

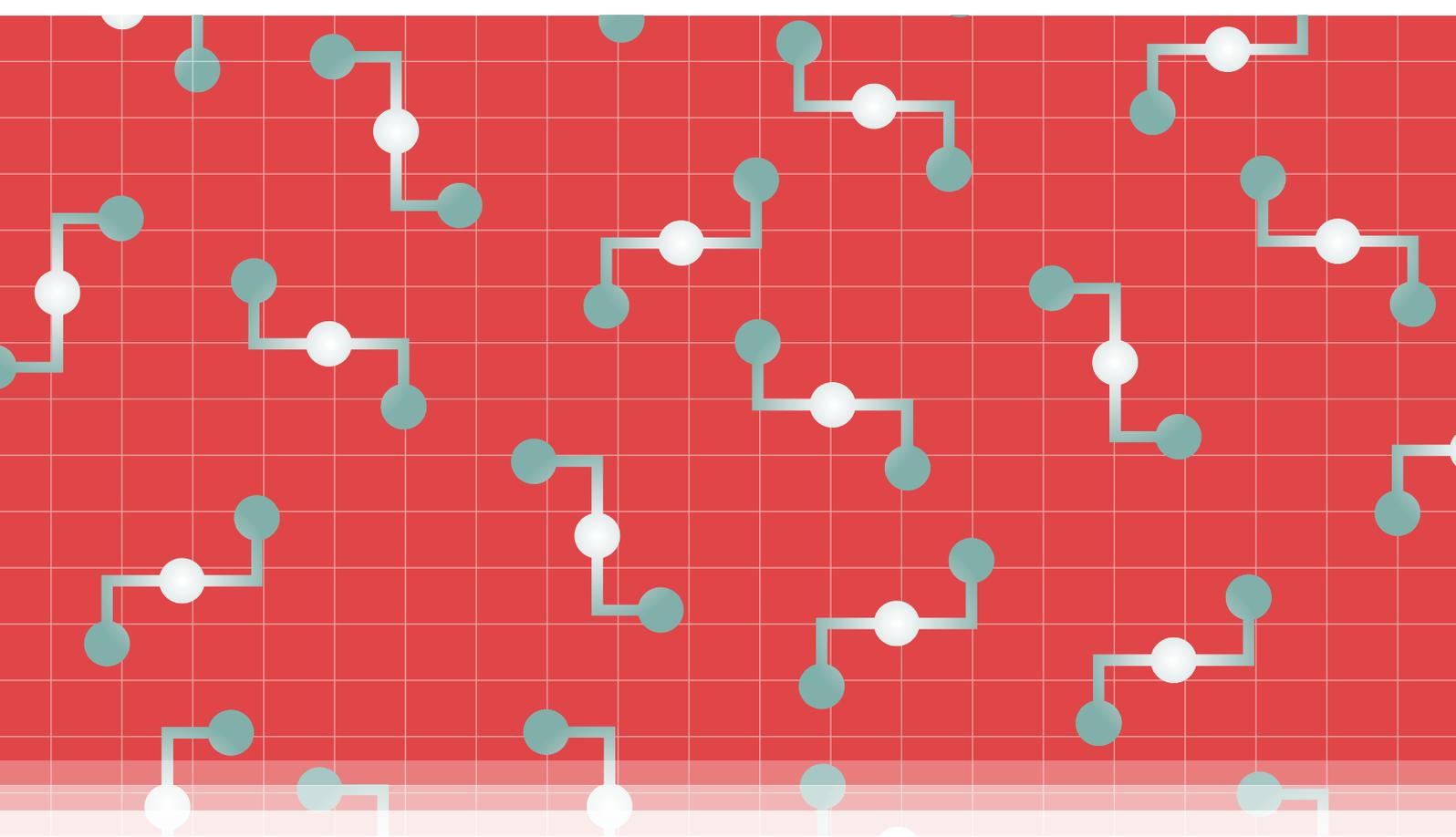
HPG case study

Coping with the risks of conflict, climate and internal displacement in northern Mozambique

‘We can’t just sit here with our arms crossed’

Caitlin Sturridge, João Feijó and Nelson Tivane

November 2022





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About the authors

Caitlin Sturridge is a Senior Research Fellow in Displacement with the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI (@CaitlinRS).

João Feijó (PhD) is a sociologist and researcher at the Observatório do Meio Rural (Research Institute on Rural Areas) in Mozambique, where he coordinates research on Poverty, Inequalities and Conflicts.

Nelson Tivane is a Policy Specialist on Displacement on a project implementing Mozambique’s Policy and Strategy for Internal Displacement Management (@Nelsontivane15).

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Acronyms

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
FRELIMO	Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (Liberation Front of Mozambique)
ICG	International Crisis Group
IED	improvised explosive device
IDP	internally displaced person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RENAMO	Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (Mozambican National Resistance)
SADC	Southern African Development Community
UN	United Nations
WFP	World Food Programme

1 Introduction

Displacement brings trauma and suffering, as well as destabilising changes to people's physical surroundings, social networks, livelihood opportunities and local governance structures (Turner, 2010). These circumstances are exemplified in Cabo Delgado province in northern Mozambique (see Figure 1). Nearly one million people have been displaced from their homes, with most now living informally alongside local residents – often friends and family, but also strangers.¹ Limited livelihood opportunities and humanitarian assistance make life a daily struggle for survival characterised by grave protection risks, food insecurity, precarious shelter and ongoing psychosocial trauma.

While the vast majority of internally displaced persons (IDPs) cite a violent insurgency since 2017 as the main driver for displacement, there is a wider and much longer history to the current humanitarian situation, including decades of conflict, economic exclusion, political marginalisation, corruption and deep-seated local grievances over access to and control over natural resources. Climate-related risks such as regular tropical cyclones have compounded the vulnerabilities of displaced people. Cabo Delgado is accustomed to climate-related disasters, but in 2019 Cyclone Kenneth caused widespread destruction in the province, flattening villages and destroying lives and livelihoods.

While the upheaval of conflict, climate and displacement is often paralysing, it can also drive the need to re-establish lives and livelihoods that have been turned upside down (Turner, 2010). This research finds that many Mozambican IDPs are doing just this. They are rebuilding and diversifying their livelihoods across farming, fishing, artisanal mining, charcoal production, trading, small business, odd jobs and humanitarian assistance. While IDPs can therefore be agents in shaping their lives in displacement, many of these strategies are nevertheless short term and risky, characterised by a lack of choice and alternatives and a sense of having to do anything to survive. Under these circumstances, IDPs in Cabo Delgado are generally getting by, rather than getting ahead.

This paper is part of a two-year, multi-country research project that seeks to build evidence and raise awareness of the myriad ways in which urban IDPs respond to climate change, conflict and displacement. By mapping the range of strategies that IDPs employ, and analysing the obstacles, challenges and opportunities that these present for their protection and wellbeing, the research aims to create an entry point for actors at local, national and international levels to support communities affected by displacement in ways that reflect their experiences, preferences and aspirations. While humanitarian assistance provides a critical lifeline for these groups, the strategies that affected people are themselves able to deploy can be a critical determinant of their survival and recovery.

¹ Although exact figures are hard to come by and are contested, at the time of writing, the International Organization for Migration's (IOM)'s Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) estimated that 946,508 people were in displacement (<https://dtm.iom.int/mozambique>).

Figure 1 Map of Mozambique and the province of Cabo Delgado



1.1 The 'good', the 'bad' and the 'resilient'

Perceptions and imagery of displaced people are driven by wider political interests, racial stereotyping, conflict dynamics and economic incentives (Kotilainen and Pellander, 2022). Over the decades, three main narratives have emerged from across policy, practice and academia.

First, and in a reflection of their trauma and suffering, displaced people are routinely depicted as passive, helpless and innocent victims of their history and their situation (Malkki, 1996; Hovil, 2007; Chatty, 2009; Fiddian-Qasimiyeh, 2009; Turner, 2010). Better recognition of IDPs' agency is gaining traction within humanitarian circles. For example, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement recommends that 'states and other actors should recognise the rights and agency of IDPs to drive their own solutions and seek to understand and promote IDPs' capacities more deliberately' (2021: 22). Yet this ideological shift in the wider rhetoric remains nascent, and is not yet widespread in practical action. 'Too often, IDPs are seen merely as "beneficiaries" with needs' (UN High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, 2021: 21).

Second, and in a reflection of the growing securitisation of migration from around the 2000s, displaced people can also paradoxically be depicted as radicalised, ungrateful, calculating, aggressive, demanding, deviant and manipulative, and even as a dangerous and active threat (Harrell-Bond, 2002; Haynes et al., 2004; Mountz, 2011; Agier, 2011). At either of these 'good' and 'bad' extremes, the effect is the same: to homogenise, dehumanise and objectify those who are displaced – outcomes for which the humanitarian sector has been widely and strongly criticised (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Malkki, 1996; Turton, 2003; Krause, 2014; Ticktin, 2014).

In more recent years, a third framing has emerged linked to resilience and self-reliance. This builds on the wider language of participation and inclusion, and is espoused by the 2016 Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and 2018 Global Compact on Refugees. The assumption is that fostering displaced people's agency to make decisions about their lives will ultimately build towards durable solutions (Easton-Calabria, 2021: 35). Nevertheless, by celebrating individual agency and ability, narratives of resilience and self-reliance can also be problematic, particularly when they downplay underlying structures and inequalities, and shift the responsibility for coping and adapting onto displaced people themselves, often with adverse implications for their wellbeing and protection (Ilcan and Rygiel, 2015; Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018; Farbotko et al., 2018; Hilhorst, 2018;).

Language matters. It establishes a tone from the outset that reinforces particular visions and worldviews, and subsequently limits the questions asked, the objects studied and the methodologies adopted (Bakewell, 2008; Hendrix-Jenkins, 2020). Imagery and discourse have power that translates into policy and practice to influence the ways in which displaced people are treated, controlled and managed (Turton, 2003), in particular, what support is afforded to displaced people, and the kinds of solutions that are prioritised (Johnson, 2011).

The language of victimhood, for example, justifies displaced people ‘being told to forget, being told to wait, being administered and generally considered bewildered and bereft victims’ (Ehrkamp, 2017: 818). The language of deviance vindicates the anti-immigration policies that have taken root in some countries, and which typically frame displacement in terms of chaos, conflict and insecurity (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022). And the language of self-reliance arguably reflects a neoliberal ‘fix’ for minimising the cost of protracted displacement to the international community:

By framing self-reliance as a way to empower refugees and as a panacea for dependency syndrome, the international refugee regime can justify decreasing assistance to protracted refugee populations, and even completely withdrawing assistance. (Easton-Calabria and Omata, 2018: 1,466)

More nuanced and context-specific interpretations are therefore needed that better reflect the lived realities of displaced people. IDPs are a heterogenous group whose capacity for agency and survival varies according to age, gender, socioeconomic status, access to resources and mental wellbeing. Options are also determined by structural factors – the wider political economy, host government policies, conflict dynamics, third parties and availability of humanitarian assistance. Options and opportunities also ebb and flow over time depending on the duration of displacement, shifts in the attitudes of government and host communities, peaks and troughs in the availability of humanitarian assistance, lulls in the conflict and seasonal fluctuations in the weather.

In this mixed and uncertain context, IDPs’ agency and resilience is important, but it also should not be romanticised. Agency and resilience cannot replace appropriate policies and humanitarian assistance. There are limits to what IDPs can achieve on their own. And their actions have impacts – both positive and negative – not just for themselves, but also for the communities that host them.

1.2 Methodology

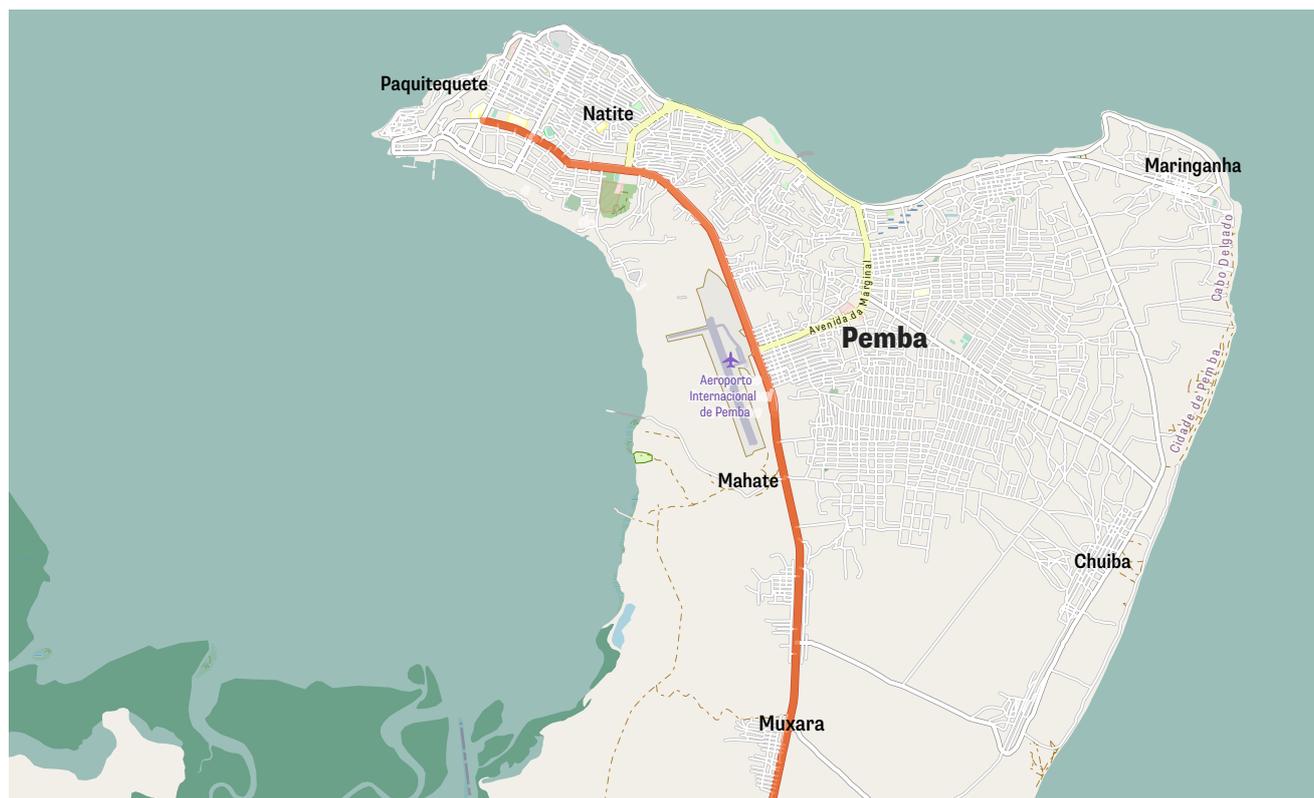
Following an in-depth review of the academic and grey literature on climate, conflict and displacement, the study used a qualitative approach to explore the following research questions:

1. How do IDPs cope with and adapt to climate change, conflict and displacement?
2. How do these coping and adaptive mechanisms impact the lives of IDPs and their hosts?
3. What are the implications for aid actors, governments and policymakers?

This report builds on the findings of two principal researchers. João Feijó produced an analytical paper that builds on his years of experience conducting research across Cabo Delgado. Nelson Tivane carried out primary data collection in Cabo Delgado during June 2022. This included in-depth semi-structured interviews with 35 IDPs and five host families in Pemba. Respondents were identified through purposive and snowballing techniques, and disaggregated by age and gender. Care was taken to interview respondents residing in different neighbourhoods in Pemba (Mahate, Natite, Chuiba, Muxara and Paquitequete) (see Figure 2) and to identify IDPs from a range of communities of origin (including the

districts of Mocímboa da Praia, Palma, Macomia, Muidumbe and Quissanga). To protect the anonymity of respondents, the researchers refrained from collecting identifying information, and this paper refers only to respondents' gender, and not their age, place of origin or place of current residence.

Figure 2 Neighbourhoods of Pemba in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado province



An additional 14 interviews were carried out with governmental and non-governmental informants involved in the humanitarian response. These respondents were mainly located in Pemba and Maputo, with some additional interviews conducted with regional experts.

The research focuses on IDPs in Pemba town for three reasons. First, IDPs there are overlooked and under-supported, living under the radar in rented houses or borrowed rooms, and at the margins of society.² The urbanisation of displacement is a second reason for narrowing the focus to Pemba town. Evidence shows that most people displaced by conflict and climate-related risks move relatively short distances, for the most part internally within their country, and increasingly to cities (Lloyd, 2021). In Cabo Delgado, the accelerated urban growth brought about by displacement is reinforcing social inequalities given low investment in infrastructure, public services, land and housing (World Bank, 2021).

² At the time of our data collection in Mozambique (June 2022), more IDPs were living in Pemba (139,566) than in any other area in Cabo Delgado, followed by Metuge (126,030), Nangade (116,538) and Mueda (104,270) (IOM, 2022a).

A third rationale is that an urban environment (characterised by relatively strong markets, trade and labour opportunities in comparison to rural areas) presents a relevant context for understanding the range of coping and adaptive mechanisms IDPs engage in.

1.3 Challenges and limitations

The volatile security situation in Cabo Delgado posed significant challenges to data collection. In the days prior to the research, a violent attack on Ancuabe, Chiúre and Mecufi (previously considered relatively safe and stable) triggered a fresh wave of displacement of some 60,000 people in just one month (Queface, 2022). These attacks came less than 24 hours after a visit by President Filipe Nyusi to Ancuabe town – contributing to heightened tensions, restricted mobility and reinforced security checks.

A second limitation is the small sample size of IDPs, host community members and key informants, totalling 54 interviews. While the populations sampled are not representative, they do nevertheless provide an insight into the lives and challenges facing displacement-affected communities in Mozambique – both those who have been displaced and those who have not.

A third limitation is that this study had originally intended to explore the impacts of IDP coping strategies on families and communities left behind in places of origin (and not just on IDPs and their hosts). However, this proved challenging in practice as, given the level of violent conflict in Cabo Delgado, few respondents were able to identify friends or family back home. Entire households and communities fled the violence, and in many cases those who stayed behind were killed, kidnapped or missing.

2 Conflict, climate and displacement in Cabo Delgado

Climate-related risks are often framed as natural and inevitable (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022). This apolitical approach overlooks the underlying vulnerabilities and exposure to risks that determine not only uneven access to environmental resources (such as land, water and pasture), but also why some groups are more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters than others. Political and historical context matter. They determine options, influence preferences and shape capacities. As summed up by Bryant (1997: 9): ‘Politics and environment are everywhere thoroughly interconnected’. As the analysis that follows will show, the confluence of social, environmental and governance issues is readily apparent in Cabo Delgado (Stewart et al., 2022).

IDP responses and strategies should thus be understood in relation to wider events and decisions taking place elsewhere and in the past. A key focus of this research is therefore not just how conflict, climate and displacement intersect, but rather the ways in which they create compounding vulnerabilities when they occur at the same time and in the same location (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022).

2.1 A history of conflict and displacement

‘Violence in Cabo Delgado is a structural constant,’ explained a non-governmental organisation (NGO) informant. ‘What is difficult to find are periods of peace.’ The reasons for conflict in Cabo Delgado are complex, comprising an array of different factors that stretch back generations (Adam, 1996; Nhachote, 2021). This long history of conflict, displacement and migration can be divided into four eras: the slave trade, the colonial period, the liberation struggle and the early post-independence period (Namaganda et al., 2022).

During the first of these eras, the extraction of slaves by European and African traders uprooted over a million Mozambicans from Cabo Delgado (Thomas, 1999). The colonial era introduced a history of imposition and force by Portuguese settlers characterised by forced labour and obligatory cultural assimilation (Capela and Medeiros, 1987; Isaacman, 1992; Feijó, 2020). The guerrilla war for independence in the 1960s, which was initially fought in the northern regions of Cabo Delgado and Niassa, ushered in a third era of conflict and displacement. To control movement and stifle resistance, the Portuguese authorities forcibly resettled Mozambicans into colonial villages (Funada-Classen, 2013). Similar practices of forced resettlement continued into the post-independence period, with the aim of ‘modernising’ the countryside. Finally, just two years after independence, civil war erupted between the national government, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) and the Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), which spread through the northern provinces of Mozambique throughout the 1980s. Lasting 16 years, the war left nearly a million people dead and between six and seven million displaced (Alberdi and Barroso, 2021).

Conflict and tension also mark periods of peace, albeit in different guises. Cabo Delgado has endured years of corruption and nepotism as liberation-era generals scoped out lucrative interests in the province. Local elites have prospered from the illicit trade in ivory, timber and precious stones, and heroin and other narcotics (Haysom et al., 2018). Decades of under-investment and under-development have contributed to weak public services, democratic fragility, a lack of freedom of expression and limited access to justice (Feijó, 2020). Tensions between the three majority ethnic groups – macuas, macondes and muanis – are exacerbated by longstanding unequal access to power (Abrahamsson and Nilsson, 1995; Israel, 2006; Santos, 2010; Feijó, 2020).

Natural resources have been a key source of tension and conflict – in particular large deposits of rubies and natural gas (the third largest in Africa) (Ewi et al., 2022). Local residents' exclusion from the jobs, income, benefits and compensation associated with these discoveries has become a major local grievance (Sekelekani, 2018). Tensions reached a peak in 2017 when over 4,000 artisanal miners (known as *garimpeiros*) were violently expelled from the Montepuez ruby field, in an act of widespread abuse that deprived many local communities of a long-standing and valuable source of income. Similarly, in the vicinity of Palma, over 10,000 people have been displaced from a 7,000-hectare area designated for the construction of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) development infrastructure. The designation of this land was strongly contested by civil society and some community members over inadequate prior consultation with the communities affected (Symons, 2016; Namaganda et al., 2022).

2.2 A violent insurgency

Conflict escalated dramatically in 2017 when groups of armed insurgents launched a series of attacks in coastal Cabo Delgado. The insurgency has been linked to changes in the Islamic denominations active in Muslim-dominated Cabo Delgado, in particular growing Salafi influence imported from the Gulf (Feijó and Maquenzi, 2019). As the insurgency grew from small units to well-equipped companies from 2018 onwards, the violence spread further south and inland, triggering large-scale displacement. Many fled the coastal districts of Palma, Mocímboa da Praia, Macomia, Ibo and Quissanga in the direction of relative safety further south towards Pemba town and the districts of Chiúre, Ancuabe and Metuge.³

While exact figures are hard to come by and remain contested, nearly a million people are estimated to be internally displaced at the time of writing (IOM, 2022a). Most are children (55%) followed by women (24%) and men (21%) (ibid.). Some 6,000 people are estimated to have been killed in the violence (ACLEDA, 2022). The conflict has ebbed and flowed over time, and the situation is extremely fluid. Nevertheless, the level of violence perpetrated by the insurgents has been consistently extreme. The intention is to terrorise through a strategy of abductions, beheadings, burnings, beatings, kidnappings and sexual abuse (Feijó, 2021). In this context, when asked why they fled, IDP respondents consistently cited violent conflict as the main (and often the only) reason for leaving their communities.

3 Based on analysis from the IOM DTM.

I left because of the conflict. And not only me. This is in general. Everybody left because of the conflict. – **IDP (male)**

If they didn't have weapons we wouldn't leave our lands. If they came to exchange punches we would not move. But they have weapons and kill people with machetes. – **IDP (female)**

The first thing we want is peace. If we are living this life of conflict every day, nothing will be of any use. We will always remain like this, moving from one place to another. Always living this life of refugees. The main thing is just to end this war. The only thing we want is to end it all. Just end it. So that everyone can get on with their lives. – **IDP (male)**

The deployment of more than 3,000 Rwandan and southern African troops since July 2021 helped drive the insurgents from the towns and bases they had occupied (ICG, 2022; Pigou, 2022).⁴ However, this also brought new challenges. National security services and private mercenaries are complicit in the abuse, and accused of torture and indiscriminate killings (HRW, 2018; Amnesty International, 2021). Many insurgents may have blended into local communities, waiting for the opportunity to remobilise (ICG, 2022). Initially scattered and weakened, the insurgents have since regrouped, and continue to threaten communities. They are increasingly deploying improvised explosive devices (IEDs), marking a new development in the conflict that will result in further bloodshed and displacement (ibid.).

Nearly all IDP respondents want to return. While there has been an increase in the number of IDPs making spontaneous returns during 2022, most respondents interviewed for this research will only consider return an option once the security situation has improved.⁵ 'All we would like is for this conflict to be over so that we can return home,' explained one IDP woman. For the moment, returns are neither safe nor sustainable. Government efforts are under way to encourage IDPs to return to some areas, but outcomes have been mixed and the security situation remains fluid and unpredictable. To illustrate this, an IDP man described returning to Macomia for a scoping visit, but that ongoing attacks and violence made it impossible for him to stay. This sentiment was emphasised by an IDP woman: 'If the war is not over I won't go back and I'll stay here until I die.'

Another barrier to return is reliable and up-to-date information due to the scattering of communities, the disruption of social networks and the fluidity of the security situation. The displacement of entire households and the destruction of their property and assets also means that many returning IDPs have nothing to go back to. Others were pessimistic about having to rebuild from scratch the networks, livelihoods and assets destroyed during the conflict. 'I don't have anywhere to go. I don't have anything,' explained an IDP woman who preferred to stay in Pemba. The slow return of humanitarian assistance,

4 Rwandan forces are operating under a bilateral agreement with Maputo, while southern African troops have been deployed as part of a regional mutual defence pact with Southern African Development Community (SADC) member states (ICG, 2022).

5 By June 2022, IOM DTM estimated that 138,231 IDPs had returned to their place of habitual residence, with most having returned during the last three months of 2021.

government facilities, public services and businesses in insecure areas also hampers return. However, at the time of writing humanitarian actors are gradually increasing their operational capacities and footprint across the province, often with assistance from local partners (see section 3.2).

2.3 Cyclones and floods

While the insurgency was escalating, Cabo Delgado was hit by Cyclone Kenneth in 2019. Coming at the end of the rainy season when river levels were already high, Kenneth brought floods and landslides. With winds of up to 220 kilometres per hour, it was the strongest cyclone on record ever to hit the African continent. The damage was extensive across the archipelago – but especially in the districts of Quissanga, Macomia and Ibo.

The cyclone destroyed 45,000 houses and vital infrastructure, including roads, bridges, electricity and communications infrastructure, schools and clinics (OCHA, 2019a). In some areas entire villages were flattened. The scale of the damage was summed up by a woman host in Pemba: ‘The cyclone damaged everything – from farms to houses. There are no fish in the sea. Everything is destroyed. Nothing remains.’ Making landfall just before the harvest season, 55,000 hectares of crops were lost, and fishing boats and equipment were destroyed. These impacts worsened food insecurity, and exacerbated protection risks, including sexual and gender-based violence (ibid.). Some 374,000 people needed humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of Kenneth (OCHA, 2019b). Yet, despite this widespread damage, the cyclone displaced only 20,000 people – nothing like the scale of the displacement triggered by the insurgency. Few IDP respondents attributed their flight to climate, and many differentiated between the cyclone and conflict in stark terms.

We didn’t leave because of the cyclone, because it didn’t kill us. The war made us abandon our homes because they cut people’s throats. – **IDP (male)**

You don’t run away from a cyclone, you run away from war because they carry guns, machetes, knives and other weapons. The cyclone just passes and you come back to life. – **IDP (female)**

Mercifully, the 2020 and 2021 cyclone seasons have not produced anything on the scale of Cyclone Kenneth, but as climate change increases the intensity and frequency of storms, Mozambique is likely to see a repeat of major weather events. During 2022, three cyclones hit in the space of three months: Ana in January, Dumako in February and Gombe in March (OCHA, 2022a). Several respondents attributed this escalation in the scale and intensity of cyclones to wider changes in the climate. Average temperatures in Mozambique have been rising since the 1950s, coupled with a downward trend in rainfall and an increase in dry and drought-like conditions (Dunn et al., 2020; Gutiérrez et al., 2021; Seneviratne et al., 2021).

A long time ago there weren’t many cyclones. Some people were born and grew up without seeing a cyclone. But in recent years, there have been several cyclones in a single season, which worries us a lot. – **host (female)**

The weather is changing. One year it rains a lot and other years it rains little. There are some years when the rain comes early and then stops falling. People who farm complain that their food has dried up. Or that there was a lot of rain that flooded the fields so the crops don't grow. – **host (female)**

2.4 Compounding risks of climate, conflict and displacement

Climate, conflict and displacement combine to exacerbate and compound risks and vulnerabilities (Siddiqi et al., 2019; Gomes and Schmidt, 2021). This was illustrated by an IDP man who described how climate and conflict followed each other in quick succession, catching displaced people when they were off-guard and ill-prepared. Several respondents described a gradual depletion of resources, as assets that were destroyed by the cyclone were replaced with temporary structures that were subsequently burned down by the insurgents, leaving them with nothing at all. In the words of one IDP woman: 'Our houses were destroyed by the rain, and what was left of them was destroyed by the war.'

While climate may not be the primary driver of displacement in the same way as conflict, the research found that cyclones and floods nonetheless significantly impact experiences of displacement. One respondent who fled during the rainy season described having to traverse dangerously swollen rivers by boat, making the journey 'not a little difficult – it was very difficult'. Another respondent described a child being washed away by the floods while trying to board a boat to safety.

Climate impacts continue to affect IDPs upon arrival at their destination. Many IDPs live in precarious low-lying areas along the coastline of Pemba (Paquitequete, Maringanha and Chuiba) and south-east Metuge, where they are at risk of floods and cyclones moving in from the open ocean (Stewart et al., 2022). Many also continue to live in tents, makeshift shelters and buildings abandoned by owners who could not afford to rebuild them after storms. 'What can we do when it rains? The water comes inside the house,' lamented one respondent. Efforts to reduce flooding in homes, for example through building irrigation channels as water outlets, often created tensions and arguments with downstream neighbours – highlighting again the complex ways in which climate, conflict and displacement intersect and overlap.

Land tenure is another example of this intersection – in particular when others occupy land that has been vacated by displaced people, or when displaced people encroach on the land of their hosts (Quan and Dyer, 2008). While local residents in Cabo Delgado initially ceded land for displaced people voluntarily, this generosity soon turned to grievance as displacement became protracted, and as competition increased in the face of the influx. Land conflicts are now common, including IDPs being expelled from farming land they had previously obtained and cultivated.⁶

Resettlement is another example of how conflict, climate and displacement overlap. Resettling communities living in areas at high risk from floods and cyclones has become a major objective of

⁶ A parliamentary commission working in Cabo Delgado province identified land conflicts resulting from the process of resettling IDPs (Club of Mozambique, 2021).

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the Mozambican government (Jacobs and Almeida, 2020). The potential for conflict is high, however, especially when resettlement plans are associated with political agendas and vested interests. For example, plans to resettle communities affected by Cyclone Idai were met with suspicion that the government was trying to move unsympathetic voters elsewhere in the run-up to the 2019 general election (ibid.). Others argue that government resettlement programmes are more to do with the government's modernising agenda for economic development than with protecting people against recurrent flooding (Artur and Hilhorst, 2012).

3 Humanitarian response

The compounding impacts of climate, conflict and displacement have created a humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado. The needs of IDPs and host communities have deepened as conflict has escalated, as the scale and frequency of climate events have increased, and as displacement has become protracted. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Response Plan for Mozambique (OCHA, 2022a):

- At least 1.5 million people need life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection in 2022.
- Protection risks remain a grave concern – especially for women and girls, people with disabilities, older persons and people living with HIV/AIDS.
- Food insecurity and malnutrition are heightened as families abandon their homes, fields and fishing areas. Erratic rainfall compounds crop losses, and the annual lean season (December–March) accentuates humanitarian needs as hunger peaks.
- Essential services have been significantly impacted, with nearly half of Cabo Delgado’s health centres closed and widespread destruction of schools and water and electrical systems.
- Government, aid agencies and host communities all have a role in the humanitarian response.

3.1 Government

In recent decades, the government of Mozambique has taken steps to transition national efforts from a reactive to a proactive approach to disaster management (Wiles et al., 2005; Koivisto and Nohrstedt, 2017). While it continues to appeal to international donors for funding based on community development plans, it has generally been less supportive of humanitarian aid operations (Ballard and Columbo, 2022). Environmental issues and climate adaptation are also largely an afterthought (Artur and Hilhorst, 2012). The government’s main priority is re-establishing security, with a view to sustaining economic interests around the LNG project referred to above, and restoring its authority in Cabo Delgado.⁷

The government has been noticeably slow in responding to the humanitarian crisis in Cabo Delgado. It encouraged people to remain in their villages and downplayed the significance of the insurgency and insurgent attacks until as late as 2019 (Bekoe et al., 2020). It delayed issuing visas for international humanitarian workers, and in clearing customs for emergency supplies. Reluctant to involve external actors, the government waited until 2020 to admit assistance and support from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (Meek and Nene, 2021). It was only in 2021 that it finally established a ministerial task team to address the humanitarian crisis – nearly four years into the conflict and after

⁷ Its response is framed by three fundamental plans: (1) restoration of government authority, both political and military; (2) rehabilitation of infrastructure and capacity-building of state institutions; and (3) the gradual return of the civilian population (WHO, 2022).

hundreds of thousands of people were already displaced (ibid.). Taken together, these delays hampered not just the mobilisation of aid, but also the establishment of resettlement centres to accommodate IDPs (Mabera and Naidu, 2020).

A security focus suits the government's framing of the conflict as an external threat. Commonly referred to as Al-Shabaab (not to be confused with the jihadist group in Somalia), the insurgency includes militants from Tanzania and Kenya, and has links with Islamic State (Habibe et al., 2019; Morier-Genoud, 2020). From 2020, government rhetoric changed from one of internal criminality to international Islamic terrorism (Hanlon, 2021). This conveniently attracted the attention of international donors concerned with Islamic fundamentalism, such as the United States and the European Union. Prioritising 'hard' security issues also helped divert attention away from national failings and the underlying grievances that gave momentum to the conflict in the first place. The insurgents were able to gain a foothold by capitalising on historical resentments and deep-seated frustrations among disenfranchised segments of the population (Feijó, 2020). The bulk of the fighters are Mozambicans, mainly 'poor fishermen, frustrated petty traders, former farmers and unemployed youth', rather than foreign fighters (ICG, 2021: i).

Another reason for government reticence towards the humanitarian response is a concern that insurgents have infiltrated displaced populations, and benefit from food and humanitarian assistance (ICG, 2021). Concerns around infiltration have resulted in heavy-handed security measures targeting IDP populations, including arbitrary arrests, mosque closures and monitoring of IDP resettlement centres (Cabo Ligado, 2021). The government has also cracked down on civilian industries or groups seen as affiliated with the insurgency. For example, following a central directive, banks in Cabo Delgado stopped offering wire transfers to prevent insurgents from using them to finance their operations (Nhachote, 2021). Likewise, in response to reports that insurgents invest their money in motorcycle taxi or M-pesa (mobile money) businesses, IDPs working in these areas have been subjected to harassment and predatory behaviour by police and municipal officials. The government has also detained journalists reporting on the situation in northern Mozambique.⁸ These repressive measures have disrupted local livelihoods, exacerbated the humanitarian situation and aggravated local grievances (Mabera and Naidu, 2020).

3.2 Aid agencies

Humanitarian action by international and national agencies and NGOs has increased substantially in Cabo Delgado in response to the overlapping issues of conflict, climate and displacement. In 2020, humanitarian organisations reached 515,000 people. This doubled to 1.29 million in 2021 (OCHA, 2022b). Humanitarian assistance in Pemba is largely provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), which distributes vouchers valued at 3,600 meticaís (equivalent to \$56) to IDP households.⁹ NGOs, civil society organisations and religious groups also provide additional assistance in the form of food

8 Including high-profile arrests of the journalist Estacio Valoi and Amnesty International researcher David Matsinhe.

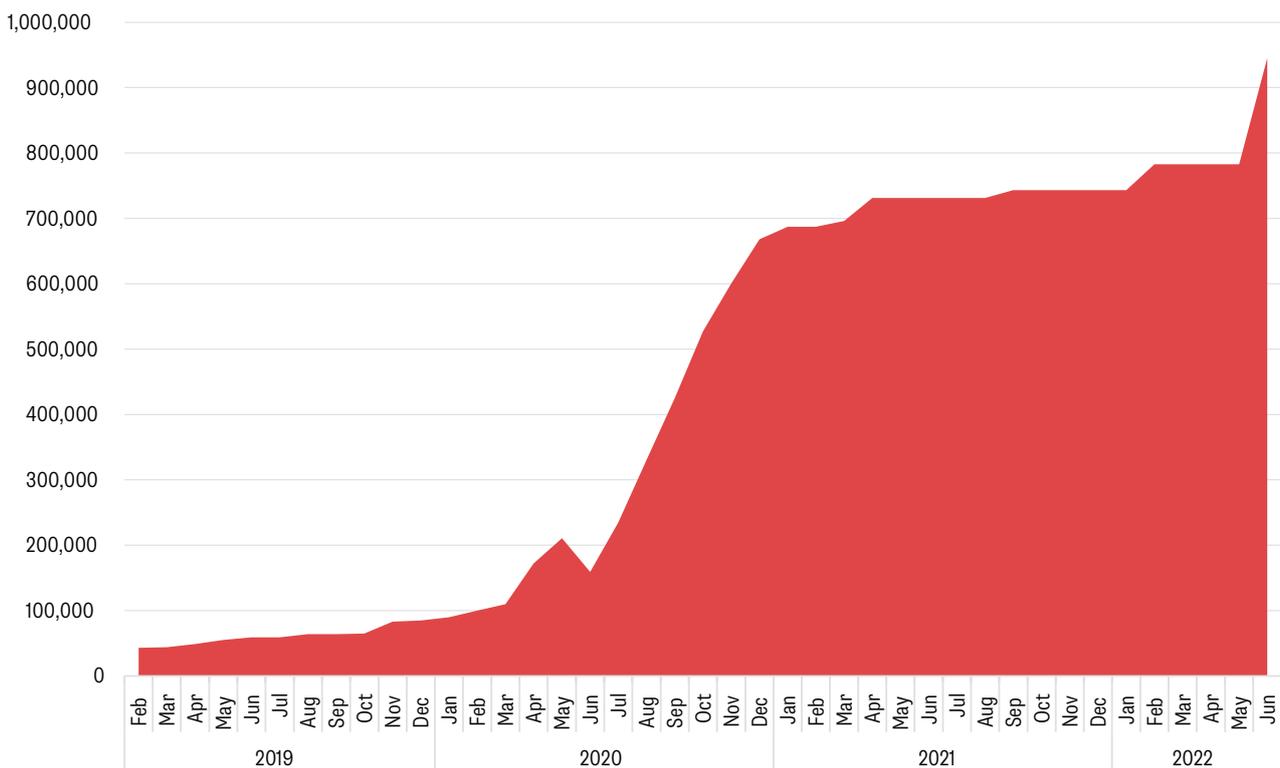
9 WFP also provides vouchers in Montepuez and Balama, and expected to start distribution in Mueda from October 2022.

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rations, water and sanitation, health and education, and livelihoods support designed to relieve the immediate needs of IDPs. These agencies and NGOs continue to face huge challenges in responding to the humanitarian situation, as outlined below.

- **Protracted displacement:** The number of IDPs has risen year on year since the outbreak of conflict (see Figure 3). Aid workers are increasingly stretched across an expanding caseload that includes IDPs who stay in resettlement centres, those who reside with hosts and IDPs who choose to return. The shifting security landscape is also increasing the proportion of host communities in need of assistance.
- **Funding shortfalls:** The humanitarian response in Cabo Delgado is acutely underfunded – at only 19% of 2022 requirements by the middle of 2022 (OCHA, 2022c). Funding shortfalls have resulted in regular interruptions in humanitarian assistance. In April 2022, WFP cut rations by scaling back the distribution of vouchers from monthly to every two months (Anyadike and Cebola, 2022; Henriques, 2022).¹⁰ More funding is urgently needed for emergency response and reconstruction efforts. Disaster risk response in Cabo Delgado is also significantly underfunded (Stewart et al., 2022).

Figure 3 Number of IDPs in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces, 2019–2022



Source: IOM/DTM Round Assessment N. 16 (May–June 2022)

¹⁰ Rations were halved in the second half of 2021 before being reinstated in January and March 2022, but have since been cut again.

- **Access barriers:** Insecurity and administrative obstacles hamper aid workers' access to remote communities. The significant escalation of the conflict in 2020 cut off multiple areas from humanitarian assistance for significant periods (OCHA, 2019a). Assistance was only possible through the activities of local partners in Ancuabe, Balama, Chiúre, Ibo, Namuno, Mueda and Macomia (OCHA, 2022a). Climatic variations present additional challenges to access. The rainy season (November–May) renders roads to hard-to-reach areas impassable. When the rains coincide with tropical cyclones, such as Kenneth, transport and communications infrastructure is damaged or destroyed.
- **Siloed approach:** An analysis of humanitarian and development responses by the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre found that 'interventions were highly compartmentalized and often siloed' (Stewart et al., 2022: 4). In order to address the compounding challenges of climate, conflict and displacement responses, 'intersectional analysis and multi-sector partnerships' are needed in order to expand access to knowledge and data, improve risk modelling and evaluation tools, address underlying structural vulnerabilities and strengthen disaster risk reduction (ibid.: 5).

3.3 Host communities

Host communities have played a central role in the humanitarian response to date. Only one IDP centre was established in Pemba due to a lack of space and political incentive. Consequently, the vast majority of IDPs in Pemba stay with family members or local hosts in borrowed rooms or rented houses. Across Cabo Delgado, 70% of displaced people currently live in host communities (Cabo Ligado, 2022b). During one interview, 60 people were found living together in a single house, sleeping on floors and verandas and in backyards.

Living in such close proximity to each other, the influx of IDPs into Pemba has had a significant impact on local residents. Accommodating friends and relatives puts pressure on hosts, who already face hardships of their own. 'I received these people and gave them a place to sleep, and we suffered together', explained a female host. A male host described how the pressure to support and provide has created tensions with his family: 'Everyday people are here waiting for us. But we have nothing to offer them. A long time ago they came to visit, and it was not a problem. But now they have come to stay, and it's very complicated.'

This was echoed by an NGO respondent describing host/IDP relations: 'The first month he [the host] is happy, the second month he starts to feel strange, the third month he is already saying, look cousin, now we have to organise ourselves.' Similar strains were articulated by IDPs who felt burdened by the pressure of supporting fellow IDPs. When asked if he was happy with supporting his relatives, an IDP man replied: 'I'm not happy. I'm still young and I have my own future to think about. Helping other people never ends. I have many people to help. So many people to help that I can't even support myself or my own family.'

Beyond the immediate impacts on households hosting IDPs, the influx has had a ripple effect across Pemba. While figures are inexact and often contested, the arrival of some 150,000 people in Pemba has almost doubled the town's pre-war population, accompanied by a significant influx of NGOs and

UN agencies (Anyadike and Cebola, 2022). This has contributed to increased demand and price rises, including of basic food commodities, exacerbated by rising oil and wheat prices globally.¹¹ Natural disasters, such as cyclones, also push up prices; following Idai in 2019, food prices increased by over 10% as crops were destroyed (BTI, 2022). Several others described health and education systems overloaded with IDPs.

Everything is expensive. Food, fish and everything that is sold here in the city. The traders have put up the prices of everything. When the distribution of vouchers approaches, everything goes up. This time in which we live is not good. Money has no value. – **host (female)**

IDPs bring opportunities as well as challenges. For example, some hosts have been able to take advantage of humanitarian distributions. Local residents often pose as IDPs in order to access food vouchers, sometimes bribing local officials to add their names to the register. In many instances, permission to stay with hosts is granted on the condition that IDPs share food aid or provide free labour or small amounts of money in return.

While there is a financial incentive for hosts to support IDPs, personal stories of charity regularly emerged from interviews. Family, friends and acquaintances function as a key safety net. And when all else fails, IDPs turn to those they know for help. ‘When I feel that the situation is critical, I ask my brother to help me buy some little fish,’ explained an IDP woman. These levels of support may seem modest, but they are not insignificant. ‘The only reason that we are able to eat is thanks to the owner of this house,’ explained another IDP. One respondent explained how his neighbours gave him advice on conducting trading and small business. Another described how local residents helped pay for the funeral of an IDP whose family was unable to cover the costs themselves.

While everyday tensions and pressures did arise, few IDP respondents in Pemba described major conflicts or fallings out with their neighbours and hosts. These tended to be more prevalent in inland rural settlements over access to farmland. According to a male host in Pemba, ‘Small conflicts usually happen but we manage the situation and go on living. They are our family, and we can’t abandon them’. Such tensions tended to emerge over perceived levels of cleanliness and sanitation, encroaching on neighbours’ space and property, or children playing too loudly. But these kinds of issues often diminished over time as hosts and IDPs became accustomed to living with each other. As articulated by an IDP woman, ‘For the first few days, this created confusion for me because most people didn’t know us. But I persevered, and I got used to it. And other people also ended up getting used to me’.

11 ‘The price of four main food commodities combined – rice, cassava, vegetable oil, and brown sugar – shows in May 2022 an increase of almost 4 percent compared to April 2022 and all commodities, except white maize and groundnut, present increase spikes when compared to prices registered in December 2021 (pre-Ukraine crisis)’ (WFP, 2022).

4 Mapping IDP coping strategies

Research revealed an array of different livelihoods strategies among IDPs in Pemba – many of which resembled activities undertaken prior to displacement and by the wider host community. Where possible, IDPs engage in strategies that build on their knowledge and experience prior to displacement. Respondents were involved in farming, fishing, mining, firewood and charcoal production, trading, small business, odd jobs, sex work, child labour and maximising humanitarian assistance. In the words of an IDP respondent: ‘Wherever we go we have to adapt to what is there.’ Another declared: ‘We can’t sit here with our arms crossed, we have to struggle!’ This builds on the idea that Mozambican IDPs are ‘neither passive victims of disasters nor submissive recipients of disaster responses interventions by external actors’ (Artur, 2012: 4). Rather, a mixed story emerged during interviews – one of agency and ambition, but also of challenges, obstacles and risks.

4.1 Livelihoods that rely on natural resources

4.1.1 Farming

Opportunities for farming are limited in urban Pemba. While many IDP respondents who wanted to farm were therefore unable to do so, others did manage to cultivate small kitchen gardens in their immediate vicinity, sometimes keeping chickens. ‘We grow matapa (casava leaves) in this yard and add it to the rations we receive to feed our children,’ explained an IDP woman. Given the limited prospects for urban farming, some respondents migrated towards rural areas, often on a seasonal basis linked to planting and harvesting, and during lulls in the conflict. Where possible, some IDPs described returning to their own farms or those of relatives, while others lease small parcels of land from local owners in exchange for food, money or free labour. Other IDP interviewees were producing and selling firewood and charcoal, and hunting rats and bush animals in rural areas – all of which can be regularly seen for sale along Pemba roadsides.

4.1.2 Fishing

Facilitated by Pemba’s proximity to the sea, some IDP respondents took up fishing, though they described a range of obstacles and challenges that either limited access or prevented them from fishing at all. These included unfamiliarity with fishing conditions and zones and a lack of equipment, such as boats, nets, flippers, goggles, spears and cool storage. These explain a reluctance to fish as well as extremely low catches among IDPs surveyed in Montepuez, Chiúre and Pemba (Feijó et al., 2022a). An IDP man complained that he only caught small shellfish that were barely large enough to eat, let alone sell. Heavily dependent on fishing and less familiar with agriculture, coastal Mwani populations face particularly significant barriers, not least because aid has tended to focus on agricultural inputs and production rather than fishing. This explains why some IDPs travel back for several weeks at a time to the familiar coastal areas they had fled or to Lake Bilibiza and the Quirimbas archipelago in order to fish more successfully.

4.1.3 Artisanal mining

Practised by IDPs and residents alike, mining is most prevalent among youth in Montepuez, Ancuabe and Metuge. There is a higher concentration of IDPs near to these mining centres, with regular sightings of them carrying excavation tools. Artisanal mining entails risks, in particular violent crackdowns that involve beatings, detentions and even killings by state officials. Officially, the aim of these crackdowns is to deter illegal miners from abroad, though the real reason is more complex and contentious: under pressure from local elites and private companies that had obtained lucrative mining concessions, the government passed a law in 2016 that effectively made artisanal mining illegal (Hanlon, 2022). Residents of Montepuez blame these crackdowns (as well as the influx of IDPs) for an increase in localised crime. Others believe the crackdowns have increased insurgency recruitment (Cabo Ligado, 2022a).

4.1.4 Mobility

Activities such as farming, fishing, charcoal production, bush hunting and mining all rely on some degree of migration and mobility – typically back and forth, circular and seasonal movements. Moving in these ways opens up opportunities, but also brings significant risks, leaving IDPs vulnerable to abuse and worse by insurgents and national security forces. ‘If [the insurgents] find us, they cut our throats,’ explained an IDP woman who was too afraid to go back to her farm. Likewise, IDPs moving to Bilibiza to fish described sleeping hidden in the bush to evade insurgents. Those caught fishing by the Defense and Security Forces experienced detention, beatings and even death on suspicion of involvement in the insurgency. Stories of fishing boats being attacked and sunk were common.

This propensity to move despite the risks builds on a history of migration in Cabo Delgado. It emphasises the continuity of displacement with existing patterns of mobility (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022). This supports the idea that ‘within the limits of their knowledge and information’, IDPs ‘tend to craft continuities in crisis’ (Artur, 2012: 4). This sense of continuity was illustrated by an elderly IDP for whom back-and-forth movements between Pemba and Mocímboa da Praia had always been a routine part of life. As a young mason, he moved from village to village building water pumps. As time went by, his extended family would travel to visit him for ceremonies and funerals, or to help during the harvest season and transport his crops back to Pemba for sale. His children moved regularly between Mocímboa da Praia and Pemba to attend school and visit relatives.

4.2 Trading, small businesses, labour and odd jobs

Many IDPs described setting up small business and trading activities. These included selling drinks and snacks (especially mandazis, a type of fried bread), fruit and vegetables, peanuts, eggs, flour, fish, woven mats and baskets, firewood and charcoal, telephone credit and second-hand clothes. Others worked as hairdressers, M-pesa agents, or motorcycle taxi drivers. Other IDPs took on manual work, such as loading and carrying goods, construction work, carpentry and plumbing.

4.2.1 Lost assets

A key challenge for many activities reliant on business, trade and labour is that the productive assets that would have enabled IDPs to start up new livelihoods in Pemba – such as cooking pots, telephones, chickens, goats, money, seeds, hoes and fishing nets – were abandoned in the chaos of displacement. The loss of documentation (identification documents, birth certificates, school certificates) also makes it harder to secure work, continue schooling, register for services and negotiate checkpoints manned by police suspicious of undercover insurgents. In most cases, insurgents arrived in villages unannounced, shooting and looting at random. In the ensuing chaos, belongings were abandoned, burnt and destroyed. As one IDP woman articulated: ‘You take the clothes on your back and your children, and leave everything else behind.’ This was a common refrain.

Is it possible to take anything when escaping? If you stay there and try to take your things, they [the insurgents] will find you and do their thing. I left my belongings on purpose because I knew I couldn’t take them. – **IDP (female)**

Everything that I had achieved during my life was burned down. – **IDP (male)**

The arduous journey to Pemba also prevented IDPs from carrying their belongings with them. IDPs described walking through the bush for days and sometimes weeks, becoming lost, exhausted and dehydrated, moving back and forth between multiple locations, and travelling in overcrowded boats and trucks. Many IDPs endure multiple displacements, limiting what they can carry with them. One respondent described moving five times, facing fresh attacks by insurgents in each new location. ‘We passed through so many places until we got tired of running away,’ explained another. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), 41% of IDPs have been displaced once, 24% twice and 35% more than three times (IOM, 2022a). In many instances, any possessions that IDPs had succeeded in carrying with them were subsequently traded with drivers and boat operators for safe passage to Pemba. Many respondents described huge rises in the normal fare as operators took advantage of those desperate to flee.

4.2.2 Disrupted social networks

In addition to physical possessions, IDPs’ social networks have been damaged by conflict and displacement. This social upheaval has undermined informal support mechanisms, such as rotating savings schemes, family loans and other mutual aid. This hampers IDPs’ attempts to rebuild livelihoods around trading and business. An IDP woman explained that she is struggling to find work braiding hair as no one in Pemba knows her. ‘At home, many people knew us. They came to us directly. It was easy. There is so-and-so who braids hair, and another who makes building blocks.’ ‘The fewer people you know, the lower your chances of getting work,’ explained another respondent. Family members are scattered across different locations, districts and provinces. Many IDPs do not know where their relatives are, or even if they are still alive. ‘We try calling my mother, but the line is disconnected,’

explained a teenage IDP who had not seen or heard from her mother since 2020. Many were kidnapped and killed by insurgents, or simply went missing and are assumed dead. Others were lost or succumbed to hunger and thirst on their journey to Pemba.

4.2.3 Political economy

Limited opportunities for trading, business and labour extend beyond individual experience, and should also be understood in the context of the wider political economy. Until 2015, the Mozambican economy had enjoyed rapid growth and sustained poverty reduction thanks to ‘high commodity prices, robust foreign direct investment and warm relations with development financing agencies’ (Jones, 2016: 1). However, the combination of currency depreciation, the discovery of vast and illegal national debt, Covid-19 and the conflict have dampened these gains (Tarp and Jones, 2021). While there are signs that Mozambique is now on track for a modest recovery, significant economic risks remain in the form of rising oil and wheat prices, conflict in Ukraine, natural hazard-related disasters and the ongoing insurgency (World Bank, 2022).

In this difficult economic environment, rents and food prices have risen in Pemba, and already shaky public services are struggling to accommodate displaced people and hosts (Henriques, 2022). This undermines business and trading opportunities for IDPs and hosts alike. To illustrate this point, an IDP woman described how selling charcoal used to be a good business that earned her enough money to sustain her family and buy school materials for her children. With the increase in prices, however, her earnings are now barely enough to cover small food items. An IDP woman selling mandazis said that increases in the price of cooking oil had squeezed the already meagre profits she had been able to make in the past.

4.3 Humanitarian assistance

IDPs described receiving only limited and sporadic humanitarian assistance that did not meet their daily food requirements. Many respondents exhausted their monthly rations within a week. Not knowing when the next distribution will come has created a sense of uncertainty and wariness among IDPs, who struggle to plan ahead.

Some months we receive support, others we do not. In the beginning we received two vouchers, and it was possible to feed 14 people, but now we receive one voucher for 14 people. We receive one month in and one month out, and we are having a hard time. Look at that girl there, she is pregnant and needs to eat well. Soon she will have a baby and will need to feed herself and her baby.

– IDP (female)

4.3.1 Getting the most out of the system

Despite these challenges, IDPs make use of the limited assistance they receive to make ends meet in resourceful ways. This builds on the idea that ‘aid recipients do not passively hang about until aid arrives, but strategise to reach agencies and become eligible for their services’ (Hilhorst and Jansen, 2010: 1,122). Interviews revealed an array of such strategies, whereby IDP households:

- Subdivide into several smaller units in order to multiply their access to food rations that are given according to household unit rather than family size.
- Split across multiple locations. While some adult men return (temporarily or permanently) to the vicinity of their place of origin, the rest of the family stays behind to maintain access to assistance. Alternatively, households may split across several resettlement centres in order to maximise access. Others choose to move out of relocation settlements altogether for most of the time, but return for food distributions or registrations.
- Sell and trade humanitarian aid with others. The high cost of living in Pemba means that many hosts who initially welcomed IDPs into their homes now expect a contribution – whether in money, labour or food – in return for continuing to allow them to stay. While this was not a specific finding of the research, others have found evidence of IDPs providing sexual favours in return for aid and shelter (Franco, 2020; Machado, 2021).
- Mobilise into voluntary groups to assist aid workers and local leaders with the distribution of aid in return for additional assistance and supplies.

4.3.2 IDPs under scrutiny

Given the limited availability of assistance, some NGO respondents interpreted these strategies as manipulative and calculating – a stance that resonates with the language of deviance that is sometimes used towards displaced people. When asked about their interactions with the aid apparatus, several IDPs described a hostile environment of suspicion that is both exhausting and threatening. They complained of repeated questioning about who they are, how many are in their household, where they have come from, and where they are staying. When unsatisfactory answers are given assistance can be withdrawn, adding to trauma and hardship for those who have already endured significant suffering.

We fled from the war to find another war of questions. We are very afraid. – IDP (female)

When we enter the city, they register us. But they never stop questioning where we come from. Every time we go to receive [assistance], they question us. We are tired. Some people even collapse because of so much questioning. Some people lose out because their answers are wrong. People are afraid and end up giving the wrong answer, so they lose out. We are not at ease. They should not be pressuring us. – IDP (female)

By clamping down on IDPs in these ways, aid actors restrict the coping strategies of some of the most vulnerable, and ignore the structural factors that compel IDPs to act in this way in the first place

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(Iazzolino, 2021). As IDPs share and sell assistance with the wider community, restrictive measures will also penalise vulnerable hosts. Rather than blaming IDPs for being strategic and resourceful, aid actors should consider how to adapt the assistance they give to provide more appropriate support.

A common complaint among IDPs was that assistance is limited to a monotonous diet of rice, maize, beans and vegetable oil. Several respondents wanted to know why their vouchers excluded essential basic items such as soap, detergent, salt, sugar, coal, clothing, fuel, transport and school supplies. If aid actors are not providing IDPs with what they need, then it should not come as a surprise that exchanges and trades are made. Entrepreneurial spirit and active agency are qualities applauded in everyday society. The same rationale should be applied to displaced people. While IDPs' survival may not depend on these 'nonessential' items (soap, detergent, salt, sugar), their consumption brings wider benefits, such as creating a sense of normality and dignity amid dangerous and volatile conditions (Oka, 2014).

5 Getting by, not getting ahead

5.1 Coping rather than adapting

Coping and adapting are distinct yet interlinked processes, and are often interchangeable in disaster responses (Eriksen et al., 2005; Field et al., 2012). Both refer to actions or activities undertaken in response to changes or pressures, and adaptive strategies often build on existing coping mechanisms. That said, coping and adapting involve differences in timeframe, sustainability, motivation and outcomes (see Table 1). Whereas adapting is perceived to be a ‘process of adjustment’ that ‘seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities’ (IPCC, 2014: 5), coping can imply short-term survival or consumption at the expense of longer-term and more sustainable change.

Table 1 Characteristics of ‘coping’ and ‘adapting’

Coping	Adapting
Short-term and immediate	Practices and results are sustained
Oriented towards survival	Oriented towards longer-term livelihood security
Not continuous	A continuous process
Motivated by crisis; reactive	Involves planning
Often degrades the resource base	Uses resources efficiently and sustainably
Prompted by a lack of alternatives	Focused on finding alternatives
-	Combines old and new strategies and knowledge

Source: CARE (2019)

The strategies IDPs use in Pemba fall firmly at the coping end of this spectrum. In a handful of cases, IDPs were able to build on prior knowledge and experience to recreate livelihoods in a new context. To illustrate this, an NGO respondent described how a displaced carpenter was unable to find work making furniture, but was able to earn an income repairing fishing boats instead. For the most part, however, IDP coping strategies are largely short-term, immediate strategies that enable them to scrape by and survive. Any income derived is spent on immediate consumption, and there is little scope for accumulating or saving capital to reinvest in more productive, long-term activities.

This was illustrated by an IDP woman: ‘I buy a sack of charcoal and sell it. From this I get two cups of beans. I put them on the fire. We eat.’ Returns are poor and some IDP ventures ended in failure, wasting precious resources that could have been better spent on meeting immediate needs. One IDP described borrowing money from her uncle in order to buy the materials needed to start producing mandazis, but that, despite all her efforts, she failed to sell them and the business collapsed, leaving her in debt. This sense of short-term survivalism was emphasised by several IDPs.

We sell eggs in order to buy vegetables to feed ourselves, and also make cakes to sell. But all this has no outlet. We don't have anything left over to keep. – **IDP (male)**

There are people who tried farming this year but came back with nothing. – **IDP (female)**

The displaced people are getting thinner, the men can't feed their children. They go fishing but come back with nothing, there is nothing in the sea. Look how thin they all are, the mothers can't feed their children. – **host (female)**

I have tried every way I can to do business and ended up losing. – **IDP (male)**

Many of these strategies are tinged with an undercurrent of coercion and risk – by a lack of choice and alternatives, and a sense of having to do anything to survive. Insufficient humanitarian assistance leaves many IDPs with little choice but to supplement food rations in any way they can. When coping strategies are undertaken as a last resort and motivated by a lack of other options, IDPs can become trapped in cycles of poverty and abuse. These shortcomings support wider concerns that promoting locally led adaptations unfairly shifts responsibility from the state and aid sector to the individual. The focus becomes about absorbing and conforming to an existing status quo rather than seeking to transform or challenge in a more radical and collective way the structural conditions giving rise to vulnerabilities in the first place (Felli and Castree, 2012; Watts, 2015; Bettini and Gioli, 2016; Bettini et al., 2017; Farbotko et al., 2018).

Following Cyclone Kenneth, some respondents had been able to rebuild again using locally available natural resources (wood, reeds, palm fronds and mud) traditionally used to construct dwellings. One respondent described having to take shelter elsewhere for a while, but returning to 'normality' not long afterwards. But this sense of normality is problematic in that it reflects the extreme poverty and marginalisation that existed prior to Cyclone Kenneth, rather than a sense of communities bouncing back. With so little to lose already, many interviews were characterised by an inevitability and fatalism. When asked what she does when she hears that a storm is coming, an IDP respondent replied: 'Nothing. I just sit here and wait' – a tendency echoed by many. 'Where would I go?' asked another IDP. This sense of having nothing to lose has arguably played into the hands of the insurgents by facilitating the recruitment of young, disillusioned fighters with little else to do. A January 2021 survey of IDPs shows that many young men joined the insurgents in return for money or in the hope of gaining jobs (Macalane and Jafar, 2021).

5.2 A spectrum of preference, interest and capacity

A key question is whether IDP coping strategies represent a core strategy, or are a peripheral add-on to the main support mechanism of humanitarian assistance. Gauging how widespread and integral these kinds of strategies are among IDPs is challenging. Many concealed such strategies either because they are deemed illicit, or because they fear that revealing them could put them at risk of losing humanitarian assistance. But, equally, many do not engage in these strategies at all. While some

respondents expressed a strong desire to rebuild lives and livelihoods in Pemba, others could see no option but to rely on others. ‘I am just sitting and waiting on others for support’ was a common refrain articulated by many respondents.

A spectrum of preference, interest and capacity emerged from interviews. IDPs are a heterogeneous group differentiated by gender and generation, as well as skills, resources, knowledge, networks and assets that equip them to respond and react to their circumstances in different ways (see below). In a context characterised by unequal and uneven access, the role of IDP coping strategies should not be overstated. What works for some IDPs in some places at some times did not necessarily work for everyone. Viewed from this perspective, a more nuanced set of questions emerges. For whom and under what circumstances are IDP coping strategies a viable strategy? How can aid actors better support IDPs in these endeavours whilst avoiding placing all of the burden on IDPs? How can IDP coping strategies be made less risky and more accessible to those who are able to pursue them?

5.2.1 Financial resources

The ability to engage in farming and fishing requires the financial resources needed to negotiate access to land, cover the costs of migration and purchase equipment such as boats and nets. IDPs with social and economic resources fared better as they were able to lease land from others,¹² or meet the costs of moving further south where competition for land is less fierce.

Likewise, business and trading ventures require initial capital to purchase supplies and replace lost assets. ‘Everything here is about money,’ explained an IDP, ‘even if you want to build something small, they will ask you for money. And we don’t have that money.’ In all these cases, opportunities were lowest for those with low socioeconomic status. These socioeconomic barriers are especially evident in urban contexts like Pemba, where social relations have become increasingly monetised (Feijó, 2021).

5.2.2 Gender and generation

Gender and generation also play a role. Mozambican women and children are ‘systemically disadvantaged which increases their disproportionate exposure to hazards and the impacts of conflict’ (Stewart et al., 2022: 24). Women and girls were more likely to die and be displaced, and to lose access to health and education services as a result of Cyclone Kenneth (ibid.).

Furthermore, the makeup of activities available to men, women, young and old is differentiated. Fishing, construction work, motorbike taxis or security are ringfenced as male activities, while hairdressing and cooking are seen as female domains. Primary responsibility for domestic childcare and meal preparation roles also reduces women’s time and energy for pursuing other activities, placing many IDP coping strategies out of their reach. Many IDP households are headed by women

¹² In Chiúre and Muidumbe, for example, one-hectare parcels of productive land are leased for between 4,000 and 5,000 meticaís (\$60 to \$80) per year (Feijó et al., 2022b).

either because husbands have moved elsewhere or were targeted and killed by the insurgents. One respondent described being responsible for 40 children, which included not only her own, but also the orphaned children of friends and relatives who had been kidnapped and killed by the insurgents. Another described struggling to find a house to accommodate her large family, and spending time and resources moving 10 times in two years.

Every house I go to they send me away because I have too many children and they are a nuisance or make noise. And the owners don't like it and send us away. In some houses we stayed for only one month. In others we didn't even last a month. – **IDP (female)**

While specific examples of child marriage did not emerge from the research, this has reportedly doubled among displaced children (Save the Children, 2022). Reports of sex work and child labour were frequently referenced during interviews. 'Go to the airport, and you will see young kids selling samosas from buckets,' explained an NGO worker. Given the challenges they faced, it was recognised by many that such activities, in the words of an NGO respondent, 'are important elements of many family economies'. 'It's a form of adaptation,' explained another key informant. Nevertheless, the women and children involved are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and miss out on their education. This vulnerability was brought into focus by an IDP woman struggling to feed her children with no support from her wider family: 'If I'm lucky, a man will look at me and say they want me for 100 meticaís (\$1.50)' – money that she subsequently used to buy basic food and water supplies, and without which the survival of her family would be compromised.

5.2.3 Wellbeing

The extreme violence and suffering of the conflict, coupled with uncertainty about the future, has caused significant psychological trauma among IDPs, which has not been adequately addressed by the response (MSF, 2021). Nearly all respondents had relatives, including young children and spouses who had died at the hands of the insurgents or during the journey to Pemba. Stories of abductions, separations, beatings, sexual abuse, beheadings, burnings, drownings and starvation were common. In the words of an IDP man, 'Two of my brothers were beheaded. Two grandchildren were kidnapped. They are somewhere in the bush.'

This level of trauma depletes energy, saps confidence and exhausts trust in others – all of which diminish capacity and willingness to adjust and adapt. An IDP who lost her mother and two-year-old daughter fleeing the insurgents was haunted by memories of the dead and unable to sleep at night. Another respondent revealed how her aunt stays at home, unable to do anything: 'After everything that she lost, what can she do except lie there.' These examples highlight how physical, emotional and mental wellbeing determine capacity to adjust and adapt (Adger et al., 2011; Waters and Adger, 2017). They reflect the subjective and socially constructed limits to adaptation – in particular the goals, values, risks and social choices that interact with the constraints of the physical world to determine whether people are willing and able to adapt in the first place (Adger et al., 2009; Mortreux and Barnett, 2017).

5.2.4 Timeframes

As well as being limited to certain groups and profiles, the scope and importance of IDP coping strategies ebbs and flows over time. Supplementing daily incomes through farming and fishing is seasonal, and depends on rainfall and temperature patterns. Likewise, patterns of circular mobility and spontaneous returns peak during lulls in the conflict, and trough when it re-escalates. Small business opportunities, such as buying and selling goods, are often undertaken as and when opportunities arise. An IDP respondent in his forties described doing sporadic ‘odd jobs’, such as building latrines for a couple of days one month, and weeding someone’s farm for a week or so another month. He didn’t have a specific plan or schedule, but took on whatever was available, whenever he was needed. Much also depends on the duration of displacement. It takes time to rebuild networks and capacity in an unfamiliar place. Recently arrived IDPs were thus less likely to engage in income-generating activities than those who had had more time to establish themselves in the city. The ebb and flow of humanitarian assistance also plays a role. The short-term and reactive nature of many donor funding arrangements restricts opportunities for aligning assistance with changing needs over time. As aid has become increasingly depleted, the relative role of IDP coping strategies takes on greater prominence.

6 A way forward

With little end in sight to the conflict, and as climate events such as cyclones grow in number and intensity, IDP coping initiatives are playing an increasingly important role in everyday strategies of survival, especially as humanitarian assistance in Cabo Delgado remains limited. But they are also far from ideal as they currently stand. Many of these strategies remain out of reach for the most vulnerable. They enable IDPs to merely scrape by, often exposing them to risks and danger, and reinforcing vulnerabilities in the process. IDP coping strategies should therefore be conceptualised as part of a collection of options that includes humanitarian assistance and social support networks. On their own, neither of these three options – assistance, networks or coping strategies – are enough to sustain a household. But, when taken together as part of a diversified approach, they can enable IDPs to cope with the compounding challenges of conflict, climate and displacement.

Building on these key findings, this final section considers how policy and programmes can better support IDPs and hosts affected by conflict, climate change and displacement in Cabo Delgado.

6.1 Connecting the dots between IDPs and hosts

Like all people under pressure, those who are displaced by conflict or climate seek out options and opportunities wherever they may be, including activities labelled as risky, illicit or dishonest. This reinforces the notion that displacement is about continuity and connection, with IDPs building on pre-existing knowledge and practice. In the words of Turton (2003: 12, 15), ‘We should be focusing on forced migrants as “purposive actors” – as ordinary people’ who are ‘embedded in particular social and historical circumstances’. Rather than ringfencing IDPs as a separate and isolated group in need of support, they should be understood as networked, as part of their local context, and in relation to others around them. In the words of a key informant, ‘A comprehensive approach is a localised approach.’

Reframing IDPs as ‘ordinary people’ reinforces the similarities that connect IDPs and hosts. IDP coping strategies emulate the everyday activities practised not just prior to their displacement, but also by their hosts. Decades of political marginalisation and economic under-investment in northern Mozambique mean that all groups – hosts and IDPs alike – are vulnerable, particularly as the impacts of climate change become increasingly apparent for all.

Balancing the needs of IDPs and hosts is critical, not least because of the vital role hosts have played in the humanitarian response. As the number of IDPs grows, however, and as their displacement becomes increasingly protracted, hosts’ ability and willingness to help is coming under pressure. More needs to be done to support them. While funding shortages limit options for extending emergency support to hosts, there is scope for hosts to be included under development interventions. In 2021, for example, the World Bank announced a \$100 million grant to support development efforts for both IDPs and hosts in northern Mozambique, as well as \$700 million to address the conflict and build resilience (World Bank, 2021).

6.2 From in-kind assistance to vouchers to cash transfers

I need money with which to develop a business. – **IDP (female)**

We are all capable of doing business, but we are not doing it because we don't have the money to start it. – **IDP (female)**

When morning comes, I just sit under the mango tree collecting dust because I have no money. If I had money, I would be out doing business. – **IDP (male)**

If I had money, I would buy tomatoes, onions and salt to resell in front of my house. – **IDP (female)**

As alluded to by these quotes, when asked about the kinds of aid and assistance that are most needed, most IDPs expressed a strong preference for cash. Cash was closely linked to a desire to establish small business and trading ventures, to re-establish assets lost in displacement, as well as a general frustration that the current voucher system prevents IDPs from purchasing what they need. The feasibility of cash transfers depends on several factors:

- 1. The ability to purchase goods and services locally.** Pemba enjoys relatively strong market conditions, including a variety of formal and informal markets and street vendors (GAIN, 2021). Market conditions may be more challenging, at least initially, in rural areas of Cabo Delgado.
- 2. The existence of mechanisms that enable IDPs to receive money securely.** A study in Maratane camp in neighbouring Nampula province found that mobile money is widely used by refugees, and that the challenges of accessing mobile phones are 'surmountable' (Bailey, 2016: 7). In support of this, several feasibility studies have found that cash transfers are both feasible and optimal for refugees in Mozambique (UNHCR and WFP, 2014; 2015).
- 3. A willingness to implement by humanitarian actors.** It is this third factor that presents the biggest obstacle to implementing cash transfers.

While cash has been widely used (as early as the 1990s) for national social protection programmes, government concerns about dependency, expectations, access to markets, responsible spending, inflation and, crucially, appropriation by insurgents to purchase weapons have blocked the use of cash transfers in humanitarian responses in Mozambique (HelpAge and WFP, 2019; Lough et al., 2020; Oliveira and Cravo, 2021). But it is not just government. Inertia, lack of technical capacities and fundraising constraints have discouraged humanitarian agencies and donors from shifting from in-kind assistance and vouchers to cash transfers (Bailey, 2016; Bailey and Harvey, 2017).

Donors in Mozambique are increasingly involved in advocacy efforts to promote cash during disasters (SARTCWG, 2020), and there are signs that government reluctance may be softening, albeit slowly. The use of vouchers has gained momentum since the 2016/2017 El Niño-induced drought (HelpAge and WFP, 2019). Small cash transfer initiatives are now being piloted with vulnerable groups in Pemba.

Nevertheless, in-kind food assistance (69%) and vouchers (31%) remained the main distribution mechanisms during 2021 (FEWSNET, 2022). While there has been a gradual shift in perspective in recent years, there is clearly still a long way to go.

6.3 Livelihoods support

Supporting livelihoods entails paying close attention to the experiences, preferences and aspirations of IDPs and hosts, and building on their existing coping strategies and skills. Many were eager to independently rebuild their lives and livelihoods, and were vocal and specific about the kinds of support they needed to do so. This included fishing equipment to replace assets left behind and destroyed; driving lessons to learn new skills for diversifying livelihoods; schooling and training for employment; and support in replacing lost identification, birth and school certificates.

Maximising humanitarian assistance is also a key livelihood strategy practised by many IDPs. Rather than penalising them for selling, splitting, sharing and re-registering aid, aid actors should consider how to adapt assistance to better support them – for example, through cash transfers and livelihoods support instead of, or in addition to, vouchers and in-kind assistance. State responses towards IDPs could also be improved. Checking the predatory behaviour of military and police towards street vendors, motorcycle taxi drivers, M-pesa agents, fishers and artisanal miners would benefit the livelihoods strategies of IDPs and host communities alike.

Building sustainable livelihoods ultimately requires a two-pronged approach that incorporates both humanitarian relief and longer-term development assistance.¹³ While the need for a more holistic approach was widely recognised, particularly as displacement becomes protracted, an NGO informant complained that efforts are limited to rhetoric rather than practice. Another local informant described the humanitarian sector as ‘completely out of focus’ in adopting a more sustainable approach. A major obstacle is that climate change, conflict and displacement are typically understood and addressed in a siloed manner that neglects their compounding risks and vulnerabilities (Sturridge and Holloway, 2022). When it comes to planning and implementation, a cross-sectoral approach to disaster risk is needed that brings together actors from across institutional divides (climate, security, humanitarian, development).

6.4 Recommendations

- Provide assistance that builds on IDPs’ agency, experiences, preferences and aspirations through flexible programming and meaningful participation in design and delivery.
- Develop pragmatic approaches towards informality that acknowledge rather than penalise IDPs who maximise aid allocations or engage in illicit or unpopular livelihood activities.

13 This is illustrated by an IOM survey that asks IDP informants to rate the relative intensity of sectoral needs from 1 (very insignificant) to 5 (very significant). Findings reveal that financial support (4.2), access to documents (4.2) and livelihoods (4.1) are on a par with essential needs, such as food (4.4) and shelter (4.3) (IOM, 2022b).

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- Promote interventions that incorporate both humanitarian relief and longer-term development assistance.
- Extend assistance to hosts through wider reconstruction and development support to Cabo Delgado.
- Transition to cash transfers through a careful and contextualised approach that builds on market research, addresses government concerns and builds on national social protection mechanisms.
- Use labels such as passive, victim, recipient and beneficiary sparingly or, better still, avoid them altogether.

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Humanitarian Policy Group

ODI
203 Blackfriars Road
London SE1 8NJ
United Kingdom

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7922 0300
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7922 0399
Email: hpgadmin@odi.org
Website: odi.org/hpg
