CHAPTER 7
CAMP SET-UP AND CLOSURE

CORE MANAGEMENT TASKS
CHAPTER 7 | CAMP SET-UP AND CLOSURE

The term camp is used throughout the text to apply to a variety of camps and camp-like settings which include planned camps, self-settled camps, collective centres, reception and transit centres, and evacuation centres.

KEY MESSAGES

- Camps are a last resort and should be established only when other solutions are neither feasible nor preferable. In most circumstances they form spontaneously. In any case they are meant to be a temporary solution.

- The raison d’être for Camp Management is to provide assistance and protection to displaced communities. National authorities are responsible for fulfilling these objectives at every stage with support from humanitarian actors. In certain contexts the national authorities have the role of the Camp Management Agency.

- Setting up and closing camps require a great deal of input from camp planners, technical staff, national authorities, the camp population and the host community. The role of the Camp Management Agency includes ensuring that all stakeholders are involved and participating in the set up and closure of the camp.

- The camp’s location, size, design and duration are context-specific. The location of a camp and how it is planned 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 and the Camp Management Agency’s task is more related to improvement of the present site.

- 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, infrastructure and assets.

- Situations resulting from conflict and natural disaster are often unpredictable. People often remain encamped far longer than initially planned. Future eventualities and different scenarios need to be anticipated at the set-up stage. This includes allowing scope for population growth, repairs and upgrades, sustainability of resources and impacts on surrounding communities.

- Proper set-up or improvement of camp conditions is essential to prevent such occurrences as gender-based violence (GBV), floods and social tensions. Failure in setting up basic support structures has serious impacts on accountability and proper management of a camp.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to provide the Camp Management Agency with insight into best practice in camp set-up/improvement and closure. It gives an overview of what is required to ensure camps are established with proper attention to site selection and site planning, that they are well maintained and that camp closure processes are developed early for the population’s protection and the management of the site and its assets. This chapter acts as a reminder to help the Camp Management Agency ensure that the right questions are being asked and that their role and responsibilities are clear.

The location 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, improves and ultimately closes down.

CAMPS AS A LAST RESORT

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 should be established only when other solutions are neither feasible nor preferable. This can especially be 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 national authorities, involved agencies, and the displaced populations, will consider all options available. All actors must bear in mind:

- the need for efficiency in providing goods and services
- concerns about protection and health risks
- risks of environmental degradation
- the psychosocial impact of life in a camp
- impacts on the surrounding community.

While camps are often set up with the expectation that they will be short-term, planning should always aim for longer-term needs, expansion and unexpected eventualities. 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 infrastructure, such as school buildings, community halls, roads, electricity cables or wells, may benefit local communities after the displaced population has returned. Conversely, buildings which have been degraded due to their temporary use as collective centres can have a negative impact on the local community. The eventual hand-over of such assets during camp closure should be defined and agreed with involved stakeholders from the outset. The planning of camp set-up/improvement and camp closure are interrelated from the beginning.

Although national authorities are ultimately responsible for camp set-up/improvement, and camp closure, the Camp Management Agency, with the support of the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, must ensure all actions taken during the camp cycle are comprehensive, inclusive, well-coordinated and uphold the rights of the displaced population. It is important to note that in some contexts, especially during natural disaster related displacement, the camp management and camp coordination roles are more and more being carried out by national authorities.

KEY ISSUES

CAMP SET-UP/IMPROVEMENT
SELF-SETTLED CAMPS/SPONTANEOUS CAMPS

Often people have already fled and reside in self-settled/spontaneous camps when the first humanitarian assistance arrives. It is then a question of improving what already exists. Self-settled/spontaneous camps are often situated on poor and possibly hazardous sites, or situated too close to areas of insecurity. Permission to use the site chosen is usually informal and requires renegotiation. They 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, surface water drainage and infrastructure such as schools, distribution centres, water supplies and recreational areas.

WHEN A SCHOOL IS NOT A SCHOOL

It is also common that buildings such as schools, warehouses, gymnasiums, factories, or local government facilities get used to temporarily house displaced populations. These are called collective centres and can either be self-settled or planned. Frequently there is pressure on internally displaced persons (IDPs) to vacate these temporary shelters before an adequate or alternative arrangement has been found. The Camp Management Agency should from the outset engage local government officials and other stakeholders on this issue.

Frequently schools are used to house IDPs after a disaster. There are many examples of this, such as the 2010 Thai floods, Cyclone Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013 and Tropical Cyclone Ian in Tonga in 2014. For the majority of a population, recovery starts the moment the storm passes. Some particularly vulnerable populations are unable to recover on their own and remain in collective centres.

As pressures mount to normalise the situation as soon as possible, it is common to find schools and other public buildings reopen for their normal purposes, leaving IDPs caught in the middle. The Camp Management Agency should ensure that:

→ the issue is brought to the attention of the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency
→ a unified position is developed and communicated to the host government and other stakeholders
→ host communities and local government are engaged and kept informed about the situation and plans to restart normal activities in facilities occupied by displaced people.

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. It is important to try to understand their motivations. There may be reasons, perhaps related to ethnicity or places of origin, why groups have settled in certain locations that may not be immediately apparent or which may seem irrational. It is better to discuss their reasons with them rather than forcing people to move. 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.

Reorganising will make management easier, more efficient, more participatory and safer. Urgent consideration must be given to relocation or reorganisation if the population is in imminent danger due to where they are settled or when protection issues arise as a result of how the camp area has been constituted. It is also important to determine who has the right to the land on which the self-settled camp is located and to understand what land-use arrangements, if any, have
been put in place.

The reorganisation of an existing camp may also happen due to new arrivals, as a result of relocation from another camp or due to decreased population because of return. The Camp Management Agency will assume the same responsibilities when reorganising a self-settled camp and follow identical standards as used for planned camps. This is still done with the aim of improving living conditions, services and protection.

PLANNED CAMPS
Generally, the camp set-up phase entails site selection and site planning. Ideally, sites are selected and planned before the arrival of the displaced population. In most cases, however, humanitarian actors arrive to find populations already settled and coping in whatever way they can. It is then more a question of improving existing conditions. In disaster-prone countries siting of the camp and several other preparedness activities can be planned and conducted in advance, in particular when displacement is seasonal, perhaps weather-related. These preparedness activities may include:

- building the capacity of national authorities
- establishing effective channels of communication with the local communities
- identifying land and buildings
- understanding issues around water, pastoral rights and access to arable land which may be used to host the displaced population
- pre-positioning of shelters (tents), food and non-food items.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD - IT CAN’T ALWAYS BE AN EMERGENCY, MOVING FROM RESPONSE TO PREPAREDNESS
Namibia is a disaster prone country that suffers from seasonal flooding and resultant seasonal displacement. Floods in 2011 were a turning point for the country’s response to this kind of displacement. The authorities recognised that camp planning and management is not just a question of emergency response, but requires seasonal planning and preparedness.

In 2011, approximately 17,000 individuals moved to camps after the floods. A government-led joint rapid assessment found that camp management was a critical gap. Recognising that this was a seasonal issue, it was decided that the focus had to be both on immediately providing adequate management and also strengthening the country’s capacity to manage displacement. This needed an effective and efficient way to empower local actors to respond to similar challenges in the future. A Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) capacity building programme was implemented for national authorities and other key disaster risk management actors.

The strategy was based on a targeted CCCM assessment identifying specific gaps and challenges and contained:

- contextualised training package and tools
- national level advocacy campaign
- basic CCCM training for the immediate response
- subsequent training of trainers for building CCCM capacity in the long term.

Within six months the country had created its own cadre of CCCM trainers in key institutions at national, regional and local levels. In 2012, this cadre trained over 1,600 camp responders.

Namibia remains disaster-prone and still faces the risk of seasonal displacement. With the lessons learned from 2011 and the continuous efforts to strengthen CCCM as an integral part of disaster risk management, for the short and long-term, the country is now better prepared for future disasters displacement.

SITE SELECTION FOR PLANNED CAMPS
The selection of a camp site is dependent on many 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, choosing a site involves consideration of access, coexistence with surrounding communities, the geology and topography, trees and vegetation, the potential impact on the environment, environmental causes of disease and other public health issues. Sites are sometimes allocated on the basis of being land or structures of low value
and hence less suitable than elsewhere. The Camp Management Agency and the Cluster/Sector Lead should advocate for the best solution available, taking into consideration standards, resources and cultural and social issues.

**HAZARD MAPPING**
The first consideration in site selection is safety from hazards, for example floods, hurricane and earthquakes. Thus integrating hazard mapping is required. Sites are often made available for displaced communities simply because they are initially inappropriate for human habitation.

For more information on hazards, see Chapter 12, Safety and Security.

**SPECIFIC SITE SELECTION CONSIDERATIONS FOR COLLECTIVE CENTRES**
When setting up collective centres it is crucial, with expert help, to consider:

- Conditions of the building, such as water and sanitation solutions within or outside the building, the state of electrical wiring and fuses and cooking and heating facilities
- Characteristics of the building: existing or possible to create separation/privacy of living units and communal areas. Enclosed spaces must have proper dimensions for their intended use
- Use of the building: if currently used for education or healthcare the impacts on current use should be considered. If unused, such as inactive hotels, warehouses or factories, they may be structurally unsound
- Ownership of the building: privately owned structure, often with high risk of eviction and forced secondary displacement, state or social ownership in general is an appropriate option. If collectively owned, often the management structure may become an obstacle
- Size: for buildings with under a 100 residents access for humanitarian can be more problematic, but generally there is a higher social solidarity and lower security of gender based violence (GBV). For large collective centres with over 100 resident, humanitarian assistance can be provided to high number of residents, but there might be higher security and GBV risks and reduced solidarity
- Duration of use: in case of long term displacement, potential for increasing living space should be considered.

Adapted from Chapter 8, Collective Centre Set-Up, Collective Centre Guidelines, page 58.

**Location**

**Security**
A camp’s location could enhance or jeopardise the protection of displaced populations. Protective factors include host communities with strong ties to the displaced population, proximity to responsible security forces and ample resources. Negative factors include proximity to hostile communities, proximity to rebel bases and areas where there are already strained resources. Preferably 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 hazards. In addition, when a camp is located near mined areas, intensive mine awareness should be conducted for the camp population by the Camp Management Agency or other specialised agencies.

For more information on security, see Chapter 12, Safety and Security.

**Access**
Sites must be easily accessible in all seasons in order to ensure the regular provision of relief supplies, mobility to pursue livelihoods and access to essential services such as healthcare. When the camp is near to services which existed prior to the camp being established, negotiations will be required with the national authorities and the community to ensure that the camp population has equal access.

**Environmental Impact**
Sites should not 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. Distance from areas of particular importance for religious or traditional festivals, monuments, historic buildings, memorial sites and cemeteries should also be considered.

Some issues are not as easy to identify. In areas where space is scarce, it is likely that the site has been abandoned or never used for a good reason such as the presence of landmines, contamination, natural hazards like flooding and landslides, or contested ownership. Advice should be sought from local planning offices, demining agencies, rural development institutions and agricultural ministries.

Dealing with waste, solid or liquid, is another main concern, although many solid wastes are 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 collective centres existing sanitation facilities should be assessed and strengthened if required since they were likely not designed to support the population subsequently utilising them.

For more information on waste disposal, see Chapter 14, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.
Consideration needs to be given to grazing, water and space required for potentially large herds of livestock that may accompany displaced persons. Their herds can potentially be a source of conflict with local communities as large uncontrolled numbers of livestock can quickly lead to competition for scarce resources, soil compaction and erosion. Basic infrastructure to slaughter animals might need to be considered based on local norms, religious requirements and potential risks to public health.

Raising awareness regarding some of the most common recurring environmental issues of communal living 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.

☞ For more information on environment, see Chapter 6, Environment.

### Conditions

#### Size

According to the Sphere Project the minimum space required per capita is 45m², including roads and footpaths, communal cooking areas, educational facilities, recreational areas, sanitation, firebreaks, administration, water storage, distribution areas, markets, storage and limited kitchen gardens for individual households. Where the communal services are provided by already existing facilities outside the camp the minimum surface area is 30m² for each person. According to UNHCR Handbook in Emergencies the recommended minimum surface area per person is 30m² 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, 45m² is considered the minimum per capita.

In general, camp populations should not exceed 20,000 to ensure proper provision of services and social cohesion. However, large-scale displacement and/or a lack of suitable land may require that camps accommodate significantly more individuals, in which case new neighbourhoods should be developed. An absolute maximum population size should be determined and made clear to the national authorities early on and when a certain trigger point is reached, such as 75 per cent 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 cent per year. It is important to keep in mind that populations in high density sites are exposed to many additional hazards, as well as risks of psychosocial distress.

### Geology and Topography

A gentle slope with a gradient of between two and six per cent will facilitate natural drainage and agricultural activities. Flat sites may have drainage problems and lead to the accumulation of standing water and thus become breeding grounds for disease-carrying vectors such as mosquitoes. Areas with a gradient greater than six per cent 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, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.

Soils which easily absorb surface water 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.

### Availability of Resources - Water, Fuelwood and Construction Materials

The availability of water is likely to be the most important criteria in determining a site's suitability. Short supply can cause outbreaks of disease and death, as well as conflict. Before a site is selected, it is important to calculate the estimated daily water needs of the camp.

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 heavy metals contamination, which warrants specific testing.

☞ For more information on standards and indicators for water supply, see Chapter 14, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene.
Fuel for cooking and/or heating is another important resource to be considered. A survey may be required to assess expected cooking and heating needs of the population, especially if wood is the main fuel source. It is important to understand the capacity of the local environment or economy to meet firewood needs. 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.

**Fuelwood Use**

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

**Fuel Wood and Sexual Violence**

In insecure environments, fetching fuel wood 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, including introduction of fuel-saving stoves, which can help to minimise this problem, are outlined in Chapter 6, Environment.

The availability of construction materials should be assessed when selecting a site. It must be determined what materials are traditionally used, their availability at the new site or, if those materials are not available, what the alternatives are.

If assessments show that it will not be environmentally destructive, the Camp Management Agency should organise the procurement of building materials from the host community. This will likely be more efficient than if the displaced population gather materials themselves. Such a scheme can also cut costs and build a good relationship with the host community by offering them economic support. If, however, this is not possible, 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.

**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. Tree and vegetation planting should also be planned and encouraged.

**Environmental and Disease Risks**

Sites 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 national authorities can help prevent or at least predict environmental risks.

Some health risks such as malaria or river blindness may not be immediately evident. Health agencies involved in the Site Development Committee (SDC) should visit local clinics to identify possible health risks typical for the area.

For more information on health-related issues, see Chapter 16, Health Care and Nutrition.

**Use of Geographic Information System (GIS) 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 metres. This then shows which sections of the camps are not meeting minimum standards for access to water.

GIS is a powerful tool with capacity to map detailed demographic information where groups or individuals live in the camp. 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.

In addition, GIS is very useful in determining risks and analysing the geomorphology of locations.

For more information on environmental, see Chapter 6, Environment.
Cultural and Social Issues
The cultural and social context of the displaced population is an important factor in site selection. They are often considered as second priority when national authorities are urgently identifying a suitable site.

Camp staff must understand the disorientation or stress a community may experience upon relocation to a new and unfamiliar area, as well as understand the stress a surrounding community may also face. Examples include:

- pastoral groups now forced to live in a communal environment
- formerly urban populations who now find themselves living in a semi-rural camp environment
- relatively well-off communities now sharing cramped accommodation in a collective centre
- ethnically, religiously, or geographically different groups now sharing space and resources.

It is important to ensure that the displaced community provide input on how the layout of the site can be made as culturally and socially appropriate as possible. This should allow for familiar norms, behaviours and rituals to continue in the camp. Where appropriate, there should be psychosocial support and training for camp staff.

There may be competition over resources between displaced and host communities but they often mutually benefit through business, labour exchange and trade. Particular caution should be taken where camps are created due to ethnically-fuelled conflicts. Overwhelmingly large camps should not be placed next to smaller host communities. An assessment of the host community’s capacity to cope with the camp should be done as camp size, composition and requirements change.

Livelihood options for camp residents should be considered during site selection. Options could include vegetable gardens, small-scale farming, animal husbandry, handicraft making, shop-keeping, provision of services and, most importantly, trade or job opportunities in the local community. Many camps are not situated in rural areas and the reality of livelihoods in a collective centre is different than where there is access to land. Camp residents, frequently originating from rural areas, may be unable to adapt to the urban labour market or access apprenticeships and vocational training opportunities, wage employment or self-employment opportunities within the host community.

For more information on livelihoods, see Chapter 18, Livelihoods.

Availability of Land or Buildings
Different stakeholders often have their own interests in identifying certain sites and avoiding others. Consequently, displaced populations can be settled in isolated, remote or otherwise inappropriate sites purportedly for reasons such as security or avoiding conflict over local resources.

Once a possible site is identified, it is important to clarify landownership and land rights. In some countries these rights may not be documented, or the land may be held under customary rights. In these instances it is important to involve local communities and leaders. Traditional land-use rights are highly sensitive. The validity of a formal agreement with national authorities to use a site may be contested by both displaced and host community leaders. Often, sites are provided on public land by the national authority. However, if the land is privately owned, the national authorities should also take the lead in negotiating compensation for the owners. Any use of private land must be based on formal legal arrangements made by the state and in accordance with national laws. Most refugee and IDP operations last longer than initially planned. Therefore it is important to secure the land for a long period of time, which might require including a renewal clause in the agreement, in order to avoid future relocation of the camp.

Site identification will usually be based on a compromise between the interests of all stakeholders. Some potential conflicts over land or buildings may be seasonal and not immediately apparent during assessment, including access needs for seasonal pastoral herd movement or the school calendar. Some key questions to be asked are:

1. If the site or the building is not already being used for settlement, why not?
2. If the site or the building is being used for some purpose (grazing fields, schools, health centres), what will happen if a camp is set up instead? In the case of a building, where will the previous activities continue and what will be the social, political, security and economic consequences if these activities cannot occur elsewhere?
3. In the case of a building, can the structure be modified and how authorisation to do so can be obtained?

HAZARDOUS SITES/BUILDINGS
When selecting a site for shelter purposes, the following sites/buildings must be avoided if they are:

- prone to disasters associated with natural hazards such as floods or landslides
- affected by environmental degradation, for example deforestation or decrease of water sources
- contaminated by industrial pollution such as soils polluted by chemicals or improper containment of wastes causing leakage into groundwater and waterways
- high health risks, for example school buildings located near open air defecation sites or mosquito-infested swamps
- close to risks of landmines and other explosives such as unexploded ordnances (UXOs) or explosive remnants of war (ERWs).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) may be prepared wherever possible by the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency and the national authorities to outline all agreements, as well as the rights and responsibilities of all parties regarding the establishment of a camp. All issues pertaining to the establishment of a camp should be fully discussed with the host community so that there is a common understanding of what the camp community needs and their impact. The host community’s
national and local protocols, including norms and values, should also be articulated.

If possible, the Camp Management Agency should participate in preparing the MoU and should always have a copy available. Additionally, the Camp Management Agency should make sure that its staff and the camp population understand what is outlined in the MoU. The document should be translated into the local language and shared with the concerned populations using different means to ensure that all groups in the displaced population have equal access to this information.

**SITE PLANNING**

The Cluster/Sector Lead Agency may likely form a committee, often called the Site Development Committee (SDC), involving all relevant stakeholders and technical experts. Even as different sites are being considered and the legal issues worked out, the SDC must start to plan the actual camp.

**RENT AND PURCHASE OF LAND**

Renting or buying land or buildings to host displaced populations may have a negative impact on vulnerable households who are not displaced and renting their accommodation. They may be evicted from their lodging by opportunist owners wanting to obtain higher rents from the humanitarian community. It may also have negative long-term consequences for the local land and housing market. Instead, land or buildings should be provided with the fully informed consent of national authorities and stakeholders.

**ONE APPROACH - STARTING WITH THE PHYSICAL SITE**

The first stage with any site planning or re-planning is to identify and then calculate the available usable space, and hence population density. This is done by clearly defining the perimeter and removing any areas within the site that should not be used on account of flood risk, gradient or any other hazards or existing infrastructure. Often sites are too small for the intended populations and time is required to advocate for either additional space or secondary sites. If a site is too dense it will have significant impacts on the health, security, privacy and dignity of those living within it.

Once perimeters are established site planning should then focus on contours, drainage and access plans, establishing zones of use and a road system which will often double as a system of fire breaks.

In the case of a site that has already been settled, a decision needs to be taken as to whether it should be upgraded within the existing settlement — by negotiating enhanced access, drainage and services within the existing site — or whether a full re-planning exercise is required, sequentially moving all households within the site.

For new sites this is the time to think about plot sizes and community layout.

For collective centres, fire access, security features such as walls/barriers on higher floors and basic infrastructure cleaning and finishing may well have to be fitted or retro-fitted. Again, once the basic services are in place, individual family subdivisions may be provided.

**Another approach - Starting with the Family**

The key to effective site planning is starting with the smallest building blocks of the camp — the individual and household. This will ensure that critical issues such as spacing and services will be adequately addressed.

Using the decentralised community approach, the SDC would first discuss with the community at the smallest unit, usually a family or a household, and then expand to those they normally relate to and live near, until a clear pattern evolves. For new sites UNHCR’s handbook recommends a U-shaped or H-shaped cluster pattern. For collective centres, defining how to create privacy within larger rooms housing multiple families will be required. Family units may be surrounded by shared facilities such as latrines, wash/laundry areas or recreation and meeting spaces.

The table below shows an example of how family units can be 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 other factors such as different groups occupying the same camp.

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COMMUNITY BUILDING BLOCKS (MODIFIED FROM UNHCR EMERGENCY HANDBOOK 2007)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smaller units</th>
<th>Larger units</th>
<th>Approximate no. of people per unit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 family or household</td>
<td>1 community</td>
<td>80 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 families or households</td>
<td>1 block</td>
<td>1,250 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 communities</td>
<td>1 sector</td>
<td>5,000 people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 blocks</td>
<td>1 camp</td>
<td>20,000 people</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ADDRESS SYSTEMS

As the general layout of the camp becomes clear, an address system should also be developed. This should allow identification of sectors and blocks, down to family shelters in order to facilitate planning. Eventually, this becomes critical to identifying persons with specific needs and community leaders. 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…)

Communities are generally skipped in the address system so that addresses do not consist of too many divisions. Thus a family’s individual shelter may be 3-C-54 (Sector 3, Block C, House 54).

While 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 persons, small children and babies, those with impaired mobility and others at heightened risk, such as women. The Camp Management Agency must identify those coping mechanisms and help support them. Likewise, the Camp Management Agency must work with protection agencies to identify and fill gaps in provision for those who may be especially vulnerable or whose specific needs are not being adequately cared for. 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 this is discouraged as it isolates these groups and leave them without the protection of the community at large.

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.

Site assessments should 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, firebreaks and possible expansion areas and assess the sustainable use or possible overuse of local natural resources.

The following table can be referenced for general guidance with regards to communal camp-wide features. These are merely for reference, as other sector chapters carry more specific information that experts need when planning and constructing individual features. While national standards will be used in some cases, these are taken from Sphere, UNHCR, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United States Agency for International Development Field Operations Guide (USAID FOG).
### GUIDELINES FOR SITE PLANNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of facility</th>
<th>No./person</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Camp Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Open Space</td>
<td>30–45 m² per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covered Space</td>
<td>3.5 m² per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firebreaks</td>
<td>50 metres of empty space every 300 metres of built-up area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Points</td>
<td>1 per 80-500 people depending on type and flow rate</td>
<td>100-500 metres from any one dwelling; gravity-fed systems on higher ground</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per household to 1 per 20-50 people</td>
<td>6-50 metres away from house if too far away won’t be used, 30 m from water sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing Facilities</td>
<td>1 per 100-250 people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting in - sanitation areas - on walking paths - in child-friendly spaces</td>
<td></td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse Bins</td>
<td>2 per community</td>
<td>1 100-litre per 10 families where not buried, 100 metres from communal areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Living Areas</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covered Space</td>
<td>3.5 m² per person</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firebreaks</td>
<td>50 metres of empty space every 300 metres of built-up area</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refuse Bins</td>
<td>2 per community</td>
<td>1 100-litre per 10 families where not buried, 100 metres from communal areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Care Facilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Hospital</td>
<td>1 per 10 camps (200,000 people)</td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Centre</td>
<td>1 per camp (20,000 people)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 10-20 beds and 1 per 20-50 outpatients</td>
<td>Centralised, but with adequate access for ambulances and other transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Waste Facilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding Centres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeding Centre</td>
<td>1 per camp (20,000 people)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 20-50 adults and 1 per 10-20 children</td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Schools</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Block</td>
<td>1 per sector (5,000 people)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Size Guidelines:</td>
<td>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</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-primary Classes</td>
<td>Up to 40 students=1m³/student; up to 48 students=0.74m³/student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes 1-3</td>
<td>Up to 40 students=1m³/student; up to 48 students=0.83m³/student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes 4-6</td>
<td>Up to 40 students=1m³/student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tent Class-room Guideline:</td>
<td>55 square meter tent can accommodate 40-45 children</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 30 girls and 1 per 60 boys</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Markets</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Market</td>
<td>1 per camp (20,000 people)</td>
<td>On higher ground to facilitate walking with heavy items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 20-50 stalls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution Points</strong></td>
<td>Distribution Point</td>
<td>4 per camp (20,000 people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Graveyards</strong></td>
<td>Graveyard</td>
<td>30 metres from groundwater sources; determine if space is available within host community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reception/ Transit Areas</strong></td>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 50 people (3:1 female to male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration Areas</strong></td>
<td>Including offices for government authorities/security, UN agencies, NGOs, meeting areas and warehouses tracing service</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latrines</td>
<td>1 per 20 staff</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>To promote protection, ensure safety and permit use of the facilities at night</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIGHTING IN CAMPS
Communal lighting is often needed and installed for a variety of purposes in camps. Lighting improves the usability of facilities at night, and promotes protection through a sense of physical security from people with bad intentions or wildlife. Wherever reasonable, lighting should be provided at key locations such as sanitation facilities, entrance/exit locations and main junctions/areas, roads and pathways, camp offices and medical centres. In all cases these installations need to be developed according to a plan, with budgets for long-term maintenance.

At household level, personal handheld lighting is often provided. It should be noted that handheld lights have a variety of uses and should complement well planned interventions and referral systems aimed at reducing GBV.

Some higher cost solar lighting units also provide opportunities to charge mobile phones.

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 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 persons committing crimes. A balance must be found between privacy and protection and quick access to emergency vehicles and good lines of sight for security patrols. All roads and pathways need to be cleared of surrounding bushes.

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. There may be a more rapid turnover of population or more abandoned shelters. In both cases, the different security risks need to be analysed and mitigated.

Communal, Commercial and Recreational Areas
Open spaces and recreation fields, general meeting areas and spaces for religious gatherings should be identified. Sufficient space should be considered for current and future market requirements. Children and adolescents need sufficient playgounds 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 animal husbandry. Livestock should be outside the camp to minimise 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 transmission of disease to local herds.

An approach must be developed with the national authorities and the local community to engage camp residents to the extent possible. If camp residents focus on agriculture, 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.

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, pressure to vacate a building or land, 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.

CAMP SET-UP/IMPROVEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES
The responsibilities of the Camp Management Agency involve both site selection and site planning activities as outlined above.

It is primarily the responsibility of national authorities to identify a site in which a camp should be located in order to ensure that the displaced populations enjoy exclusive rights to use selected sites. In most scenarios the national 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 about site selection criteria, which can determine structural suitability, safety considerations or technical requirements for water and sanitation services. The Camp Management Agency might also come across housing, land and property issues in connection with the site selection, water, pastoral and agricultural access for the camp population. Very often it can be difficult to determine who has the right to the land and also to establish the boundaries of the site.

The Cluster/Sector Lead Agency usually discusses with and supports national authorities in partnership with other key
stakeholders, including the Camp Management Agency. They should be able to advise and comment on technical assessments and advocate for the needs and rights of the camp population. When the SDC is established, it should ideally consist of the Camp Management Agency, the planning and surveying national authorities, service-delivery agencies, technical experts, UN agencies, security forces, host community leaders and representatives of the displaced population. This will create the highest feeling of ownership for all involved.

During the camp set-up/improvement the Camp Management Agency should:

- contribute to the SDC with its professional expertise on issues of planning and set-up
- assist the Cluster/Sector 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
- ensure continuous monitoring of how the camp set-up/improvement is working for the residents, staff and host community, adapting and coordinating as necessary
- facilitate the contribution of displaced persons and their hosts to site selection, camp planning or improvement. Failure to include these groups can lead to poor relations, unrest, and even violence. As much as possible, women, minorities and groups at risk or with specific needs should be represented on the SDC
- support and coordinate the construction, repair and upgrading of shelters, infrastructure and facilities with due regard to security and cultural considerations and gender segregation
- plan for the effective distribution of goods and services. This will require an understanding of livelihoods, cooking and hygiene practices
- develop a shared understanding at the planning stage of how distribution centres, social buildings and infrastructure such as roads, culverts and drainage channels will be used, managed and maintained.

CAMP CLOSURE
The closure of a camp is a context-specific process. It can take place for a variety of reasons, and in a diversity of ways or stages ranging 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. It may sometimes be the case that while 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. It may also simply return to its previous function.

Whatever the circumstances around camp closure, careful planning and extensive coordination is crucial and should be carried out by the Camp Management Agency in collaboration with national authorities and other key stakeholders. Together they should ensure substantive participation of the camp and host populations in the process.

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.

CHALLENGING PHASE
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 exiting or have already left. It can also be a time when budgets and resources are low. 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 ensure for assistance and protection of the community and the management of the site in its final days.

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. As mentioned in Chapter 1, there are three types of durable solutions:

- return to place of origin
- local integration into the community where the displaced population has taken refuge
- resettlement in another part of the country or into another country.

The Camp Management Agency, in coordination with the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, plays a facilitating role in conducting training and/or disseminating information at the camp level concerning durable solutions, the right to voluntary return and the corresponding duties of the national authorities. States have the primary duty to establish conditions which allow displaced persons to benefit from durable solutions voluntarily, and in safety, security and dignity.
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 accurate, objective and updated information about the situation in their country or areas of origin, displacement and/or resettlement. Voluntary return is often spontaneous. 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 national authorities and humanitarian agencies when conditions for return are considered conducive.

Voluntary return or repatriation, ensuring compliance with the necessary preconditions of 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. These need to be 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.

While there is no universally accepted concept of the term dignity, in practice it means that the needs, 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 national authorities and the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, to advocate for the conditions for an appropriate voluntary return 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. This 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. When necessary, special considerations 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, planting seasons, and the economic viability at the place of origin.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD - PROTRACTED DISPLACEMENT AFTER NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE PHILIPPINES, 2014

Quite often after a natural disaster, the vast majority of a displaced population returns to their place or origin within days or even within hours in order to begin the recovery process. Those who do not return shortly after an event may have an impediment to self-recovery which needs to be identified and resolved. Post natural disaster experience in the Philippines shows that:

- Individuals or families may be extremely vulnerable and require more substantial assistance than simply the receipt of humanitarian assistance such as a shelter kit
- Families may have been informal settlers and agricultural workers previously living on farms or plantations that have been destroyed, thus removing livelihood opportunities
- Families may not have been home owners but rented land and are not given permission to rebuild in previous places of residence
- Groups of families, perhaps comprising the entire population of a collective centre, lived in a location now deemed a no-rebuild zone, thus making it far more difficult for them to receive recovery support at that location.

Each one of these issues must be understood and durable solutions need to be identified. Solutions for these particular caseloads need to be prioritised by the Cluster Lead Agency and national authorities. It is the responsibility of the Camp Management Agency to first understand impediments to return and communicate them to the appropriate authorities.

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

Spontaneous return may be triggered by changes in the home areas or in the areas of displacement. Vulnerable populations seeking to return should be prioritised, while ensuring that protection and assistance continues for those who do not return.

Displaced people may decide to return or depart for other areas even when conditions en route or at the selected destination are insecure. The Camp Management Agency should aim to identify motivations for return or departure. This may highlight other issues, such as political or military motivations or increased tensions. It may 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.

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

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**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 advocate in close coordination with the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency and other actors. Forced return or relocation calls for strong international responses and interventions. Relocation of displaced people may be necessary in certain circumstances. Any relocation process of displaced people must, at all times, take place under similar conditions of voluntariness, safety, security and dignity.

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**VOICE FROM THE FIELD - MOVEMENT AND VOLUNTARY RETURN IN NORTHERN UGANDA: A REPORT BY HUMAN RIGHTS FOCUS**

After being displaced by the Lord’s Liberation Army, displaced Acholi want to go home, and are doing so despite a lack of water, roads, building materials, tools and information. Voluntary return is a right enshrined in Uganda’s National IDP Policy which affirms state commitment to promote the right of IDPs to return voluntarily, in safety and dignity, to their homes or places of habitual residence. It is 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. In order to support voluntary return:

- the government needs to unambiguously state that forced displacement is over for good
- the government needs to guarantee the right to voluntary return and provide clear and consistent messages to this effect
- the government and IGOs/NGOs must avoid doing anything, intentionally or unintentionally, that might hinder people from or bias people against returning home
- a regular professional police presence should be established in all the districts inhabited by Acholi people to deal with crime and other threats
- focus should be on restoration of service provision and rehabilitation of infrastructure, in particular water and roads, rather than emergency aid to displaced populations
- IDPs need to be provided with accurate information about security, infrastructure, service provision and food aid distribution in order to effectively plan their return
- the accountability of aid providers to aid recipients should be ensured. Open discussions among IDPs/IGOs/NGOs and national authorities in public meetings should be the basis for the engagement of humanitarian actors with the community.

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**PHASE-OUT AND EXIT OF THE CAMP MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

In some situations the Camp Management Agency and other service providers may withdraw and the camp may continue to exist.

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. The Camp Management Agency should ensure all stakeholders are involved and working to support the decision. Careful planning and coordination between national authorities and other stakeholders in the exit phase is crucial, especially in meeting the protection and assistance needs of the residual population.
Examples of conditions for Camp Management Agency’s exit strategy could include:

- identification of durable solutions which can be implemented
- camp residents no longer needing the coordinated support and protection by the Camp Management Agency
- 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 categories of aid workers putting the population at more risk of harm than proportionate risk warrants
- another transitional settlement solution is required.

The Camp Management Agency needs to liaise with the national authorities and other stakeholders for the promotion of protection and future provision for the remaining camp population.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD - HANDOVER OF CAMP MANAGEMENT TO NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, 2011

After seven years of operating a camp in Burundi, and a year-long evaluation, the Camp Management Agency decided that emergency operations were effectively over and it was time to transfer camp management operations, including service provision, to other actors. They then:

- defined the exact activities and responsibilities to be handed over
- established a clear handover plan signed by all stakeholders. This included clear goals and measurable criteria, specific timelines and consultations with the camp population. This document served as the blueprint for the handover process, covering issues related to human resources, transfer of materials and infrastructure, observation missions and documentation
- drafted handover documents for each partner/activity. These highlighted key challenges and lessons learnt and provided references to all relevant tools and documentation
- provided training and capacity building. National authorities were trained in camp management through formal and informal sessions
- provided technical support during an overlap period. Senior camp management staff remained available for consultation by partners after the completion of the handovers.

Challenges encountered included reduced monitoring capacity and limited funding to retain experienced staff, but in general the handover process was well received by the camp population, partners and national authorities. Handover was deemed highly successful, both at the end of the transition period and after an assessment mission conducted two years later. Contributing factors included:

- support through appointment of an exit coordinator: A staff member with dedicated responsibility to design, implement and monitor the process over the course of one year
- sufficient timing: Exit and handover was identified over two years before the event, allowing sufficient time to transfer knowledge, build capacity and ensure a smooth transition
- dedication, motivation and ownership of national authorities: National authorities were very open and willing to learn and supported a transparent recruitment process for new staff
- retention of original camp management staff: Around half of the original camp management staff was rehired by national authorities, providing experience and institutional memory to ensure continuity.
CAMP CLOSURE RESPONSIBILITIES
The responsibilities of a Camp Management Agency during phase-out and closure of the camp is operating in include:

- planning for exit and closure from the beginning
- assessing the voluntariness of return or resettlement
- coordinating and ensuring the participation of all stakeholders
- implementing information campaigns
- promoting protection of persons with specific needs and groups at risk
- administrating and terminating contracts and agreements
- managing documentation and data deregistering
- considering environmental issues
- distributing or decommissioning camps assets
- promoting protection of any people staying behind.

Planning for Exit and Closure from the Beginning
Planning for exit and closure of the camp is as an integral part of the set-up process. Handover plans and agreements with national authorities 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.

The Camp Management Agency must ensure from the beginning that the camp population is aware that the camp is a temporary measure and is focused on identifying durable solutions. The active development of participation, skills and self-management strategies within the displaced community can help to decrease their dependence and reduce vulnerability, and thereby empowering the camp population to retain and develop independence and self-reliance.

Assessing the Voluntariness of Return or Resettlement
Return must be voluntary, informed, dignified, and sustainable. The Camp Management Agency must facilitate voluntary return promptly while having a strong understanding of the impediments to return in order to ensure that vulnerable populations are not forgotten during a return process.

Voluntary choice 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 national authorities, the Cluster/Sector Lead Agencies and other humanitarian stakeholders to verify 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. Various forums, such as youth, women’s and older persons’ committees should be promoted to discuss motivations for return. Social media may be an appropriate tool and focus group meetings could identify motivations and possible push and pull factors.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD - INFORMED RETURN IN PAKISTAN
In Pakistan during 2009, large scale military operations occurred in Malakand Division in the north-western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. After the operations the government identified certain areas as fit for return. A significant portion of the population began to return but others could or would not and became protracted. A Returns Task Force, made up of representatives from the international community, local organisations and the government sought to define and confirm that returns were organised and that those who returned did so sustainably, voluntarily, in dignity, while being kept informed.

It was critical to let everyone know the schedules of free transport to areas deemed safe to return. Bus schedules were printed in local press and radio ads were run. Local leaders were notified in advance. Thus those lacking literacy were still aware of plans and services.

Coordinating and Ensuring the Participation of all Stakeholders
Ensuring participation and coordination among all stakeholders in the camp during its closure is the Camp Management Agency’s responsibility. This 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, with a focus on identifying durable solutions.

A working group should be established. Roles should be clear and, where necessary, formalised. Coordination meetings should function as a forum for continued sharing of information on the voluntary nature of the return.

Dialogue with the national authorities on return issues should be initiated as soon as possible. The national authorities should at all times be part of coordination mechanisms in camps, such as the working group on return. The Camp Management Agency may initiate or conduct trainings and workshops for the camp population and, as appropriate, for others including national civil servants interested in protection concerns specifically related to voluntary return. Workshops may cover gender-specific issues, the concept of voluntary return, the IDP Guiding Principles related to return, resettlement and reintegration and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons.

The Camp Management Agency has a responsibility to work closely with the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency and advocate with service providers and their donors to provide appropriate reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction assistance. Where possible, cross-border programmes at the place of origin of the displaced should be initiated by the Cluster/Sector Lead Agencies and supported by the Camp Management Agency. They may provide information on community
needs, and facilitate linkages between relief, early recovery and longer-term development.

Implementing 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 ranging from the situation at the place of origin to what shelter materials, documentation and other assets they should take when they leave. The content, frequency, and format of information disseminated should be developed in partnership with the affected population.

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

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.

Information on return procedures and transportation arrangements needs to be disseminated and responsibilities should be defined and put in writing. Information on the return process must be disseminated in ways that allow 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, non-accompanied children, older persons 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
- schedules, 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.

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 References section.

Promoting Protection of Persons with Specific Needs and Groups at Risk

Special referral systems for vulnerable individuals or groups should be available throughout the return process. Individual tailored solutions may be required for people with special needs. Persons with special needs should be encouraged to return in groups of extended family members, women or groups of families accustomed to living together.

The Camp Management Agency must ensure that departure zones have a separate area designated for groups at risk and their family members. Security during departure is a responsibility of the national 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.

Appropriate arrangements for unaccompanied children must be established. The mandated national authorities and/or the lead agency on child protection are equally responsible for ensuring care of unaccompanied children upon arrival. The different roles between the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, protection agencies and the Camp Management Agency should be formalised and clear to all.

VOICE FROM THE FIELD - GO-AND-SEE VISITS

Planning Go-and-See visits is an activity through which camp residents exercise their right to participate in and be informed about the return process. Such confidence-building activities should be well-planned. Feeding back information about Go-and-See visits provides a chance for established camp committees to play a key role in chairing meetings and disseminating information 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. Post-visit dissemination of the information is as important as the visit itself.

Facilitating camp-wide information campaigns on return is a Camp Management Agency’s responsibility, in close collaboration with the national 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, phones, videos, schools and educational facilities and religious institutions. In reaching out to different groups, existing in-camp committees and women’s groups should be approached individually. Schools and teacher-parent associations are ways to reach children, providing the opportunity to raise questions and express their aspirations and insecurities about return.

For more information on mine risk and mine risk education, see the International Mine Action Best Practice Guidebook in the References section.

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RETURN OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

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. Family support in return for fostering may cease to continue. This may cause a family to separate from the child upon or after return.

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

Administering and Terminating Contracts and Agreements

At a minimum, contracts and agreements that are developed need to be in accordance with the rules of the Camp Management Agency, national law and policies and International Labor Organization’s standards. They need to be written so that they are clearly understood by all parties. A good contract or agreement should:

- be fair to all sides. Following this simple rule will result in both parties wanting to achieve their commitments and resolve issues
- be clear. Don’t get lost in complexity, but agree on what should be achieved
- clearly communicate risks
- include a documented process for addressing grievances
- include planning for various camp closure scenarios and exit strategies
- ensure that lease agreements for housing, land and property assets are terminated in accordance with the law
- follow the above rules when terminating contracts and agreements to ensure that the termination process is understood from the beginning. The Camp Management Agency should make sure that the termination process is in line with local laws to prevent prolonged debate and possible litigation.

Managing Documentation and Data

Population Data

The national authorities, the Cluster/Sector 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. 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. During 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 in the best interests of the concerned individuals. Confidentiality must be kept at all times. Correct data have to be provided to such ministries as immigration, education and health in order to ensure that the returning displaced population is able to obtain proper identification documents, access to education, health care and basic social services. 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. Medical records should remain with the displaced during transfer.

Administrative Documents

Norms of sound accounting practice require operational reports, MoUs (including all annexes), books of accounts and other financial records to be kept for at least five years. A lessons-learned document should also be produced, relating the camp’s history, how successes were achieved and challenges addressed.

For more information on how to manage information, see Chapter 5, Information Management.

Deregistering

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 and which confirm each individual has given her/his consent. 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.
Considering Environmental Issues

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 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. Ahead of camp closure there should be an assessment of the extent and condition of infrastructure and existing services, such as water pumping and treatment facilities. This should involve community members and local authorities. 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 national authorities. Livelihood security options should be encouraged as part of any rehabilitation programme. All rehabilitation initiatives require funding. This need not necessarily be expensive. 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. They may wish to see the site remain as it currently is rather than revert to its previous state. 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.

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 environment issues, see Chapter 6, Environment.

Distributing or Decommissioning Camp Assets

The Camp Management Agency is responsible for ensuring that all material assets in the camp are distributed through inclusive and transparent processes that are both context dependent and coordinated with all stakeholders. Shelters are often dismantled by families who take with them such valuable materials as non-food items given in distributions, cooking pots or blankets. Water tanks may be collected by service providers. Electrical wiring may need to be safely removed 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 national 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.

Promoting Protection of any People Staying Behind

Those remaining temporarily behind in a camp which is largely empty may experience major negative effects on their psychosocial and physical well-being. Continuing care and assistance within the camp cannot always be guaranteed as agencies scale down or phase out. National authorities may decide to dismantle the camp after mass return operations have been completed.

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 for reasons of safety or psychosocial health. Any contracts needed for their assistance should be modified and extended accordingly. If there are multiple camp sites now only partially utilised a consolidation process may occur, recognising that the Camp Management Agency does not want to encourage secondary displacement. 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. Not knowing 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/IMPROVEMENT
✓ The Camp Management Agency works with the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency in establishing a Site Development Committee (SDC).
✓ Representatives on the Site Development Committee include, in addition to the Camp Management Agency, the national authorities, the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, the camp population, service providers, surveyors, GIS experts, hydrologists, public health engineers, land tenure experts (lawyer or an expert in customary land tenure rights) and other relevant technical experts.
✓ Information related to safety, protection, security, social and cultural considerations, location and conditions of the land (including size, access, distance from borders and available resources) is analysed.
✓ Housing, land and property rights related to the site selection and camp improvement, particularly around issues of water, pastoral and agricultural access, are identified.
✓ Future changes and uncertainties, such as new arrivals and camp expansion, are planned for.
✓ The camp is planned and set up, eventually improved, in line with international standards and indicators and in accordance with the cultural and social needs of camp residents.
✓ 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, plans to improve the site, together with reasoning behind final decisions, are documented.
✓ The environmental impact of the camp is considered and plans are made to limit environmental damage.
✓ Site planning pays special attention to members of groups at risk and those with specific needs.
✓ Protection concerns are assessed.
✓ Guidelines, standards and the expertise of individuals and agencies are used to make for an efficient and safe camp in line with international laws and standards.
✓ In situations of self-settled/spontaneous camps, decisions are made about the need to reorganise or resettle the community or parts of the community as appropriate.
✓ The SDC continues to function after camp set-up to address issues in the care and maintenance phase of the camp, as appropriate.
✓ As part of a larger monitoring and evaluation system, key actors are brought together to get feedback on how residents, staff and the host community regard the camp location and layout.
✓ If evidence emerges of a growing disparity exists between the living conditions of the camp residents and the host population, the Cluster/Sector Lead Agency, the national 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 identification of possible durable solutions.

CLOSURE
✓ Phase-out, exit and camp closure are considered and planned for from the beginning.
✓ Assessments to ascertain whether return is voluntary are made.
✓ Participation and coordination among all stakeholders is ensured.
✓ Information campaigns are developed and implemented to ensure residents have accurate, objective and up-to-date information on closure 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 re-integrate on return.
✓ Administrative procedures ensure that all documents are either with their owners before they leave or, by their consent, with lead agencies (Cluster/Sector/Protection), held by NGOs or have been destroyed.
✓ The deregistration process is facilitated.
✓ The monitoring of the return process ensures safety, security and dignity.
✓ All 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 national authorities or other appropriate people.
✓ Latrines, rubbish pits, and washing facilities are safely decommissioned.
✓ Service contracts and agreements are modified or terminated appropriately, including any lease agreement for housing, land and property.
✓ A list of environmental concerns is made and plans developed on how they are 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.
✓ Site returned to previous condition unless alternative plans have been developed and agreed to by national authorities and surrounding communities.
CHAPTER 7 | CAMP SET-UP AND CLOSURE

TOOLS

TOOLS AND REFERENCES
All tools and references listed below are available on the electronic Camp Management Toolkit either on the USB memory stick accompanying every hardcopy or from the website: www.cmtoolkit.org.

- Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) South Africa, 2008. Guidelines for Phase Out and Closure of Centres of Safe Shelter
- CCCM Cluster, 2013. Temporary Site Planning Checklist
- Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), 2006. Quick Guidelines for Transitional Settlements (or Camp) Site Selection
- UN-Habitat, 2011. Settlement Planning, Un-Habitat in Disaster and Conflict Context
- UNHCR, NRC, 2013. Internal Camp Regulations, Liberia

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- Human Rights Focus, 2007. Fostering the Transition in Acholiland: From War to Peace, From Camps to Home
- International Mine Action Best Practice Guidebook, 2005