacity against required tasks, and apply a subsidiarity principle (choose the most local option that can realistically do the work).</i></p> <p>Provide technical and financial support (where feasible) to the responsible bodies to repair damaged WASH infrastructure taking into consideration quality and quantity, safe access, security, environment and climate and social considerations.</p> <p><i>Other options include direct management by a water committee, through capacity building if needed (not really recommended), initial management by NRC with a clear plan and timeline for handover to a pre-identified local actor/system, involving users, local authority, private sector or other entity who use their own resources.</i></p>	<p>Support capacities of local service providers to do this – rather than NRC direct delivery.</p> <p>If you are rehabilitating an existing water supply system, think about if the existing management model was suitable or needs changing, and what evidence is available to support this.</p>	<p>Local actors, Cash and Market Systems</p>

Community / Household / Individual Level

Water trucking

The delivery of water by truck to populations is a very expensive and unsustainable option that should only be undertaken in the short term, where there is no other option. It is most effective during the early stages of an emergency response when immediate access to safe drinking water is critical. For a 'Solutions from the Start' approach, a clear exit strategy should be planned – e.g. parallel expansion of existing water points.

Rehabilitation or expansion of existing water points

Rehabilitation should be prioritised, especially of those water points that might have been damaged recently which people were recently dependent on. If demand has increased (due to displacement), extend or expand the capacity of the system.

Rehabilitation and connection to existing infrastructure is preferable to short-term unsustainable parallel delivery by humanitarian actors.

Local actors

Standpipes

Installation of public standpipes connected to an existing nearby safe water source or water network. Be sure to consider if the increased demand for water in the network can be met. Otherwise, we might deprive host community of water or reduce pressure and flow in the pipe which could reduce social cohesion. This should only be led by a WASH Specialist or PDM.

Rehabilitation and connection to existing infrastructure is preferable to short-term unsustainable parallel delivery by humanitarian actors.

If current users are paying for services consider sustainable options to help support payment, or support to service providers to enable continued O&M.

Groundwater

Well, spring and boreholes can be used to provide water based on the context and availabilities. Rehabilitate existing groundwater infrastructure rather than to start a new one, as the ownership and management is already in place. *It is important to reduce the likelihood of contamination of groundwater from either surface pollutants or shallow groundwater pollution.*

Rehabilitation and connection to existing infrastructure is preferable to short-term unsustainable parallel delivery by humanitarian actors.

If you are rehabilitating an existing water supply system, think about if the existing management model was suitable or needs changing, and what evidence is available to support this.

Sanitation infrastructure rehabilitation

Where possible, repair or rehabilitate damaged sanitation facilities to restore access to sanitation services instead of constructing new latrines. Connect toilet blocks to existing sewer networks where feasible and accepted.

Rehabilitation and connection to existing infrastructure is preferable to short-term unsustainable parallel delivery by humanitarian actors.

Solid Waste Management - support to local authorities / community self-management

Support local authorities or private sector actors to resume solid waste collection, or extend services to new displaced populations.

In interim, complementing work of municipalities until the system is re-established: support local/affected communities to manage solid waste in and around sites (*displacement sites, collective and makeshift shelters, etc.*) through community engagement, providing tools, hygiene awareness, and where feasible cash for work schemes (with clear exit strategy).

Choosing a more sustainable long-term modality, rather than NRC or implementing partner direct delivery.

Local actors, Cash & Market Systems

Protection from Violence

Consider how to utilise Protection from Violence expertise and activities to support NRC integrated response focused on a Solutions from the Start approach.

- Use protection analysis and protection team knowledge to inform NRC planning – to rapidly understand community dynamics, community leadership structures, and capacities including of community groups.
- Explore Civilian Self-Protection as part of preparedness – mapping community groups, building community capacities to maintain networks and knowledge in emergencies, co-develop community safety strategies to reduce harm in an emergency – increasing capacity for community response.

Example activity	Detail	Why does this contribute to a 'Solutions from the Start' approach?	Integrated with
Policy / Legislative / Regulations Level			
Advocacy for protection	Use evidence-based messaging to increase visibility on protection risks towards local authorities, implementing actors (<i>NGOs, UN, coordination structures, donors</i>) Adapt protection analysis recommendations towards policy and advocacy based on protection risks identified.	Ensuring that key stakeholders (<i>national authorities, donors, international community, other implementing actors - NGOs & UN</i>) are aware of protection risks faced by the population will support long-term solutions.	Advocacy, Access
Systems Level: Admin / Judicial / Civil Society / Private Sector			
Analysis:	Conduct a rapid, participatory assessment to identify protection actors providing protection specialised services for displaced and conflict-affected persons.	Understand the existing and disrupted capacities in the environment we are responding to in order to better use and support them.	
Protection Systems Assessment	Identify key disruptions and opportunities in national social systems, when relevant, to support advocacy.	Prioritise using existing systems (national social system or community-based networks) if possible.	

Map community self-protection mechanisms, strategies, and actions implemented by communities at the onset of emergencies to mitigate and/or reduce the impact of protection risks affecting them.

<p>Analysis:</p> <p>Protection Risk Assessment/ Protection analysis</p>	<p>Conduct a secondary review of protection sources, and when relevant conduct a rapid protection risk assessment to gather data on context-specific threat, vulnerabilities and capacities of the population at risk.</p> <p>Undertake a rapid protection analysis to identify key protection risks, including those which require protection advocacy towards policy changes.</p> <p>Use protection analysis to inform protection advocacy and programmes</p>	<p>Protection analysis informs decisions and advocacy and will support longer-term solutions.</p> <p>Should be used by all CCs, not just PfV.</p>	<p>All CCs</p>
<p>Support and grants for local actors</p>	<p>Support identified local actors and networks in their protection efforts, including community-based organisations, to implement protection strategies mitigating protection risks.</p> <p>Include basic capacity strengthening activities to those local actors to support their longer-term capacity (protection & institutional capacity).</p> <p>Support those local actors in getting visibility in coordination structures to increase their funding opportunities and longer-term response capacity.</p> <p>Explore options to use flexible mini-grants or Group Cash Transfers to support local groups.</p>	<p>Strengthen existing capacity that will stay beyond the emergency response.</p>	<p>Cash & Market Systems, Partnerships</p>

Community / Household / Individual Level

Preparedness: local stakeholders	<p>Map key stakeholders: local authorities providing state services, and non-state actors (local civil society actors) with capacities in protection.</p> <p>Map humanitarian protection actors (national and international) - if possible together with the local protection coordination structures.</p> <p>Understand the response capacity (community, national, international, state, civil society).</p>	<p>Know your environment to be ready to respond and rather support existing systems.</p> <p>Know who the actors are who can intervene in case of emergency, and support the existing system.</p>	
Preparedness: civilian self-protection	<p>Understand community capacities, existing community self-protection strategies.</p> <p>Map local actors (community leaders, community-based organisations, civil society organisations) and their capacities.</p>	<p>Know who the actors are who can intervene in case of emergency, and support the existing system.</p>	
Preparedness: conflict-sensitive protection analysis	<p>Updated context and protection analysis (NRC own's analysis or using external one when possible); <i>if there is a significant change of circumstance the protection analysis must be updated.</i></p>	<p>Protection analysis informs NRC protection programmes, non-protection programmes and advocacy</p>	ICLA
Civilian self-protection	<p>Based on CSP criteria, select the most relevant community-based structure to initiate civilian self-protection activities.</p> <p>Build their capacity on civilian self-protection (<i>including community-led protection risk assessment, identification of positive and negative self-protection strategies, definition of self-protection strategies and/or plans</i>).</p>	<p><i>Civilian self-protection supports the prevention of protection risks, identifying actors, supporting their analysis and response capacity.</i></p> <p><i>CSP would predominantly maintain and support existing community capacities.</i></p> <p><i>How CSP is implemented is extremely context-specific: supporting the response capacity may require support from other CCs depending on the self-protection strategies/plan defined by the community.</i></p>	All CCs

Use funds or NFI to support the implementation of self-protection strategies. Be ready to facilitate access to other actors to increase community capacity.

Engage in capacity building to support the implementation of the self-protection strategies/plan.

Link with other CCs to implement the self-protection strategies/plan. Facilitate external engagement of community structures with local authorities or non-State actors, other national or international actors, as relevant.

Referral and access to specialist services

When possible building on existing services mapping, through coordination mechanisms and State services, referral to State and local specialised protection services when adequate and available.

Utilising existing services rather than setting up parallel delivery is likely more sustainable.

Possibly provide training to local actors on service mapping and safe and ethical referral.

Protection case management

Where there is functioning case management by State services or a strong civil society, NRC can train existing services on the protection risk approach, confidentiality, referral and other relevant thematics linked to Protection Case Management, as relevant.

Aiming to strengthen existing capacity in country.

ICLA

If NRC is working through a local partner, this would include capacity building and support in strengthening existing systems for Protection Case Management.

Protection monitoring

Collecting data on protection trends to inform protection analysis and advocacy not only for NRC but for all actors, possibly also State and local actors.