

GUIDE FOR ADEQUATE HOUSING IN RESPONSE TO REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS FROM VENEZUELA IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

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From the Shelter Sector under the Interagency Coordination Platform for Refugees and Migrants in Venezuela (R4V), in coordination with other regional sectors and humanitarian organizations in the region, we view access to adequate shelter as more than the provision of a roof and four walls in times of crisis, but as the opportunity to rebuild the word "home" through the right to live with dignity, protection and security in a healthy environment that allows people to rebuild their daily lives and reactivate their economic and social activities; thus sharing the definitions of "Adequate Shelter" of UN-Human Rights (UNDHR)¹ and UN-Habitat or those collected in the 2018 Sphere Handbook ².

The populations in a mobility situation, such as refugees and migrants, find themselves in a situation of greater vulnerability when leaving their homes behind and face the constant deprivation of fundamental human rights and particularly, the right to access to housing, exacerbated by situations of discrimination, racism and/or xenophobia; which prevents them from achieving adequate and sustainable living conditions. Adequate housing does not exclusively provide protection within the built spaces but is a means of accessing a better standard of living. Given that displacement nowadays last longer than previously (even lasting decades) the absence of adequate housing increases poverty levels, widening the inequality gap which tries to achieve socioeconomic integration of refugees and migrants through access to decent work and consequently, to having a sense of integral and economic security, and to retrieving a sense of community and social cohesion.

This paper focuses on access to adequate housing for the Venezuelan population through rental support programs in urban areas. However, it can be adapted in other contexts, such as rural areas or access to home ownership in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Thanks to more than 50 sector partners, multiple problems have been identified that impede the exercise of this right, some of which are: risks of eviction related to the lack of contracts, the irregular/undocumented legal situation of the population, or the informality of the settlements in urban contexts, the lack of proper housing conditions and overcrowding,

¹ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (2009), "The Right to Adequate Housing. Fact Sheet No. 21/Rev.1."

² As mentioned in the "Sphere Handbook 2018", Chapter on "Shelter and Settlement", Section: "Essential Concepts in Shelter and Settlement. Everyone has the right to adequate housing", the minimum standards therein are a form of practical expression of the right to adequate housing in humanitarian contexts with the objective of creating a safe living environment.

the unsafe locations exposed to risks of disaster or far away from basic education and health services, as well as employment and income generation opportunities, among other problems.

For this reason, this document is structured around the seven (7) elements of adequate housing: security of tenure, availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure; affordability/habitability, accessibility, location and cultural adequacy³, and its definition contextualized to the situation of the Venezuelan population in the LAC region. This conceptual framework, reflected in this document, is expressed in a practical way through a scoring tool, in which key questions⁴ are identified that allow measuring the level of adequacy inside rental housing in urban or peri-urban contexts. This tool was born from the joint work with the Collaborative Working Group formed by Cashcap, REACH, IOM, IFRC, UNHCR and NRC⁵ framed in the initiative of the Rental Housing Market Assessment Manual 3. Additionally, this tool has been peer reviewed with housing specialists from 15 countries in the region.

Finally, this document aims to support humanitarian actors that provide rental support to ensure and protect access to adequate housing to the extent of their capacities by incorporating a multidimensional discussion of this right with the objective of avoiding harm. The key questions posed are intended to serve as a basis for dialogue on adequate housing in the region, are flexible for adaptation to each specific context, and hopefully in the future identify others of greater relevance to the region. In other words, housing is understood as part of a system, composed by different dimensions of a flexible nature in a context of unpredictable crises

As humanitarian organizations working in the Shelter Sector, we encourage States to strengthen their commitment to access of adequate housing for refugee and migrant populations coming from Venezuela, and thus support more durable solutions aimed at local integration and coexistence. Ensuring access to adequate housing contributes to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New Urban Agenda⁶.

³ From a more urban and territorial dimension, in Habitat III (2016) the dimension of governance was added to the definition of Adequate Housing, related to the capacity of the inhabitants to make decisions, taking into account access to information, participation and the interest of the population in participating in the activities of the area or neighborhood. For the present document, it has not been included, since it works transversally from the concept of Accountability to the Affected Population (AAP); and focuses on access to rental housing for the migrant population. Even so, it is considered essential to consider this aspect, as well as those on sustainability and environment, and gender, which in this document have been kept as cross-cutting, not as new elements.

⁴ In the following pages: key questions from direct consultation with the respondent are highlighted in **green**, direct observation during a technical visit to the dwelling are highlighted in **orange**; and answers that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing in **red**.

⁵ Available for download from the Global Shelter Cluster and R4V Hosting Sector websites, as well as CaLP.

⁶ Consult UN-Habitat "Contribution of housing to the fulfillment of the 2030 agenda". [Link](#)

1

Security of Tenure.



those conditions that guarantee occupants legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats.

2

Availability of Services, Materials, Facilities, and Infrastructure.



Said availability refers to ensuring drinkable water, adequate sanitation facilities, energy for food preparation, heating/air conditioning and lighting, and food conservation or waste disposal, within the housing infrastructure.

3

Affordability



This refers to the cost of housing. A high price may pose a threat, danger, or difficulty to the fulfillment of other human rights for refugees and migrants occupying housing.

7

Cultural Appropriateness



Housing should consider how the activities of individuals develop in their daily activities in the space, in accordance with their cultural identity and diversity.

4

Habitability



The forthcoming conditions will guarantee the physical safety of its inhabitants there must be sufficient living space, as well as protection against cold, humidity, heat, rain, and wind or other health risks and structural hazards.



5

Accessibility



Housing can be an element of discrimination in itself if its design and construction do not consider the specific needs or disadvantages and marginalized groups

6

Location



Is fundamental to ensuring the right access to security, education, health, work, as well as access to free time and rest.

1st **ELEMENT**



Security of Tenure

Security of tenure is described as those conditions that guarantee occupants legal protection against forced eviction, harassment and other threats. The tenure of interest in this document is that of lease, whether public or private, but it may have other forms such as cooperative housing, ownership by purchase, inheritance or donation; usufruct; among others.

Protection against forced evictions is reflected more intensely in the Security of Tenure Element, which allows us to analyze the risks that could result in the forced eviction of a refugee or migrant family. Such evictions are a serious violation of human rights, mainly the right to adequate housing; since evictions cannot result in rendering a person homeless, leaving them exposed to different risks.

It is important to keep in mind that security of tenure is not synonymous with the right to a property or the right to land. In fact, the right to adequate housing is a broader concept, which must be given over and above the other two.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

<p>With whom do you have a lease agreement?</p>	<p>Owner or real estate company</p> <hr/> <p>Sublandlord</p> <hr/> <p>Don't know</p>
<p>How long is the lease agreement?</p>	<p>One year or more agreement</p> <hr/> <p>Monthly agreement</p> <hr/> <p>Weekly agreement</p> <hr/> <p>Daily agreement</p> <hr/> <p>No duration set</p> <hr/> <p>Other</p> <hr/> <p>NS/NC</p>

<p>What kind of contract do you have with your owner/sublandlord?</p>	<p>Written contract (before a notary or competent institution)</p> <hr/> <p>Written Contract (between parties)</p> <hr/> <p>Agreement/Verbal contract</p> <hr/> <p>Without contract/agreement</p>
<p>Is there proof of rent payment?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Have you felt discriminated against when renting (for reasons related to place of origin or nationality, economic status, gender, culture or race, number of children, pets or others)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>How would you define your relationship with the owner/sublandlord?</p>	<p>Very good</p> <hr/> <p>Good</p> <hr/> <p>Regular</p> <hr/> <p>Bad</p>
<p>¿What kind of support network do you have (where could you turn to in the event of an eviction)?</p>	<p>Hotel or Shelter</p> <hr/> <p>Family or Friends house</p> <hr/> <p>Public Institutions, NGOs/Agencies, Church, Red Cross</p> <hr/> <p>Collective Shelter</p> <hr/> <p>No alternatives</p>
<p>Do you believe there is a chance to be evicted in the next 30 days?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>In the last 3 months, have you or any member of your family ever felt the risk from sleeping or had to sleep in a shelter/street at least one night as a result of being evicted?</p>	<p>Never slept in the street nor shelters</p> <hr/> <p>Had the risk to sleep in the street or shelter but never happened</p> <hr/> <p>Slept in the Street or in a shelter</p>

2nd ELEMENT



Availability of services, materials, facilities, and infrastructure.

Said availability refers to ensuring drinkable water, adequate sanitation facilities, energy for food preparation, heating/air conditioning and lighting, and food conservation or waste disposal, within the housing infrastructure.

This element is directly linked to habitability, and refers to the built quality of the housing, without forgetting that, in turn, it guarantees access to health, safety, comfort, and nutrition for its inhabitants.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

Does the shelter have electricity?	Yes, formal <hr/> yes, Informal <hr/> No
Do the electrical installations pose a risk due to their poor condition?	Yes <hr/> No
Are the accommodation rooms sufficiently illuminated at night?	Yes <hr/> No
Does the accommodation have access to potable water, food preparation and personal hygiene infrastructure?	Yes, formal aqueduct (public water mains/aqueduct) <hr/> Yes, hosepipe or community aqueduct <hr/> Yes, water tanker or water truck <hr/> Yes, bottled water <hr/> Yes, own well <hr/> No

<p>How often does the residence have access to water?</p>	<p>24/7</p> <hr/> <p>A few hours everyday</p> <hr/> <p>6 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>5 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>4 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>3 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>2 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>1 days a week</p> <hr/> <p>1 day every two weeks</p> <hr/> <p>1 day every three weeks</p> <hr/> <p>1 day every 3 weeks</p> <hr/> <p>No access</p>
<p>Does the accommodation have access to a sanitation system (toilets, latrines)?</p>	<p>Yes, flush toilet connected to sewage system</p> <hr/> <p>Yes, flush toilet connected to septic tank</p> <hr/> <p>Yes, single pit latrine (no connection to septic tank or sewerage)</p> <hr/> <p>No access</p>
<p>Are the toilet facilities shared by several families?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>What is the condition of the toilet?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>Good enough</p> <hr/> <p>Not good enough, in poor condition</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely poor and/or unhygienic</p>
<p>Is there a sink next to the toilet?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

<p>Does the accommodation have a toilet facility (shower, hose, bucket washing area, other)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Is there a garbage management and collection service in the vicinity of the accommodation?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

3rd ELEMENT



Affordability

This refers to the cost of housing. A high price may pose a threat, danger, or difficulty to the fulfillment of other human rights for refugees and migrants occupying housing.

The UN in 2018, estimated that housing is considered affordable if the household spends less than 30% of income on expenses associated with housing. This percentage is indicative and would require a detailed study, but it is very useful as an initial reference. Within the expression "housing-related expenses" we cannot only consider the rent payment, but also the cost of construction materials, although this is not the main focus of this tool.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

The interviewer should ask the household the following two questions to elicit answer, based on the answers, adjust the last question:

1. how much do you pay per month for rent, plus utilities (water, light, gas and/or electricity) plus other expenses associated with housing (community expenses, other)?

2. Among all household members, what is your monthly household income?

Does the surveyed household pay for rent more than ... percent of their total monthly income?

Between 0% and 30%

Between 30% and 50%

Between 50% and 70%

Between 70% and 100%

<p>How often do you pay your rent?</p>	<p>Daily</p> <hr/> <p>Weekly</p> <hr/> <p>Bi-weekly</p> <hr/> <p>Monthly</p>
<p>Have you been able to pay your rent on time during the last 3 months?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you have any debts, delinquencies or delays associated with your lease payment?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Have you been exposed to risks or have you had to take any action that harmed your dignity (borrowing, selling/bartering items, begging, etc.) to make up the rent payment in the last month?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Considering your current resources and savings, how long can you afford to pay your rent?</p>	<p>More than 6 months</p> <hr/> <p>Between 3 and 6 months</p> <hr/> <p>Between 3 and 6 months</p> <hr/> <p>Neither or less than a month</p>

4th **ELEMENT**



Habitability

This element is the one that has traditionally been associated with the suitability and dignity of housing, and has limited the overall global village perception of understanding housing as a container to house people; instead of in its full definition, which complements the other six crucial elements.

The forthcoming conditions will guarantee the physical safety of its inhabitants there must be sufficient living space, as well as protection against cold, humidity, heat, rain, and wind or other health risks and structural hazards.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

<p>Identify the room where the largest number of people in your household sleeps, how many people are in that room?</p>	<p>1 to 2 persons</p> <hr/> <p>3 persons</p> <hr/> <p>4 persons</p> <hr/> <p>5 or more persons</p>
<p>Do you feel safe inside your accommodation because you have enough privacy and there are partitions, walls or door locks that prevent exposure to risks (harassment, assault, or exploitation)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Is the accommodation safe from minor damage to the infrastructure or risks of falling from stairs, windows, or double heights?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

<p>Is the physical and structural condition of the building safe for the people who live in it?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Does the dwelling offer conditions for minimum privacy (existence of an adequate lock for access control in your room or dwelling, partitions, partitions or good condition of doors in private spaces such as bathrooms, bedrooms, baby changing areas or menstrual hygiene management)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Is the space where you sleep exclusively for sleeping and is it separated from other uses of the dwelling (kitchen, bathroom and social area)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Does the accommodation have enough natural light in all rooms?</p>	<p>Yes, in all of them</p> <hr/> <p>No, only in some</p> <hr/> <p>None</p>
<p>Does the accommodation have enough natural ventilation?</p>	<p>Yes, all of them</p> <hr/> <p>No, only some</p> <hr/> <p>None</p>
<p>What is the floor/ground condition?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>In good shape</p> <hr/> <p>In bad shape</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely substandard and/or unhygienic</p>
<p>What is the condition of walls or partitions?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>In good shape</p> <hr/> <p>In bad shape</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely substandard and/or unhygienic</p>
<p>What are the conditions of the doors?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>In good shape</p> <hr/> <p>In bad shape</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely substandard and/or unhygienic</p>

<p>What are the conditions of the windows?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>In good shape</p> <hr/> <p>In bad shape</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely substandard and/or unhygienic</p>
<p>What is the condition of the roof or deck?</p>	<p>Excellent</p> <hr/> <p>In good shape</p> <hr/> <p>In bad shape</p> <hr/> <p>Nonexistent, extremely substandard and/or unhygienic</p>
<p>Do you consider that the housing protects people from excessive heat or cold?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you have enough household essentials (utensils for food preparation and consumption, beds, mattresses, furniture, appliances) to carry out basic household activities?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

5th **ELEMENT**



Accessibility

Housing can be an element of discrimination in itself if its design and construction do not consider the specific needs or disadvantages and marginalized groups, particularly people living with physical disabilities or the elderly.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

<p>Does the surrounding area offer enough lighting conditions, good pavement conditions, presence of handrails and ramps, without excessive slopes or barriers to pedestrian access?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Does the interior of the accommodation have sufficient dimensions (width of doors and corridors) and conditions (existence of ramps, other facilitators or elements that facilitate use) to allow the elderly, children or people with disabilities to access and make full use of the space (including the bathing area)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

6th **ELEMENT**

 Location

Every person has the right to choose his or her residence; however, for it to be adequate, its location must include or be in close proximity to employment opportunities, health services, schools, day care centers and other social services and facilities, and be located away from areas with the risk of disaster as well as dangerous or polluted zones. This element can be a challenge in large cities especially those in Latin America, if transportation costs are not included in the analysis can become very high.

Location is fundamental to ensuring the right access to security, education, health, work, as well as access to free time and rest. It is the element that best reflects the idea of adequate housing beyond the built environment. This links housing with the urban space in which it is implemented, adding value to the territory, and highlighting the importance of having green areas.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

Is the accommodation close to a public transportation option?	Yes <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> No
Is the accommodation close (walking distance or accessible transportation) to a health center?	Yes <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> No
Is the accommodation close (on foot or by accessible transportation) to an educational center?	Yes <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> No
Is the accommodation close (on foot or via accessible transportation) to markets, stores or wineries?	Yes <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> No
Is the livelihood or income-generating housing options within walking distance (or via accessible transportation)?	Yes <hr style="border: 1px solid orange;"/> No

<p>Is the accommodation close (on foot or via accessible transportation) to parks, green areas or other recreational spaces?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you consider that the home is exposed to disaster risks (floods, landslides, fires, proximity to chemical industries, landfills or military targets)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you consider that the dwelling is exposed to security risks, abuse and/or violence because of where it is located (neighborhood/community)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you consider your accommodation to be in a neighborhood/community that welcomes your presence (because of your origin or nationality, economic, gender, cultural or racial status)?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <hr/> <p>Partially</p> <hr/> <p>No</p>

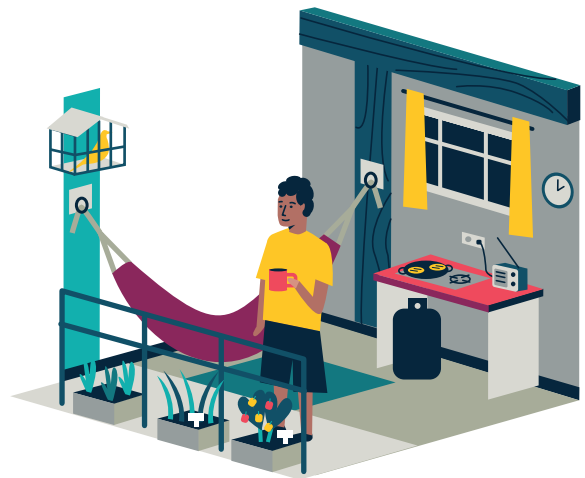
7th **ELEMENT**



Cultural Appropriateness

Ethnically, the space must respect and consider the expression of the cultural identity of its inhabitants. Since housing is the space in which human beings develop as individuals and integrate as part of society, housing should consider not only the spatial constructs, but also how the activities of individuals develop in their daily activities in the space, in accordance with their cultural identity and diversity.

This element is particularly relevant in the case of mobile populations, such as refugees and migrants, who radically change the context, their origin, transit and destination. It is also particularly relevant in contexts of non-westernized communities or diverse ethnic communities with links to rural areas that arrive in urban or peri-urban contexts.



KEY QUESTIONS:

GREEN those of direct consultation with the respondent

ORANGE those answered by direct observation in a technical visit to the housing

RED Those that imply direct categorization as inadequate housing

<p>Do you consider that the housing allows you to live according to your customs and beliefs?</p>	<p>Yes _____</p> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you consider that the construction of the housing adapts to the traditions and beliefs of the population or poses a risk to the identity, safety, security, protection and/or health of the people in the household?</p>	<p>Yes _____</p> <p>No</p>

ADEQUACY OF HOUSING STANDARDS



ADEQUATE HOUSING

Refers to housing that meets all seven elements of the definition of Adequate Housing.



INADEQUATE HOUSING

It is considered critically inadequate housing when it poses an imminent risk to the resident and, in most cases, would require the relocation of the family's unit. Examples of this situation are houses located in an area at risk of disasters or completely isolated without access to any public service or structurally unsound buildings.

Four elements are identified that directly categorize a dwelling as inadequate:

1. The building poses a risk to the people who live in it due to its physical and structural conditions.
2. The accommodation has access to electricity, allowing the performance of housing daily tasks and providing protection during the hours of darkness.
3. The accommodation does not have access to drinking water, food preparation and personal hygiene.
4. The accommodation does not have a sanitation system (toilets, latrines).
5. The shelter is exposed to disaster risks

How are the scoring tool levels defined? Each key question presented throughout the document has four values according to the answer obtained, which in turn is associated with a specific score based on whether its proximity to the optimal levels of adequate housing. To interpret the result, it is initially necessary to define relative weighting for each of the seven elements according to the context in which the assessment is carried out or the interests and needs of both the affected population and the organization providing the assistance.

Through a methodology of composed indicators, averages are weighted resulting in percentages relative to various levels of housing adequacy, establishing a general range in the spectrum between the categories of adequate and inadequate housing. The user will also be able to visualize the situation to each of the seven elements evaluated in the individual's dwelling of interest.

In short, the tool will allow the housing specialist to program an appropriate response in each case based on the analyzed data collected⁷.



⁷ For more information download the tool in the QR code on the following page.

Scan the QR code below to download the editable version of the Scoring Tool.

For more information see the www.r4v.info website.



