



# SHELTERBOX: SUPPORTING WOMEN AND CHILDREN



Women and their children are disproportionately affected by disaster and conflict. They account for 75% of the world's refugees and displaced people.

When women and children lose their home due to conflict or disaster, they often have to sleep in crowded collective centres or in the open air. This makes them increasingly vulnerable to exploitation, violence and the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Lack of access to critical healthcare, clean water, sanitation and hygiene and inadequate shelter put pregnant women at risk.

**60% OF ALL PREVENTABLE MATERNAL DEATHS TAKE PLACE IN CONFLICT SETTINGS, DISPLACEMENT OR DISASTERS.**

During conflict and disaster, people often lose their livelihoods, which can make it difficult to afford food, school fees and other essential things for their children. Without a space to study in, and without the tools they need to study, children can lose out on schooling, drop out of school, and become trapped in a cycle of poverty.



**YAZIDA IS A WIDOWED MOTHER OF ONE LIVING IN A SMALL MAKESHIFT SHELTER IN KUTUPALONG SETTLEMENT CLOSE TO THE COASTAL TOWN OF COX'S BAZAR.**

When we met her, Yazida was just eighteen-years-old. Four months previously, she had traveled to the camp with her daughter Fatima who was two at the time, after her husband was brutally murdered during the attacks in her village.



< In the Philippines Jini, pregnant mother of three, stands with one of her children on top of the ruins of their home which was destroyed by a typhoon.



## AMIRA

**Amira and her family fled the war in Syria and arrived in a refugee settlement in the northwest of the country.**

**“THERE IS NOTHING MORE IMPORTANT THAN HOME.”**

“We left our house because of the war, as we had no other choice because of the bombing of our house.”

Winters in Syria can be harsh and cold. The family were sleeping in a car and then in a cheap tent with a broken zip.

The children were always freezing and frightened. Every day felt like a battle against the elements.

ShelterBox's partners in the settlement provided Amira with a large tent with plenty of room for her whole family to live and sleep in. They also received a solar light, water carriers, blankets and tarpaulins to create more space and insulation from the harsh Syrian winters.

In their tent, the children study while the adults drink tea. They have a place to live and to start to rebuild after the horrors of war.

**“ALL OF THE ITEMS ARE IMPORTANT TO US BECAUSE WE HAD NO BLANKETS AND NO TENT FURNITURE AND WE HAD NO KITCHEN UTENSILS AT ALL AND WE CAN'T BUY POTS BECAUSE OF THE HIGH PRICES.”**



## LETE

A pregnant woman displaced by the conflict in northern Ethiopia. "I'm pregnant, I'm displaced, but I'm still alive,"

**"I WALKED 90 KILOMETRES FROM MY HOMETOWN WITH MY CHILDREN. BEING PREGNANT, IT WAS EXTREMELY CHALLENGING. I WAS ALONE WITH MY CHILDREN, I HAD TO LEAVE MY HUSBAND BEHIND AND WE HAVE NOT SEEN HIM SINCE. HALFWAY THROUGH OUR JOURNEY, SOME PEOPLE HELPED US AND LET US INTO THEIR CAR TO GET HERE," SHE SAYS.**

▽ 41-year-old Grace is a widow with six children from a village called Chabuka in Malawi. Her entire house and everything she owned was washed away when the fast-flowing water swamped her village



## HOW SHELTERBOX SUPPORTS MOTHERS AND CHILDREN

When homes are destroyed by disaster and conflict, ShelterBox supports the most vulnerable members of a community with emergency shelter and other essential aid. Our vulnerability criteria ensures that groups such as families with elderly relatives, pregnant women and new mothers are prioritized.

**Emergency shelter helps to create a place for women and children that feels safer and is more private. It can reduce the time in collective centres, or even sleeping out in the open, where privacy, safety and dignity are hard to protect. Equality and safeguarding often starts with being able to create privacy – a space to call your own that is separate or screened off from others.**

When ShelterBox provides a place for a mother and child to live, we provide a roof over a sleeping child's head. Women are often the primary care givers. Shelter and other items help with immediate needs like where they will sleep and how they can prepare food. So women can consider the next steps like re-establishing ways to earn money and make a living and re-establish their children's education. With a roof over her head, a mother who has lost everything can plan and start her own business, such as farming or sewing. This not only brings in much-needed income but can promote healing, self-esteem and support a local economy.



## DIANE

Yokimi, along with her mother Diane, live in Tokou on the island of Ovalau, Fiji, which suffered widespread damage as a result of Cyclone Winston. When our response teams reached Ovalau, they found massive trees on their sides, stripped clean of leaves and branches, while broken belongings lay stranded in the rubble.

**'I'M SO HAPPY TO HAVE A TENT – TO HAVE A SAFE PLACE OF OUR OWN TO SLEEP'**

- Diane

**WE ALSO PROVIDE SOLAR LIGHTS SO CHILDREN LIVING IN PLACES WITHOUT ELECTRICITY CAN STILL STUDY FOR SCHOOL. WE OFFER COOKING EQUIPMENT SO MOTHERS CAN COOK MEALS TO SHARE WITH THEIR CHILDREN, AND WARM CLOTHES AND BLANKETS THAT KEEP CHILDREN SAFE FROM DISEASE.**

Play is also crucial to aid children's development. But without shelter, children have no where safe to play. They have no where safe to grow and learn. Shelter provides stability and a place to call home. It's a place where children can sleep safely at night, a place to wake up in the morning feeling safe and secure. That safety and security is what a child needs to play, make friends and engage with education.