



What defines a shelter?

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Physical Displacement

- IFC PS 5 defines physical displacement “as the relocation or loss of shelter”
- In Michael Cernea’s words from 1997, “loss of shelter tends to be only temporary for many resettlers; but for some homelessness or a worsening in their housing standards remains a lingering condition...”
- He concluded that one of the objectives of resettlement should be to move from a state of homelessness to one of house reconstruction.



What is a shelter?

Shelter

- “[a building designed to give] protection from bad weather, danger or attack” (Cambridge Dictionary)
- “a place giving temporary protection from bad weather or danger” (Oxford Dictionary)



Shelter or Not?



Why does this definition matter?

- Distinction between physical and economic displacement
- If physical displacement:
 - RAP required
 - Compensation for loss of asset with objective of improving standard of living
 - Potentially greater burden of avoidance of impact and greater burden of ensuring that households have shelter post impact
 - Lender focus
- If economic displacement:
 - LRP required
 - Compensation for loss of asset with objective of restoring livelihood with no specific focus on avoidance of “homelessness”



Is the definition working?

- What would working look like?
 - Consistency of application
 - Clarity around categorisation of impacts
 - Equitable treatment of equivalent impacts in similar settings
- The current scorecard...



Mongolian Nomadic Herders

- Mongolian herders follow a seasonal routine, moving herds to new grazing lands based on the time of the year
- They typically move at least twice a year, in spring (to summer camp) and at the beginning of winter (to winter camp)
- Mongolian law recognises land title for winter and spring camps (not summer camps)
- Winter camps can be registered, although in many cases formal registration has not yet been completed by herder households



Mongolian Nomadic Herders



A winter camp site may not necessarily contain a physical structure but it does provide shelter from weather and danger and it fulfills the role anticipated in PS5.



Seasonal herders in Armenia

- Herders travelling from Iran to southern Armenia to use mountain pasture during summertime



Seasonal herders in Armenia

- Herders typically have no permanent structures or assets on camp sites
- No land ownership, but possible land rental rights
- Impacts to herder camp locations typically classified as economic displacement



Multi-located communities in Solomon Islands

- History of village movement in Santa Isabel Island (head-hunting, colonial requirements, church influence)
- Village of Ruidede moved from coast (Suma) to hillside due to fear of climate change impacts



Diversified Livelihoods: Gardening and Fishing

- Gardening conducted on hill-sides, but weekly trips to coast to fish / collect crabs
- Houses in both villages are considered permanent residences and are necessary for maintenance of livelihoods



Gardening Huts - Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

- Gardening huts are used in much of the Pacific to provide overnight / multi-night shelter when households are tending their more distant gardens
- Physical characteristics of gardening hut may be indistinguishable from “permanent residence hut”
- Typically, garden huts are considered economic assets and loss of these huts is linked to economic displacement impacts
- But... how often would a garden hut need to be used for it to constitute a “shelter” as per PS 5?



Findings #1 - A primary residence?

- Most resettlement approaches assume a household resides in one primary residence, with other residences (shelters) being used only occasionally
- This presupposes that the loss of a “secondary residence” does not constitute loss of shelter
- But what about communities who use multiple shelters, eg, nomadic groups, or communities who fish and cultivate?
- Can they avoid “homelessness” if one of their residences is lost?



Findings #2 – Temporary / Seasonal Shelter

- Can we articulate why winter camps in Mongolia constitute physical displacement, while seasonal herder campsites in Armenia do not?
- On what basis are we making this distinction?



Findings #3 – Distinctions are not as simple as they seem

- Practical experience leads practitioners to make distinctions between physical and economic displacement impacts based on an understanding of the role and use of a structure... but in the absence of guidance, are these distinctions consistent?
- Examples in Asia where only primary residences are compensated in terms of physical displacement, and secondary residences are compensated purely as economic assets – is this the default rule?



Conclusion

- For what seems to be such a simple and primary aspect of resettlement, there is little guidance on how to assess alternative uses of shelter
- In the absence of this guidance, it is likely that significant divergence of practice will continue in the field, with households being compensated differentially and the duty of care to avoid creating homelessness possibly being overlooked

