

An Introduction to Hosting Assistance Programming



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This document provides selected extracts from the IFRC (2024) Step-by-Step Guide for Hosting Assistance to People Affected by Crisis and it is intended to introduce the reader to some of the key concepts related to Hosting Assistance Programming, for those requiring further information please refer to the guide

What is hosting assistance?

Hosting someone in need is one of the oldest forms of humanitarian response. Often occurring organically through family members or friends, host households are often the first responders to those displaced in times of crisis. In addition to hosting someone known through familial or social networks, there are also many examples of hosts showing humanity by opening their homes to strangers. The Red Cross Red Crescent can play an important enabling role in supporting this local coping mechanism, helping to sustain existing “hosted arrangement[s]” (the Sphere Handbook¹ term) and facilitating safe and advantageous new hosted arrangements.

Hosting assistance is a humanitarian assistance option that helps to facilitate successful hosting. It can be provided by humanitarian actors (Red Cross Red Crescent, authorities, civil society) working in a coordinated and complimentary manner, to respond to the vulnerabilities, needs and capacities of three distinct categories of people in the context of a hosted arrangement:

- The displaced/guests;
- The hosts; and
- The wider host community.

Key advantages of hosting assistance





- 1 Displaced people can access safer, more dignified and stable accommodation of a good standard when compared to a collective centre or camp.
- 2 Accommodation not otherwise available (i.e. in the housing market) is made available by hosts. In particular, hosting can relieve pressure on camps, collective centres and the rental market.
- 3 Host households, where there is “good-will”, may provide additional support with food, water, emotional support, ad hoc translation, childcare, orientation, help with navigating access to services, in some cases help with finding livelihood opportunities, and social and professional connections.
- 4 Where the host and guest know each other (extended family, friends, friends of friends/family), there is an added sense of security and trust.
- 5 Accommodation may be spread throughout the wider host community and as such avoids the concentration of groups, supporting greater integration, and access to opportunities related to livelihoods, markets and services. It may ease pressures on public services and markets (e.g. labour market), as compared to when displaced populations are concentrated in a particular area.
- 6 Hosting promotes greater interaction between host and displaced populations which has been shown to build empathy and reduce social tensions.

¹The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (2018), p279. “Hosted Arrangement” is listed as a post-crisis dispersed settlement scenario in the Shelter and Settlements technical chapter and is described as “Host populations provide shelter for displaced populations or individual families.” With examples given as “Houses, apartments, land already occupied or made available by the host population”.




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What does hosting assistance involve?

Hosting assistance can be delivered in a range of ways and can involve the following components:

| Component of Support | Notes/Examples |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Information support</p>  | <p>For hosts, displaced people, guests. This relates to a variety of informational resources including how to make the best success of a hosted arrangement, manage shared space and resolve problems that can arise between hosts and guests. For guests, it can include how to navigate the neighbourhood, understanding cultural aspects of life, information on how to access services, information on how to find work, how to reduce utility bills or rehome pets among other topics. For hosts it may be information to help them manage expectations, prepare for hosting, and understand how they can best inform and assist their guest.</p> |
| <p>2 Accommodation checks, improvement and adaptation</p>  | <p>Checks to ensure accommodation is safe and suitable for those they are hosting. Simple adaptations such as minor electrical or fire safety adjustments, to more significant adaptations such as the installation of handrailing or lighting modifications to accommodate a guest with a disability or supporting hosts to make dilapidated accommodation habitable.</p> |
| <p>3 Safeguarding risk support</p>  | <p>Protection risk vetting of hosts (and guests), monitoring of protection risks during the hosted period, follow-up of sensitive feedback/complaints and protection related case management more broadly (including specialized Protection services), identification of vulnerabilities in the guest household and protection related referrals or direct programming.</p> |
| <p>4 Orientation, training and network support to hosts</p>  | <p>Helping hosts to understand the commitment they are making to host, managing expectations and anticipating the impact on their lives. Training can include topics such as cultural understanding, setting ground rules, resolving tensions as they arise, and managing the process of guests moving-on, amongst other topics. Establishing a host network on existing social media platforms, WhatsApp (or similar) support groups, or mentoring by experienced hosts may also assist hosts.</p> |

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| Component of Support | Notes/Examples |
|---|--|
| <p>5 Assessment of households, matching, agreements, and placement support</p>  | <p>Assessing hosts and guests for hosting, facilitating matches, assisting with household agreements that facilitate living together and avoid problems and supporting the guest in their move. Identifying guest vulnerabilities and making appropriate referrals can also be part of this assessment, however, this will also occur during hosting via case management (part of complementary programming, integration and exit support).</p> |
| <p>6 Financial support and other incentives for host and/or guest</p>  | <p>Provision of multi-purpose cash assistance. This may be paid to hosts as a form of recognition for hosting efforts, as compensation for some of the hosting costs, and/or as an incentive to encourage their engagement in a hosting assistance programme. Alternatively, this can be paid to guests, empowering them to choose how to use the support. Other incentives could include Insurance for damage or liability, tax breaks for hosts, guarantees in case of non-departure of guest household.</p> |
| <p>7 Complementary programming, integration, inclusion and exit support</p>  | <p>Complementary programming refers to different activities and modalities of support used to achieve objectives complementary to the accommodation support. Integration and Inclusion support helps displaced people to integrate with the host community, while exit support includes casework to assist guests to exit the hosted arrangement.</p> <p>Examples of activities: Household items provision; Mental Health and Psycho-social support; Language knowledge support; Transport support; Education; Livelihoods support, Child-care support; Grants for deposits and/or guarantor support to assist guests accessing the private rental housing sector when exiting hosting; Social connections and network fostering; Activities with the wider host community. These are examples and the list is non-exhaustive.</p> |

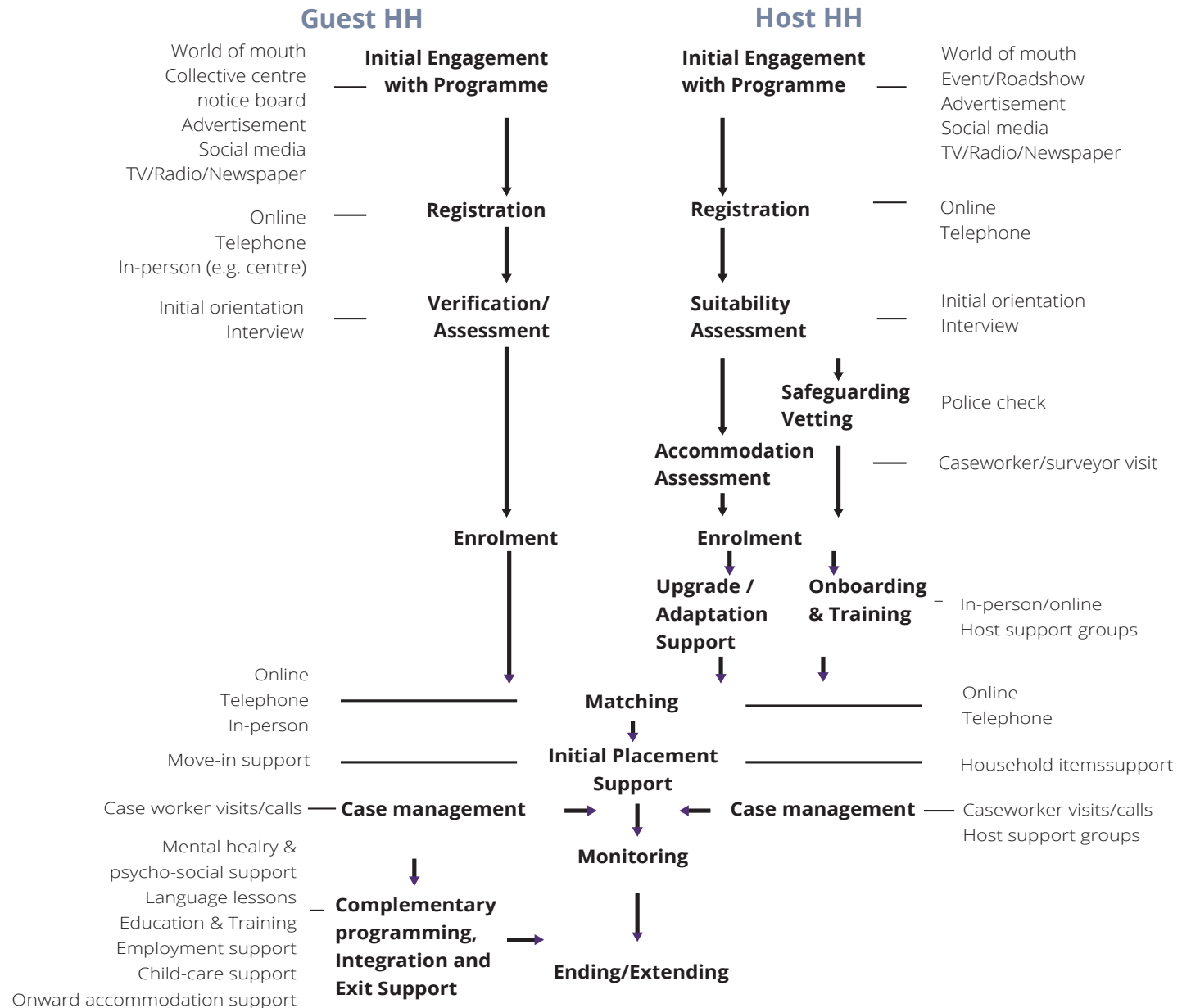
The role of the Red Cross Red Crescent in hosting assistance can vary, and could include:

- Non-implementation: coordination and/or providing technical assistance on delivering hosting assistance programming to other organisations
- Implementation: comprehensive hosting assistance programme that includes the whole process of hosting (registration, vetting, assessing, matching, case management etc.) or it could be only contributing one or two components of hosting assistance, perhaps as part of a programme run by others.

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Process overview

A typical hosting assistance programme could have the following process overview:

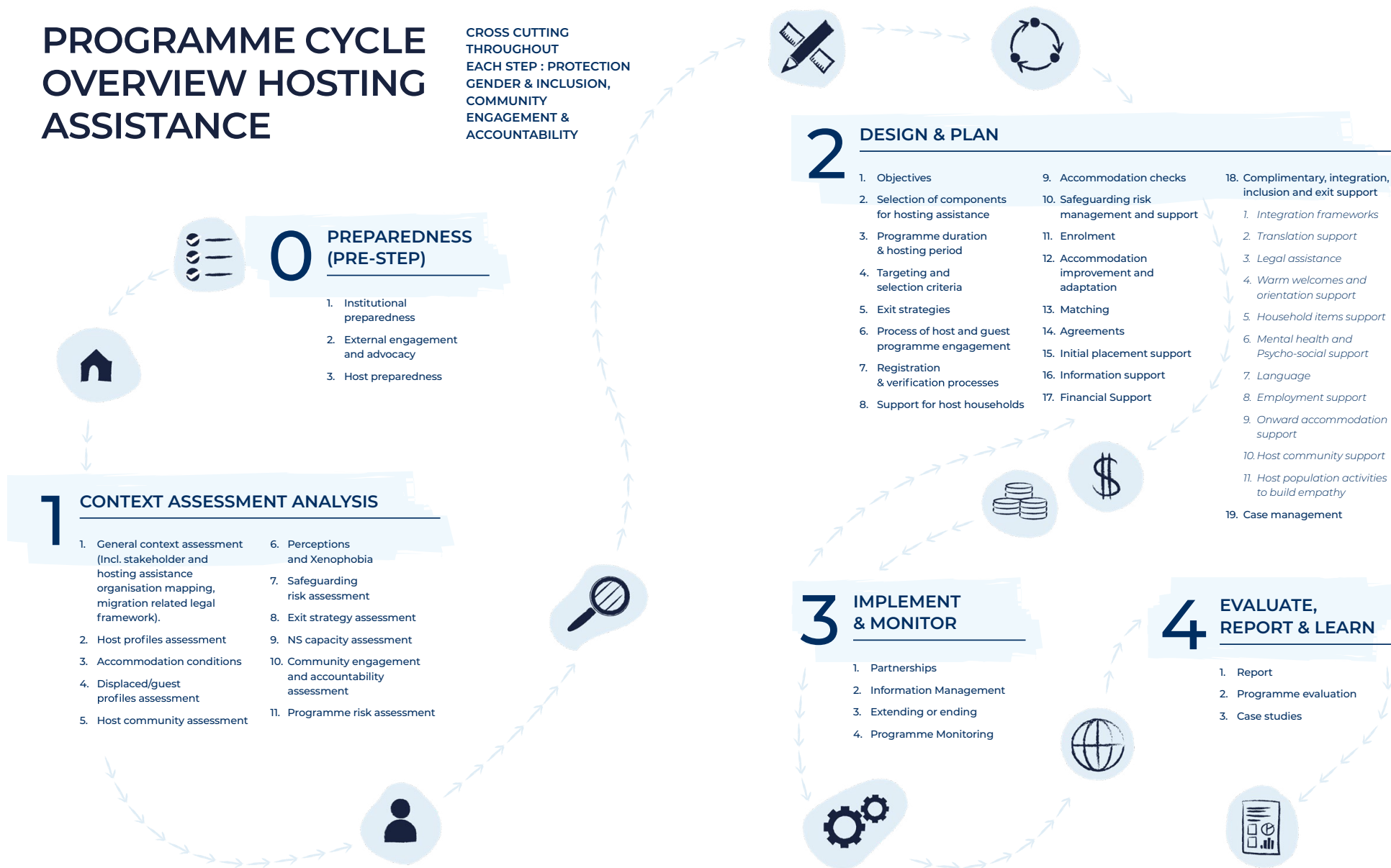


How do you design a hosting assistance programme?

As with other programmes, the steps in hosting assistance can be considered in relation to the humanitarian programme cycle.

PROGRAMME CYCLE OVERVIEW HOSTING ASSISTANCE

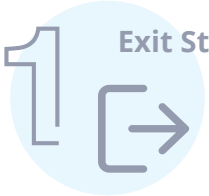


CROSS CUTTING THROUGHOUT EACH STEP : PROTECTION GENDER & INCLUSION, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY



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Selected Key concepts in Hosting Assistance Programming


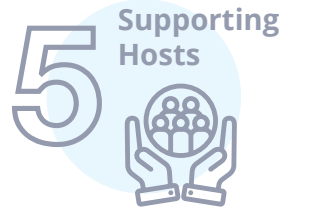

The following are important considerations in any hosting assistance programme:

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|  <p>Exit Strategy</p> | <p>The exit strategy concerns how households will be supported to exit hosting while still maintaining access to adequate housing. There may be many different pathways, from integration, finding employment and renting onward accommodation, to accessing social housing, to voluntary return to place of origin. It must be appreciated that there are different pathways for varying profiles of guests. Considering the exit strategy early on in your programme design is crucial to avoid the risk of hosts feeling trapped and obligated to continue hosting, and because the support needed to help guests to exit hosting may take time to achieve results (e.g. integration and employability support). This will impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The duration of your hosting assistance programme and the minimum hosting period you accept from potential hosts • The targeting and selection criteria for displaced people • The design and resourcing of components of support (e.g. language lessons) |
|  <p>Working in Partnership</p> | <p>Hosting assistance should adopt a multi-stakeholder and multi-sectorial approach. Displaced households will be of varying profiles and have a range of sectorial needs, and these must be supported within a hosted arrangement. Where they are not appropriately supported the host may feel overwhelmed since they will be bearing the burden of this support. The Red Cross Red Crescent cannot provide all parts of the support, we must work in partnership with authorities and civil society organisations to be able to best support guests and hosts.</p> |
|  <p>Case management</p> | <p>Case management and case work is key to a successful hosting assistance programme. This can involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessing and matching suitable guests and hosts • Supporting the host in adjusting to living with the guest household, and how they can best support guests within their capacities, while avoiding fatigue. • Working with the guest household to develop a personalised development plan (particularly related to integration and exit) considering each member of the household, their capacities, vulnerabilities and needs. • Supporting the guest household to access appropriate services through referrals (external, or internal) including identifying any specific needs for certain groups, such as people with disabilities, pregnant and lactating women, and those facing exclusion. • Support the host and guests with considering extensions or onward accommodation options, such as a new match or accessing other housing. |

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Selected Key concepts in Hosting Assistance Programming

The following are important considerations in any hosting assistance programme:

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|  <p>Safeguarding risk management and support</p> | <p>The hosting assistance organisation has a duty of care to both hosts and guests when they are facilitating placements. Consider both the risks to guests from hosts and the risk from guests to hosts. As part of the programme design the following processes can contribute to protection risk management and safeguarding support including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Registration and verification• Vetting of hosts• Vetting of guests• Matching process• Case-management and monitoring visits• Hotline, complaints and feedback mechanism |
|  <p>Supporting Hosts</p> | <p>From the outset, hosting assistance organisations should consider and agree the role of hosts in a hosting assistance programme (which may be different than where hosts support family or friends). While hosts may play a crucial role in supporting their guests, they should not be obligated to do more than providing accommodation and a welcoming environment. Hosting assistance organisations and public bodies should provide the bulk of support to guests to not exhaust the good-will of hosts, so hosting assistance programmes should be designed with this in mind from the outset.</p> |
|  <p>Information management</p> | <p>A Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database with comprehensive data protection is an essential part of managing a hosting assistance programme at scale. When working in a consortium or with other stakeholders (for example local authorities or referral organisations) there may need to be data sharing protocols and agreements put in place. It can take significant time and resources to develop a CRM that is compliant with data protection requirements and to negotiate these arrangements. Where possible it is recommended that this is developed as part of preparedness activities.</p> |

Where can you get more information?

Please see the IFRC (2024) Step-by-Step Guide for Hosting Assistance to People Affected by Crisis

For Red Cross Red Crescent Movement Staff and Volunteers who have queries related to undertaking hosting assistance programming and require any assistance in the application of the guide you are welcome to contact the IFRC Urban Resilience and Settlements team on: shelter.settlements@ifrc.org and/or Ela Serdaroglu, Urban Resilience and Settlements Lead ela.serdaroglu@ifrc.org.