

DIGNIFIED SHELTER ADVOCACY NOTE

March 2024



NW Syria - XB Hub
ShelterCluster.org
Coordinating Humanitarian Shelter

Photo Credit: GOAL



2.1M

*People in Need of Shelter assistance.



1.1M

*People in Need of NFI assistance.



\$75M

Funding requirement for dignified shelter.



\$68.3M

Funding gap to achieve target in 2024.



100K

Number of individuals targeted for support in 2024.

2024 SHELTER SITUATION IN NORTH-WEST SYRIA

Inadequate Living Conditions: With 2.1 million people in need of shelter assistance and over 800,000 living in tents and makeshift shelters—90% of which are more than a year old—the severe winter conditions present a significant humanitarian challenge in north-west Syria. The majority reside in old tents at IDP sites, which 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 face safety, security, and protection risks. These issues arise partly because the temporary shelters and settlements fail to meet dignity standards.

Earthquake: The February 2023 earthquake that struck Syria and Türkiye has exacerbated the conditions for an already vulnerable population living in overcrowded and substandard shelters.

Winter Severity: The long, extremely cold, and unpredictable winters in north-west Syria cause acute suffering for two million individuals lacking adequate shelter. Respiratory infection outbreaks increase during winter, leading to higher hospitalizations, morbidity, and mortality rates. The absence of warm clothing, insulation, and heating amplifies the risk of respiratory infections, hypothermia, and preventable deaths, particularly among children and the elderly.

GOAL

To provide everyone living in tented sites in north-west Syria with access to dignified shelter and safer living conditions.

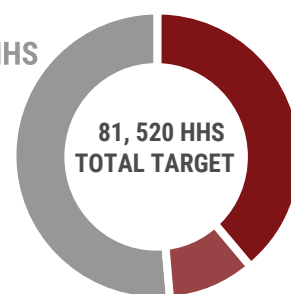
The Dignified Shelter action plan ([click here](#)) targets supporting 81,520 families residing in tented sites with valid HLP while advocating for HLP solutions for the remaining 100,000 families living in tents in sites without valid/pending HLP or missing information.

Progress

Since the initiation of the Dignified Shelter Action Plan in March 2022, we've successfully provided dignified housing to 31,255 households across 157 locations. This has been made possible through the collaborative efforts of 29 cluster organizations that include UN, Local and International NGOs.

42,154 HHS

52%
Gap



31,255 HHS

38%
Completed

7,841 HHS

10%
In Progress

* Based on the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) between Jan and December 2024.

WHAT ARE DIGNIFIED SHELTER & LIVING CONDITIONS?

Dignified Shelter & Living Conditions is a strategy that aims to respond to the issues stemming from unplanned sites. The initiative aims to transition IDPs living in tents to dignified shelters (temporary transitional shelter solutions) more suitable for long-term displacement. The transition can reduce reliance on emergency services, minimizing the need for costly and short-lasting tent

replacements every six to 12 months.

The approach promotes multi-sectoral response planning, implementation, and monitoring while advocating for integrated multi-sector site planning. This includes the development of drainage, sewage, water, roads, lighting, and electricity, as well as support for early recovery, livelihoods, educa-

tion, and health initiatives. Moreover, the strategy involves long-term investments in more dignified camp infrastructure, making IDP sites more resilient to sudden disasters and reducing the risk of gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse.



THE IMPACT OF DIGNIFIED SHELTER & LIVING CONDITIONS

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.

Sampling Design

A sample of 380 households was drawn from the total number of households assisted. This represents a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

This sampling strategy allows for an efficient and cost-effective approach to reach the target population while ensuring the representativeness of the sample within the study's context.

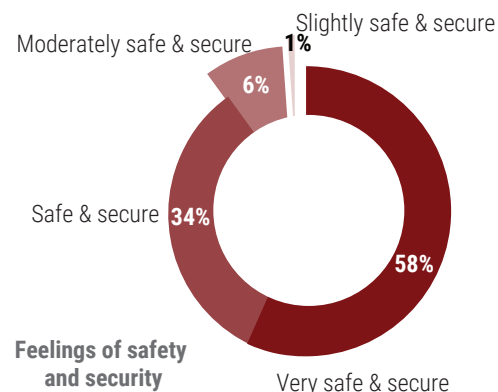


SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS

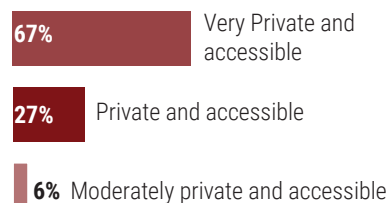
Protection from Harsh Weather Conditions

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.

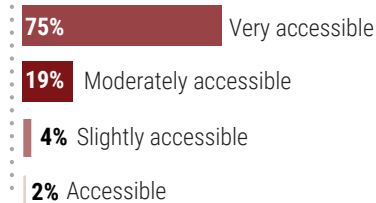
This protection enhances their overall feelings of well-being and safety, with a majority (58%) feeling very safe and secure, (34%) feeling safe and secure, while a minor group felt moderately (6%) or slightly (1%) safe and secure.



Ease of access to cooking areas for women



Ease of access to WASH facilities



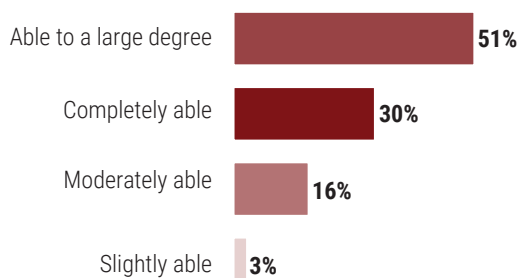
Enhanced Privacy and Dignity:

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.

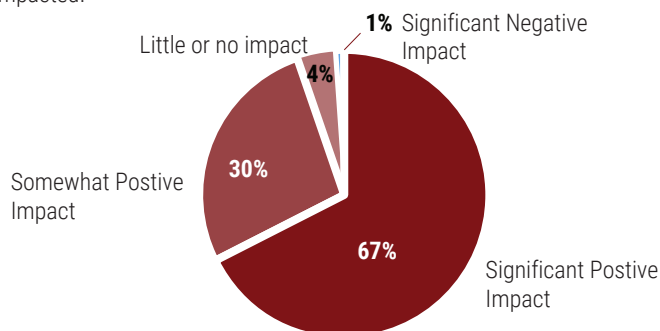
Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs):

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.

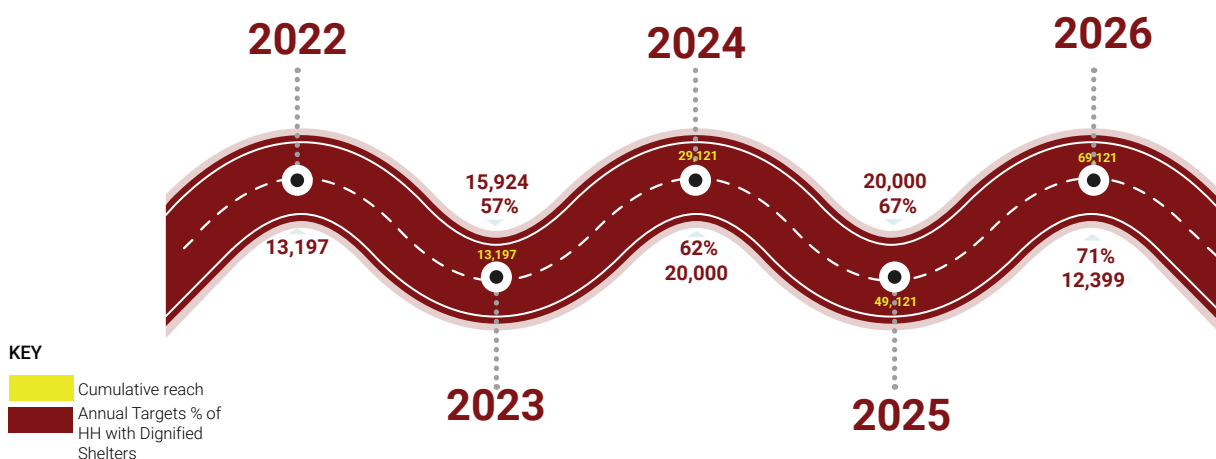


Impact on Livelihoods:

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.



DIGNIFIED SHELTER ROAD MAP





SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS BY SHELTER TYPE

Introduction

Adequate humanitarian shelter options can vary based on needs, urgency, material availability, cost, cultural acceptance, and the circumstances of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). These options are forms of humanitarian intervention aiming to offer adequate, safe, private, and dignified shelter, especially in complex situations like the aftermath of the 2023 earthquake. However, these shelter options are ultimately temporary, awaiting the resolution of hostilities and the initiation of return processes.

The Dignified Shelter Action Plan, launched in March 2022, piloted various shelter solutions. This included ten types of shelters, each varying in cost, materials, and design but offering longer lifespans than tents. The shelters can generally be categorized into four groups: concrete, Sandwich Panels, Hybrid, and RHU.

Definitions

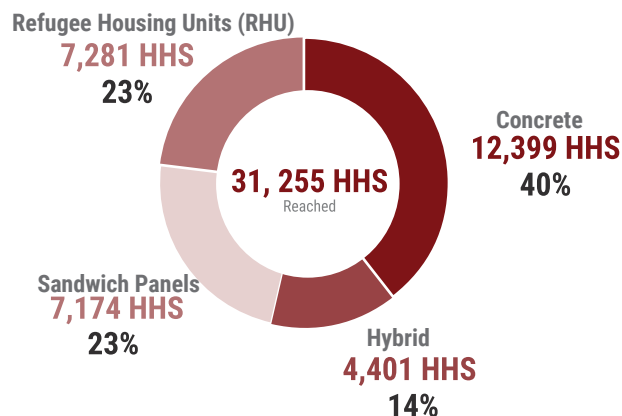
Concrete: This durable shelter is made from locally sourced, simple materials like sand, cement, and fine aggregates. It is strong against high winds, snow, seismic activities, and heavy rains.

Sandwich Panels: Shelters made with sandwich panels—two thin strength-providing layers around a lightweight core. They are quick to install but typically more costly due to material costs and skilled labor requirements.

Hybrid: Shelters that combine different construction methods and materials, such as sandwich panels, steel frames, and concrete blocks. They are locally sourced, and the composite frame ensures durability and weather resistance.

Refugee Housing Units (RHU): These easily transportable and quickly installable shelters are suitable for emergencies. Made of plastic panels, they have lockable doors and windows for security.

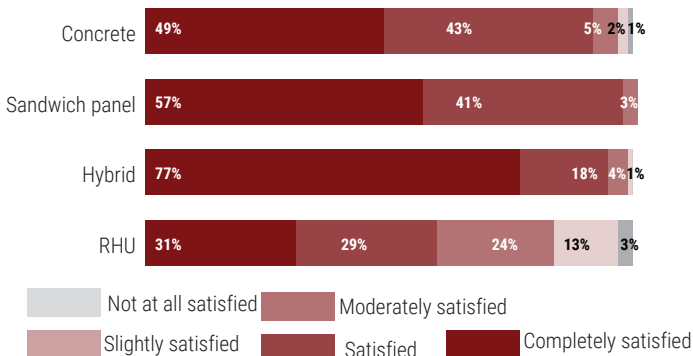
Achievement by Shelter Type



Satisfaction by shelter type*

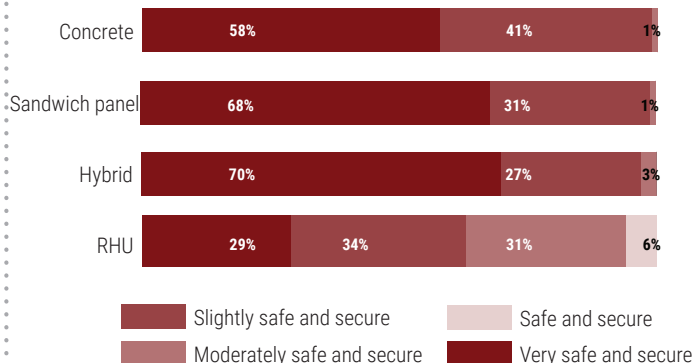
Overall satisfaction by shelter type hybrid scored the highest satisfaction rating at **77%**, followed by sandwich panels at **57%** and concrete at **57%** regarding overall satisfaction with the materials.

Generally, there was a high level of satisfaction of the shelter materials with very few levels of dissatisfaction.



Safety and Security by shelter type*

In terms of safety and security, the hybrid was deemed the most secure with a **70%** rating, followed by sandwich panels at **68%** and then concrete at **58%**.



KEY MESSAGES

Sustained Funding

The Shelter/NFI Cluster in north-west Syria works to ensure safe and suitable shelter solutions for displaced populations and vulnerable communities. With resources, the Cluster can address immediate needs, promote long-term resilience, and protect affected populations from harsh weather conditions and protection risks.

Alignment

To maximize the impact of their support, stakeholders and the Shelter/NFI Cluster will work to align their efforts around priorities, locations, and community-led approaches.

Cost Efficiency and Resilience Building

The Shelter/NFI Cluster will continue identifying opportunities to use locally available materials to improve cost efficiency two years after the action plan launch. This will also ensure that a dignified shelter approach contributes to increased resilience and access to services, especially for the most vulnerable households and communities in areas with high needs severity.



THANK YOU NOTE

The S/NFI Cluster extends its gratitude to all donors, including the OCHA Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF), for their contribution to the Dignified Shelter projects in North-west Syria. Since 2021, SCHF has allocated a substantial fund of US\$ 34 million, enabling 19 cluster partners to provide 11,510 units. This effort has

significantly enhanced the quality of life for over 55,000 individuals. These internally displaced persons (IDPs), including women, men, children, the elderly, and people with disabilities, have moved from tents and unplanned camps to new homes. These homes offer more dignified living conditions.

Shelter and NFI Cluster Co-coordinators

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Everyone deserves access to dignified shelter, free from fear and insecurity. Dignified shelter is more than just physical space; it serves as a sanctuary where individuals can heal and thrive.

It guarantees seamless access to living areas and essential facilities, ensuring improved living conditions for women, girls, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

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OCHA Syria Cross Border Humanitarian Fund (SCHF)

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This approach addresses the critical humanitarian concern of massive displacements in Northwest Syria, exacerbated by inadequate IDP sites and extreme living conditions, particularly during winter. The overcrowded IDP sites present severe risks, especially for women and girls, while extreme weather particularly affects young children and older individuals. The dignified shelters approach is multisectoral and inclusive. It not only improves living conditions but also provides essential services and infrastructure such as drainage, sewage, and electricity. This approach mitigates health and protection risks and enhances the resilience of displaced populations. Moving forward, the Dignified Shelter Approach will continue to be a SCHF key priority, in line with the Deputy Regional Humanitarian Coordinator (DRHC) Vision Statement for 2024

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