



Shelter/NFI Cluster
NW Syria - XB Hub
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

Action Plan for Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions in North-West Syria

March 2024 |

Photo Credit: GOAL, 2023



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” I want to live in peace and have a small land and a house to shelter me and my children from the cold in the winter and the heat in summer. I want to make a decent living so that I can avoid asking people or organizations for assistance ”
— Sara, a woman living in Raqqa, Syria (UNFPA/WoS)

Photo Credit: Shelter NFI cluster, 2024



Shelter Situation in Northwest Syria

Inadequate Living Conditions: With 2.1 million people in need of shelter assistance, and over 800,000 people living in tents and makeshift shelters (90% of which are more than 1 year old), the severe winter months pose a significant humanitarian challenge in NWS. The majority of people reside in old tents in IDP sites that lack proper sewage, drainage, electricity, and water supply. Among the camp population, 80% are women and children who have experienced multiple displacements over several years and are subjected to safety, security, and protection risks (in part) due to the temporary and undignified nature of shelter and settlement conditions. High rates of gender-based violence, and the impact of poor living conditions on children, the impact of climate change and natural disasters that make traditional approaches to shelter less effective.

Earthquake: The earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey in February 2023 has worsened the situation for an already vulnerable population living in overcrowded and substandard shelter conditions.

Winter Severity: The long, extremely cold, and unpredictable winters in northwest Syria result in acute suffering for 2 million individuals who lack adequate shelter. During winter, there is an increase in respiratory infection outbreaks, leading to a rise in hospitalizations, morbidity, and mortality. The absence of warm clothing, insulation, and heating further increases the risk of respiratory infections, hypothermia, and preventable deaths among children and the elderly.

NW Syria Humanitarian Leadership Group
Statement on Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions

The HLG supports emergency, temporary shelter for IDPs in NW Syria. This includes a range of different activities aimed at ensuring safe and dignified living conditions for displaced people. All shelter support is provided in accordance with humanitarian principles, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, and following due diligence on housing, land and property rights. All temporary shelter support for IDPs is provided while recognizing the right of people to seek and enjoy asylum, and the right of displaced people to return to their places of origin when the situation is conducive for safe, voluntary and dignified returns. While tents are suitable for the initial period of displacement (6-12 months), where possible the HLG supports improved temporary shelters for people facing protracted displacement that have longer life-spans and provide greater levels of protection.

All humanitarian shelter should be coordinated through the Shelter Cluster and follow agreed cluster guidelines. At this stage, while the conflict in Syria continues, the HLG is not supporting any construction of permanent housing for displaced people in NW Syria.



800,000
People live in tents in the NWS

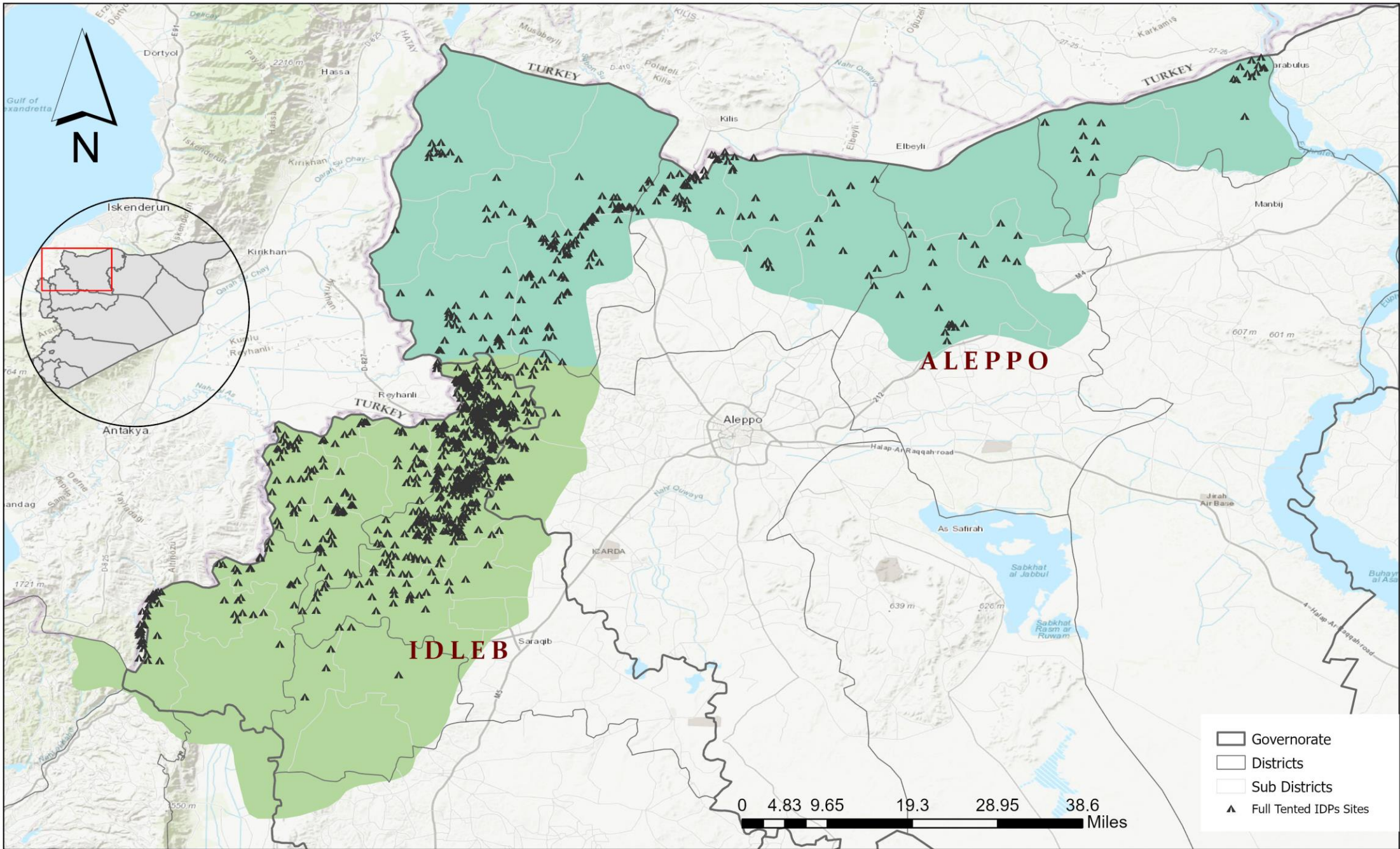
“
..tents are too close to each other, no safety, no doors to close, poor lighting conditions. We have no electricity until now, and going out at night in the darkness exposes us to violence.
”
Old woman, Al Asyaneh camp, Aleppo
(Voices from Syria).

Photo Credit: Shelter NFI cluster, 2021



NW Syria : Tented IDP sites (as of March 2024)

As of March 2024, according to ISIMM Plus reported data, out of a total of **1,474** sites, **1,084** are tented sites , representing **73.5%**.



Disclaimer: The boundaries, areas, and names shown not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. The map for humanitarian use only. Data Source is ISIMM Plus March 2024

Providing Structures of Protection

A. The Need for Change

After over ten years of war, humanitarian needs have evolved. There is an urgent need to for a more systematic approach to addressing shelter and living conditions in NW Syria. Nearly all tents in NW Syria will need to be replaced in the next year. Ongoing tent replacement will be an enormous expense and will not meet basic shelter needs. Continue short-term shelter interventions will entail substantial future funding commitments as tents wear out and need to be replaced.

There is now a unique opportunity to invest in Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions. This will provide more appropriate humanitarian shelter for a context of protracted displacement. It will be a more effective use of aid funding. Dignified Shelter will reduce dependency on the short-term cycle of temporary assistance and increase resilience. Having a safe place to live will reduce the need for large-scale winter support programs designed to help vulnerable families survive winter in aging tents.

B. Dignified Shelter Is Protection

Dignified Shelters are structures of protection. 80% of people in IDP sites are women and children who live in 'critically overcrowded' conditions. Women and girls report feeling most unsafe around communal bathing facilities and latrines.

Gender-based violence is extremely high: overcrowded living conditions contributes to child marriage while 548,000 people accessed GBV services in NW Syria in 2021. Humanitarian assistance can no longer be generic. Shelter assistance must respond to their needs. .

C. Living Conditions

There are 1,468 IDP sites in NW Syria but only 188 are planned. there are 1,245 sites are unplanned and spontaneously settled by IDPs themselves. They lack services, site planning, waste disposal, sewage systems, dependable water supply and are difficult to access. While 58% of the people in IDP sites are children, access to education is limited. In 2021, 400 sites flooded. In early 2022, more than 10,000 tents were destroyed as a result of extreme weather, including heavy snow, strong winds and flooding. There is an opportunity now to invest in infrastructure improvement and basic site planning to increase resilience and support access to key services such as education, WASH and health.

D. Value for Money

Tents are expensive and short term (in principle 6 months). The starting cost for a Dignified Shelter is the equivalent to two tents but the life span may be five or more years. There is a compelling business case for modest investment now that will reduce costs and aid dependency in the future. Much of this can be achieved with a better use of existing funding.



Photo Credit: BINAA, 2023

What are Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions?

Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions is a response to the inherent problems of unplanned sites. The approach promotes more multi-sectoral response planning, implementation and monitoring; longer-term investments in more dignified camp infrastructure; wider stakeholder engagement and reduced reliance on continued repeat emergency services. It will ensure that IDP sites are more resilient to sudden onset disasters as will reduce the risk of gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse.

Key activities

- 1. Transition IDPs living in tents to dignified shelters that are better suited to protracted displacement.
- 2. Promote integrated multi-sector site planning including drainage, sewage, water, roads, lighting, electricity, early recovery and livelihoods, education and health.

The Dignified and Safer Living Conditions approach defines sites with high needs and considers the whole population within those sites. This guidance document builds on the existing Global Shelter Cluster Settlements Approach Guidance and the NW Syria SNFI Cluster Dignified and Safer Living Conditions Technical Annex.



Value for Money: A Business Case for Dignified Shelter

The price-range for an average **Dignified Shelter** is around **USD 2,900**. These shelters are designed to last for 5-10 years, though they have the potential to be modified/improved and could potentially last longer. The cluster has developed an annex with a range of options and costs per type of dignified shelter.

Meanwhile, the standard tent that has been used in NW Syria costs an average of USD 800, however these do not provide sufficient levels of privacy, dignity, durability, fire-retardancy, or structural integrity for the harsh winter conditions and overcrowded IDPs sites of NW Syria. While 36% of tents are more than 2 years old, in principle they need to be replaced every 6 months. Higher quality tents have been procured recently for about USD 850, however these are still not suitable for long term displacement and still need to be replaced after one year. Neither of these prices include WASH facilities or site-level infrastructure improvements.

Dignified Shelter is a more cost-effective use of aid funding and demonstrates value for money. One Dignified Shelter, which may have a lifespan of 5 or more years, is roughly equal to the cost of 2 standard tents, which are only designed to last for 6-12 months.

Dignified Shelter will also reduce dependency on short term annual winter support which currently is USD 40 million or 50% of the SNFI Cluster annual budget.

There is a clear business case for Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions. Investment now will save money in the future while reducing expenditure on 'one-off' seasonal support to save lives over winter that has become an annual necessity owing to poor shelter conditions.



Photo Credit: Mercy USA ,2023



The Impact of Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions

Introduction

Introduction In **March 2024**, two years after the launch of the Dignified Shelter Action Plan, the S/NFI Cluster carried out a Perception Survey to evaluate the impact of dignified shelters and compare the situation with tented sites with the support of 19 cluster partners.

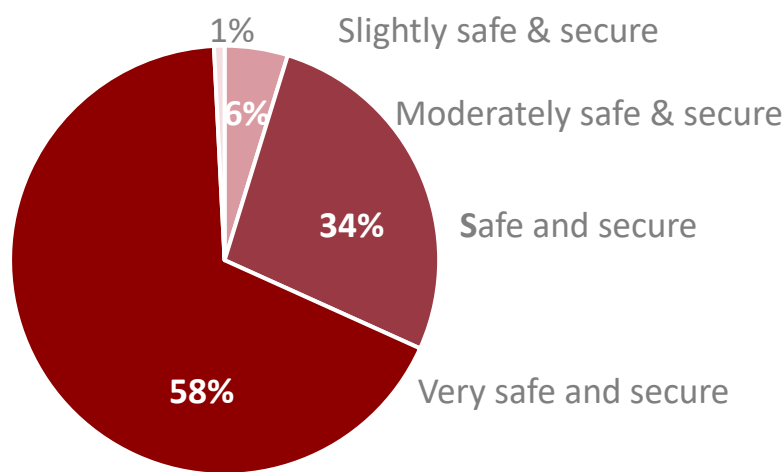
Methodology

The survey utilized a simple random sampling methodology to identify and assess the perceptions of households since the inception of the activity.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Protection from Harsh Weather Conditions

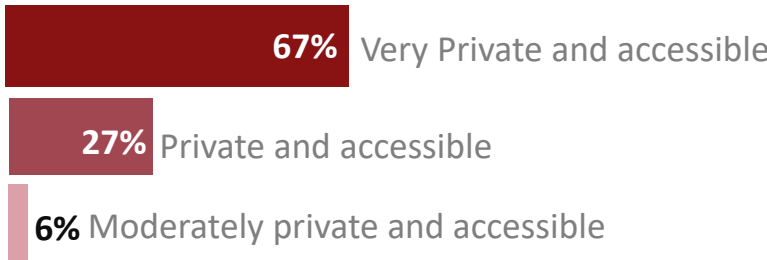
A majority of IDPs (99%) residing in dignified shelters report feeling well-protected from harsh weather conditions such as rain, wind, snow, and extreme temperatures. This protection enhances their overall feelings of well-being and safety, with a majority (58%) feeling very safe and secure, 34% feeling safe and secure, while a minor group felt moderately (6%) or slightly (1%) safe and secure.



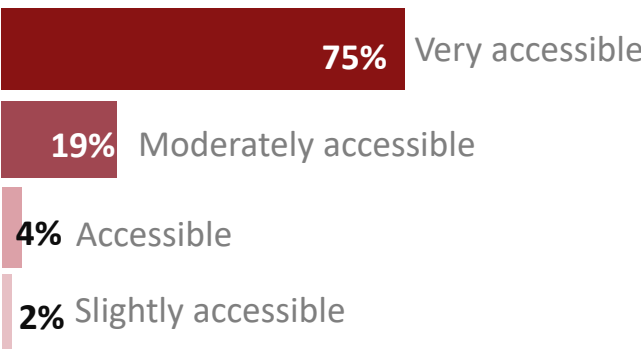
2. Enhanced Privacy and Dignity

Dignified shelters provide better privacy, especially for women, enabling them to access cooking areas and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) facilities with ease and dignity. Access to WASH and cooking areas was generally highly regarded with no major impediments reported.

2.1 Ease of Access to Cooking Areas for Women

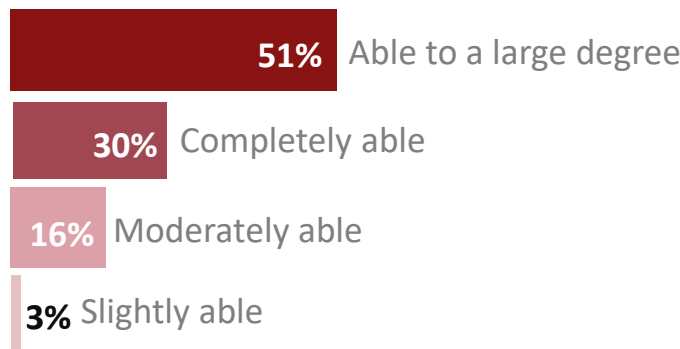


2.2 Ease of Access to WASH Facilities



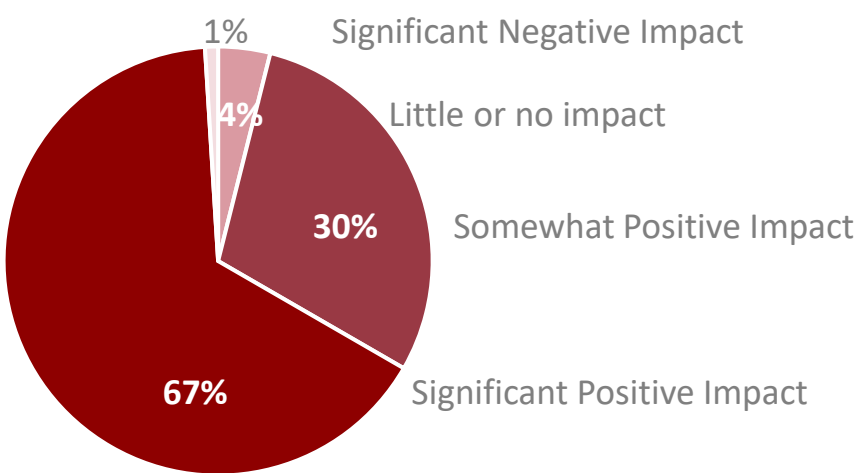
3. Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)

Of the respondents, 20% identified as being persons with disabilities or having a person with a disability residing in the same household. Of these, more than 80% reported no significant access barriers.



4. Impact on Livelihoods:

Residing in dignified shelters has had a positive impact on the ability of families to earn a living, thereby boosting their self-reliance and resilience. 67% of the respondents indicated that their livelihood situation was positively impacted.



To access the [Dignified Shelter Advocacy Note](#) for the year 2024, please click [here](#).

Goal & Implementation Phases

Goal

To provide access to Dignified Shelter & Safer Living Conditions to everyone living in tented sites in NW Syria.

The action plan is targets to support **81,520** families living in tents in sites with Valid HLP while advocating for HLP solutions for the remaining **100,000** families living in tents in sites without valid/pending HLP or missing information.

Dignified Shelter Site Selection Criteria

The S/NFI Cluster has adopted a comprehensive severity-based approach to compare and prioritize sites for dignified shelter. This approach is based on ISIMM Plus data collected by the CCCM Cluster. It considers all relevant factors when selecting sites, with a particular emphasis on giving priority to sites on public land that have valid Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) rights, whenever possible. The analysis is done in **3 phases**:

1. Site Categorization

The sites that are not fully covered by dignified shelters are analyzed based on HLP status, shelter type, and the percentage of tents that are older or less than 1 year and categorized into the implementation phases of the Dignified Shelter action plan.

2. Site Ranking

These sites are assessed and ranked based on severity indicators such as shelter type, HLP status, vulnerability to flooding, overcrowding, and the lack of necessary facilities and infrastructure like roads, drainage systems, lighting, water networks, sewers, education, and healthcare facilities.

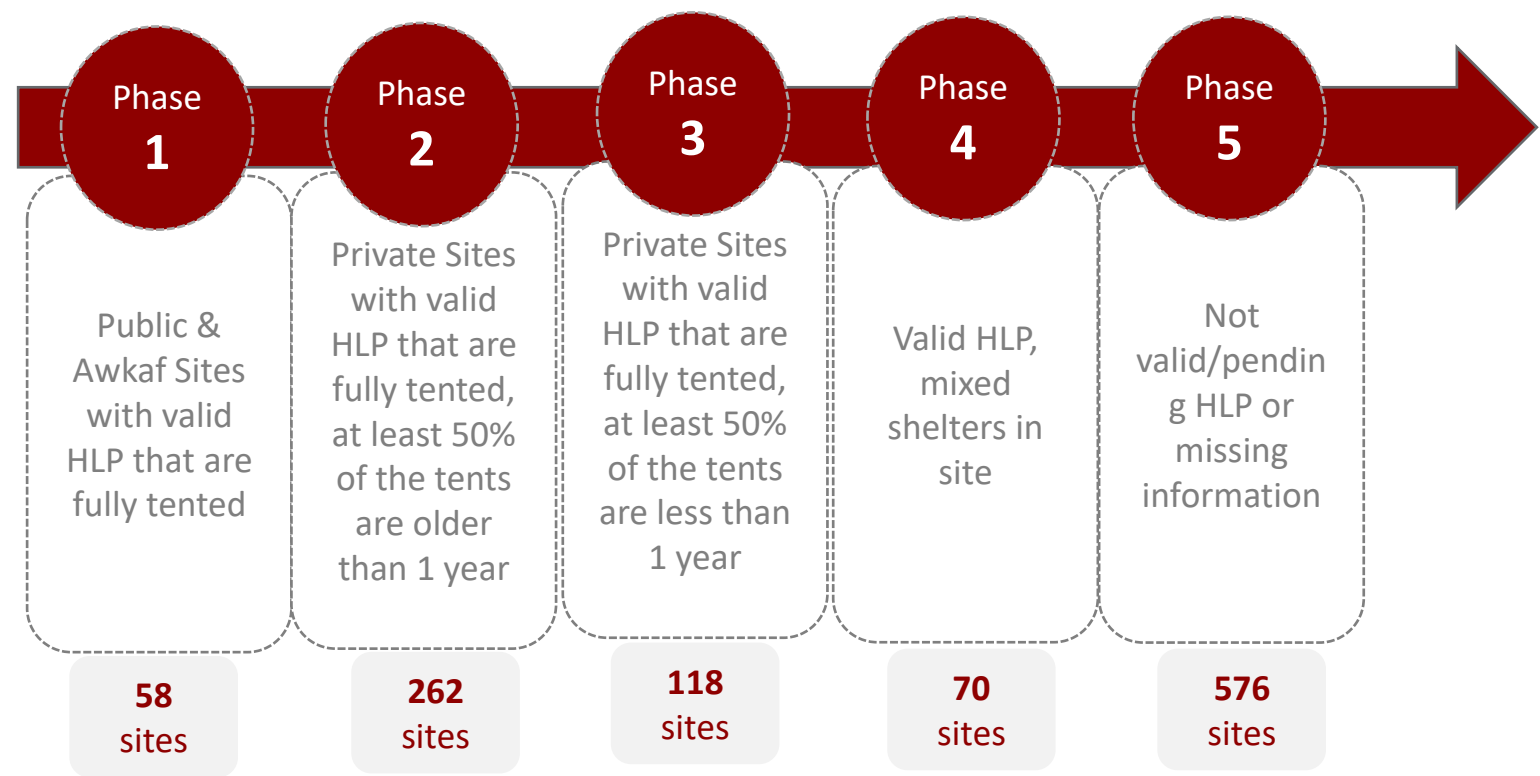
3. Site Prioritization

In 2024, the S/NFI Cluster will prioritize Phase 1 sites for providing dignified shelter projects. However, if a partner faces challenges such as housing, land, and property (HLP) issues, technical obstacles, donor stipulations, safety and security, local authorities' approvals, areas of operation, or lack of alternative sites, they can shift their focus to high severity sites in Phases 2 to 4.

To access the final site prioritization for 2024, please click [here](#).



Dignified Shelter Site Selection Criteria



Site prioritization : Categorization as of March 2024

Progress

The action plan aims to provide access to dignified shelter and safer living conditions for all individuals residing in tented sites in Northwest Syria. It targets and supports **81,779** families living in tents in sites with valid Housing, Land, and Property (HLP) documentation, while also advocating for HLP solutions for the remaining **100,000** families living in tents in sites without valid or pending HLP documentation or missing information.

This bar shows progress achieved as of **March 2024** since March 2022.

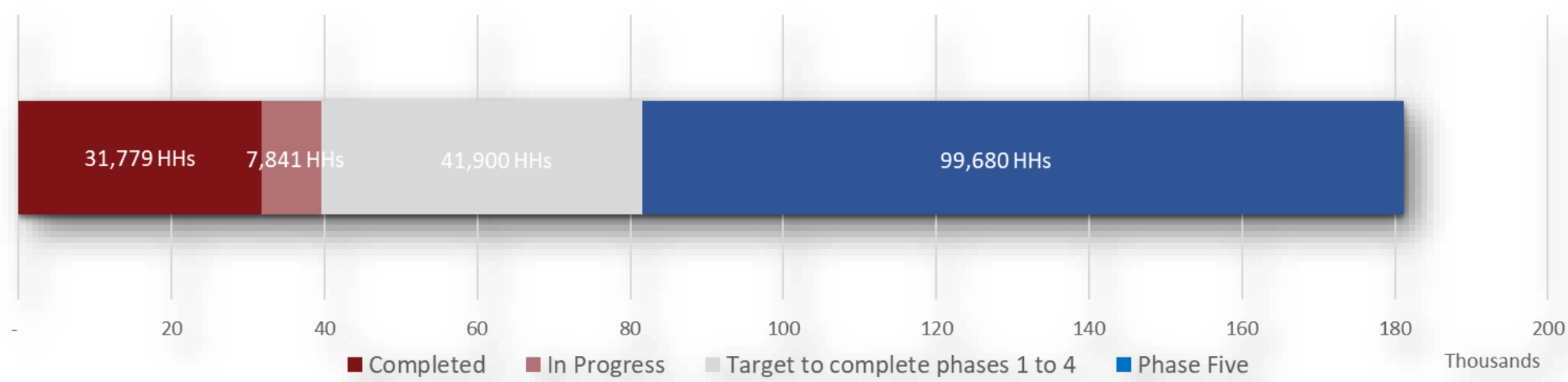
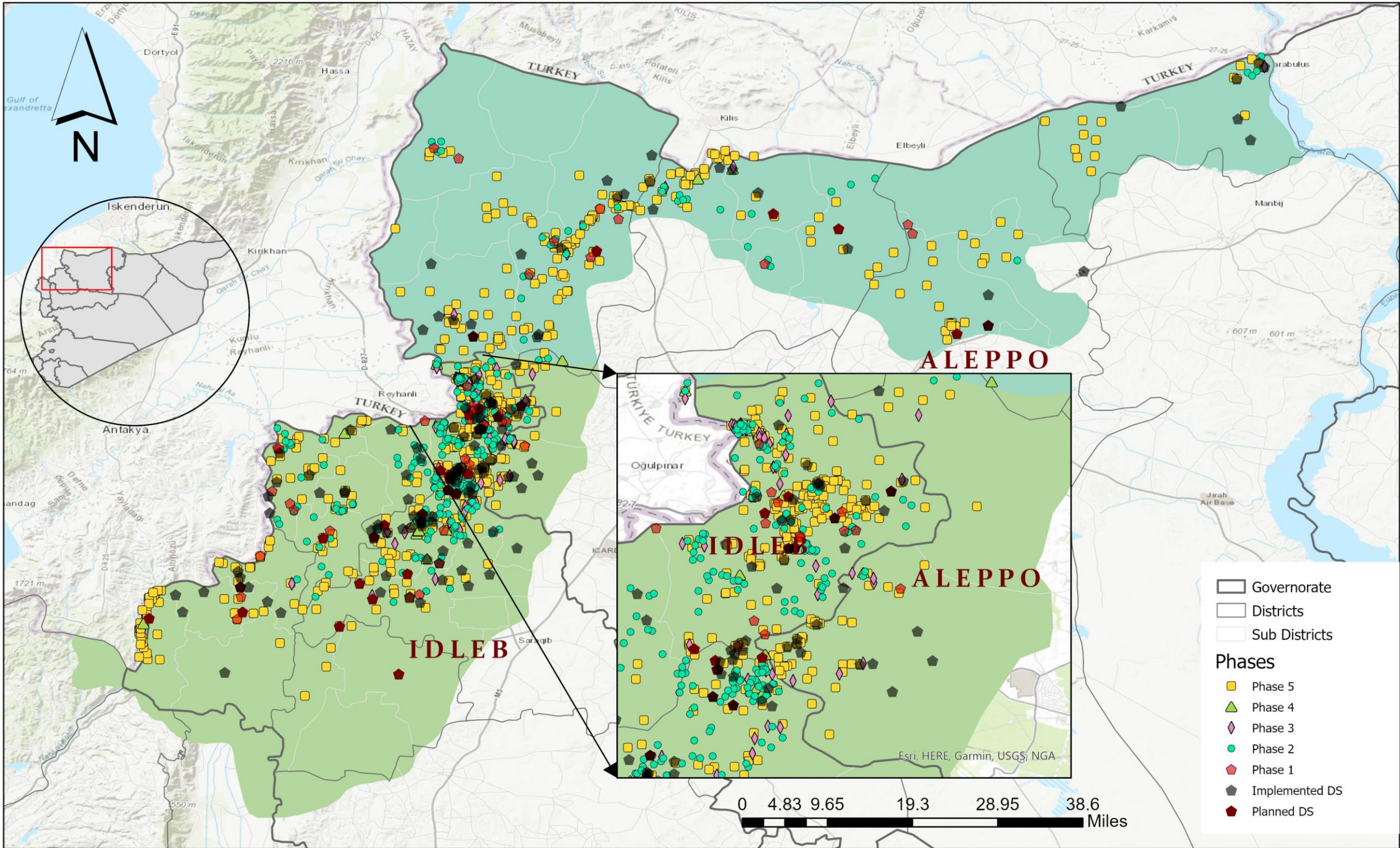


Photo Credit: IYD, 2023



Map of Implementation

This map shows progress achieved as of **March 2024** since March 2022.



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Budget & Costs

Costs of the intervention vary depending on context, shelter design, location, geophysical conditions, access, and currency fluctuation. The price range for a Dignified Shelter is **USD 2,900**. Per unit costs (for planning purposes):

2,900 USD

Total average price of a Dignified Shelter

In the budget and cost details of dignified shelters, it's crucial to clarify that the specified amount of \$2900 excludes infrastructure expenses. This figure serves as an average cost across different types of dignified shelters. The actual cost of each dignified shelter may fluctuate based on variables such as family size and the materials utilized. Dignified shelters built with locally sourced materials often prove to be more cost-effective than other alternatives.



Photo Credit: Mercy USA ,2022

Cluster Implementing Capacity

There is significant knowledge and experience within the current shelter cluster, especially among local NGOs. While strong capacity exists, a significant operational scale up would need to occur.

- **85** implementing agencies (As of March 2024)
- USD **122** million (**2024** HRP appeal for Shelter activities)
- USD **91** million (**2024** HRP appeal for NFIs activities)
- USD **178.6** million (**2023** HRP appeal for Shelter and NFIs activities)
- USD **192.6** million (**2022** HRP appeal for Shelter and NFIs activities)
- USD **90** million (Cluster annual budget **2020-2021**)
- USD **180** million (Cluster annual budget **2019-2020**)



\$75 M

Funding requirement for dignified shelter in 2024

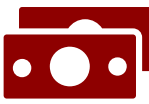


100 K

Number of individuals targeted for support in 2024.

Experience implementing multi-sectoral projects:

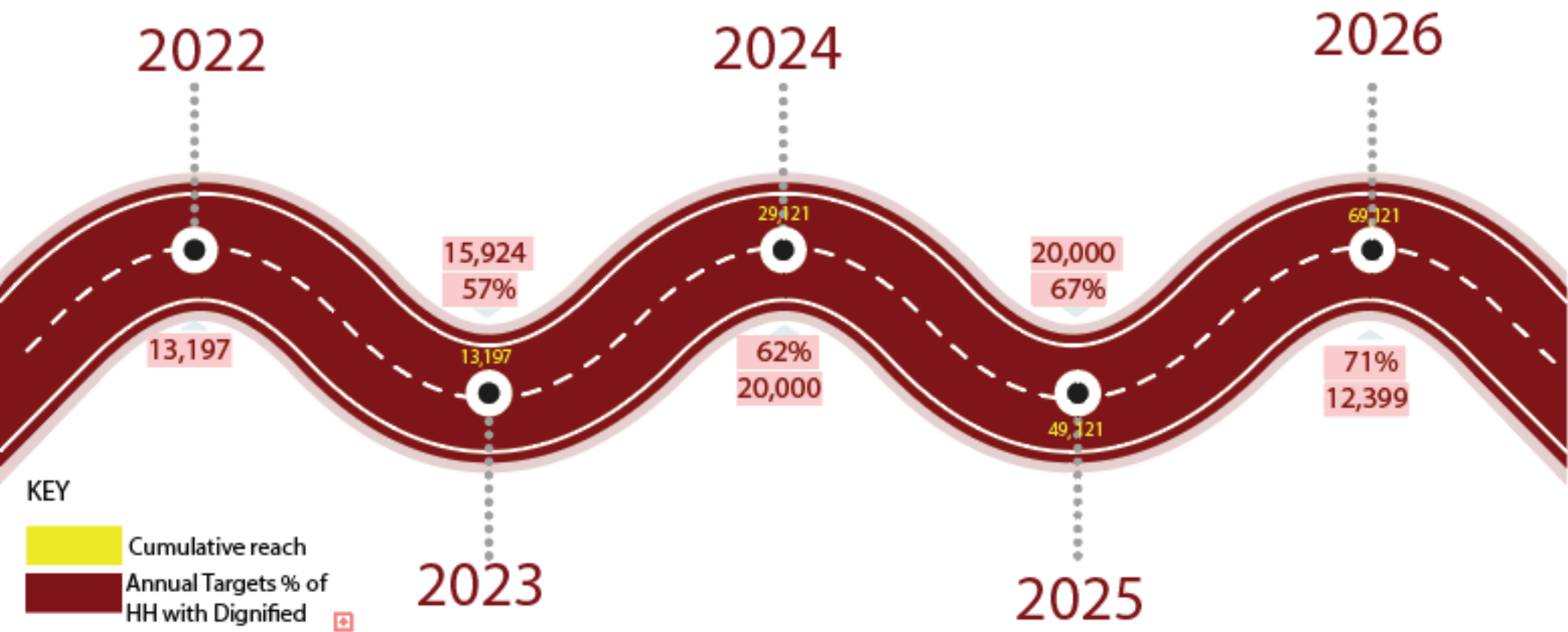
- **725K** people reached with shelter(regular and Earthquake activities) in **2023**.
- **225.8K** people supported with infrastructure activities in **2023**.
- **300K** people supported with Earthquake response activities in **2023**.



\$68.3 M

Funding gap to achieve target in 2024.

Dignified Shelter Road Map





Overall Risks & Mitigation

Risks

- This is not just about the shelter unit but about improving sites as well. This requires multisectoral site planning.
- Short timeframes for implementation at scale.
- Agencies will need to scale up substantially.
- Multiple shelter solutions and designs will be required, and this requires flexibility from donors to consider a range of shelter options.
- HLP constraints
- Equity

Mitigation

- Development of common guidance & prioritization with CCCM, WASH, Protection, Early Recovery, Logistics, & Education clusters.
- Prioritization of most vulnerable sites
- DS & LC builds on existing projects & implementation.
- Agencies have managed similar levels of funding in the past.
- Strong existing cluster capacity.
- Key agencies will need to scale up operations.
- Engagement of additional agencies
- Ongoing donor engagement and advocacy.
- Most approaches have already been funded by key donors.
- Strong support & flexibility from SCHF.
- Close engagement with HLP Working Group
- Revision of HLP due diligence guidelines
- Cluster agencies are highly experienced in HLP issues.
- Targeting the most vulnerable sites and households.
- Support to wider site management & infrastructure.
- Integration with cash-based programming supporting wider camp and host communities.



Photo Credit: Binaa, 2023



Action Plan Summary Table



Photo Credit: IOM, 2021

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	TOTAL
	Public & Awkaf Sites with valid HLP that are fully tented	Private Sites with valid HLP that are fully tented, at least 50% of the tents are older than 1 year	Private Sites with valid HLP that are fully tented, at least 50% of the tents are less than 1 year	Valid HLP, mixed shelters in site	Not valid/pending HLP or missing information	
# of IDP sites	58	262	118	70	576	1,084
# Shelters (1 per family)	14,116	65,406	24,813	20,201	138,733	263,269
# People	83,741	351,951	133,078	110,429	753,936	1,433,135
Cost (USD)	40,936,400	189,677,400	71,957,700	58,582,900	402,325,700	763,480,100

Document version	Date	Changes made
01	March 2022	Launch
02	July 2023	Update to include earthquake effected people
03	March 2024	Update to include impact Survey and site prioritization



SNFI Cluster - NWS XB hub;
Lead Agency: UNHCR
Co-Lead Agency: CARE
Updated : March 2024
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