

COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS ON DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Prospects and Challenges for Internally Displaced People in
Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa and Zambezia provinces

JANUARY – JUNE 2025

Acknowledgements

The findings in this report result from community consultations with forcibly displaced people and other people affected by the conflict in northern Mozambique, led by UNHCR, in partnership with Helpcode and in close collaboration with the Government of Mozambique, specifically the National Institute of Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (INGD). We are grateful for the collaboration with and feedback from UNHCR's partners, as well as national and local authorities, and for the support of the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund and its generous donors, Switzerland, Norway and Germany.

Most importantly, we thank the affected people themselves, who were willing to share their time, expertise, opinions, hopes and plans with us. If the findings herein can help guide authorities and other relevant actors towards more effectively supporting affected people to reach durable solutions to their displacement, we have achieved our goal.

CONTACT US

Zachary Lefenfeld

Protection Officer, UNHCR Mozambique

Email: lefenfez@unhcr.org

Stephanie Ferry

Donor Relations Officer, UNHCR Mozambique

Email: ferry@unhcr.org

Shafqat Mehmood

Information Management Officer, UNHCR Mozambique

Email: mehmoods@unhcr.org

Website: [UNHCR Mozambique](https://www.unhcr.org/mozambique)

In collaboration with and support from:



República de Moçambique



Internal Displacement
Solutions Fund



COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Displaced woman cultivating crops in Mueda district, Cabo Delgado. © UNHCR/Isadora Zoni

Introduction

Background

Violent insurgency by non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado has **displaced over a million people** since the conflict began in 2017, with the majority displaced in Cabo Delgado and with a significant number displaced in Nampula and Niassa. This protection crisis has been characterized by grave human rights violations, including child rights violations; gender-based violence (GBV); housing, land and property (HLP) violations; family separation; and movement restrictions; as well as challenges to access to legal documentation; justice and legal aid; mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS); education, shelter, healthcare and other basic services. Women, children, older people and people with disabilities are disproportionately affected.

While attacks, mass displacements and severe humanitarian and protection needs persist, many people have spontaneously returned, often only to their areas of origin. Additionally, after more than half a decade of displacement, many displaced people decide to remain in the place of displacement to locally integrate instead of returning home. A very small handful of others have decided to relocate to other areas of Mozambique. As displaced people seek to restart their lives, the Government, bolstered by humanitarian, development and peace actors, must **support them on their pathways towards durable solutions**.

Purpose and Scope

This report presents the findings of UNHCR's community consultations on durable solutions during January-June 2025. It represents a central component of UNHCR's larger Community Engagement on Durable Solutions project being implemented in 2024-2025. UNHCR and partner

Helpcode, in collaboration with and support to the Government of Mozambique's National Institute of Disaster Risk Management and Reduction (INGD), jointly conducted community consultations with displaced people and returnees concerning their:

- intentions on durable solutions;
- challenges to local integration in displacement areas and reintegration in return areas; and
- information and communication needs around durable solutions.

Host community members were also consulted on the relevant topics above.

Objectives

The objectives of the report and UNHCR's wider Community Engagement on Durable Solutions project are to ensure that:

1. affected people are at the center of the UN Secretary General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement and
2. their voices inform durable solutions programming and initiatives.



We don't want to be displaced again."

— Returnee boys in Chiure, Cabo Delgado



Ensure everyone — especially the most vulnerable — has equal access to essential services...Listen to communities in an inclusive and transparent way, and offer responses that are adapted to local realities."

— Advice from a displaced person with a disability in Namacurra, Zambezia

Methodology

This report is based on quantitative and qualitative community consultations carried out between January to June 2025 in Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa and Zambezia provinces of Mozambique. The quantitative component employed the KoBo data collection tool and interviews were conducted at the household level. Sample sizes in all four provinces were statistically representative. The qualitative component relied on Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with community leaders and other community figures, and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with different Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) groups and individuals across displaced, returned and host community populations.

Quantitative component

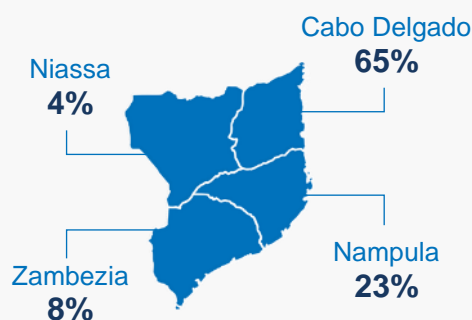
Overall, 9,480 household consultations were conducted, of which 6,204 were displaced households and 3,276 were returnee households. The data was collected from displaced people living in sites and host communities and from returnees in places of origin. 61% of respondents were women and 39% were men. 86% were 18 to 59 years old and 14% were 60+ years old. The average household size was almost 4.8 people. 46% of respondents were displaced people in IDP sites, 19% were displaced people in host communities and 35% were returnees in places of origin. 68% of the interviewed households had at least one person with at least one specific need, with the most prominent being people with specific legal and physical protection needs (usually related to a lack of legal documentation); people with a serious medical condition; and people with a disability.

DEMOGRAPHY

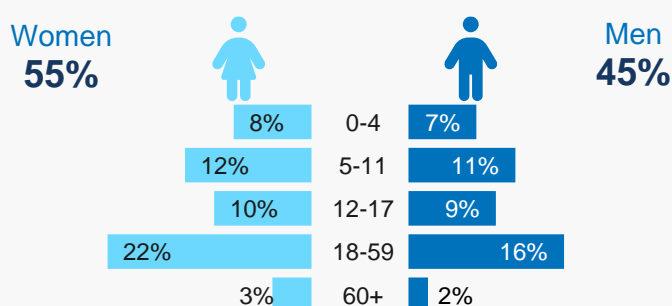
Respondent composition



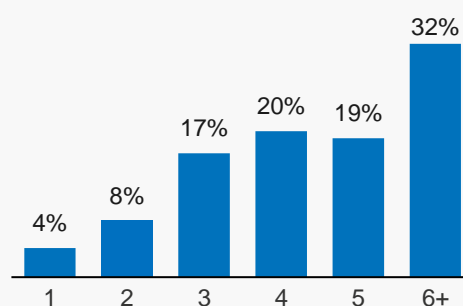
Household distribution



Household composition



Household size distribution



Province	Households consulted	% of women household respondents	Average household size
Cabo Delgado	6,179	61%	4.6
Nampula	2,134	60%	5.4
Niassa	419	59%	5.0
Zambezia	748	73%	4.3
Total	9,480	61%	4.8

Qualitative component

The quantitative household consultations were complemented by FGDs and KIIs with displaced people, returnees and host community members in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Zambezia. In total, 72 FGDs and 21 KIIs were conducted. 34 FGDs and 9 KIIs were conducted with IDPs. 7 FGDs and 3 KIIs were conducted with returnees. 31 FGDs and 9 KIIs were conducted with host community members. The qualitative data is integrated into the narratives that accompany each visualization in this report, when relevant. An AGD approach was applied to the FGDs, which were broken down into groups of boys (12 to 17 yrs old), girls (12 to 17 yrs old), men (18 to 59 yrs old), women (18 to 59 yrs old), older people (60+ yrs old) and people with disabilities.

Province	Focus group discussions	Key informant interviews
Cabo Delgado	30	9
Nampula	26	8
Zambezia	16	4
Total	72	21

¹ Qualitative data was not collected in Niassa due to capacity and logistical limitations.

A displaced child with a disability receives an assistive device in Corrane IDP site, Nampula.

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Findings

1. Overview: Intentions on Durable Solutions²

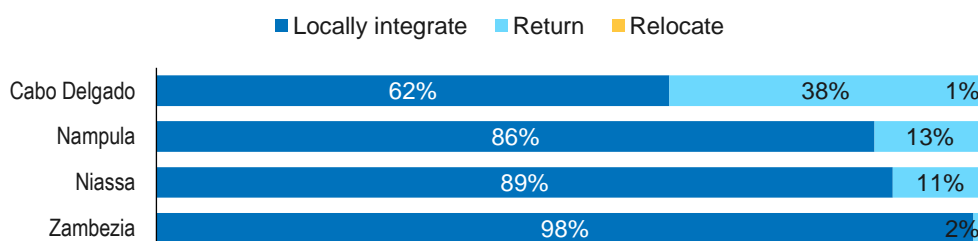
 **73.4%**
Locally integrate

 **26.1%**
Return

 **0.4%**
Relocate

1.1. As displacement becomes more protracted, a larger proportion of displaced people intend to stay and locally integrate

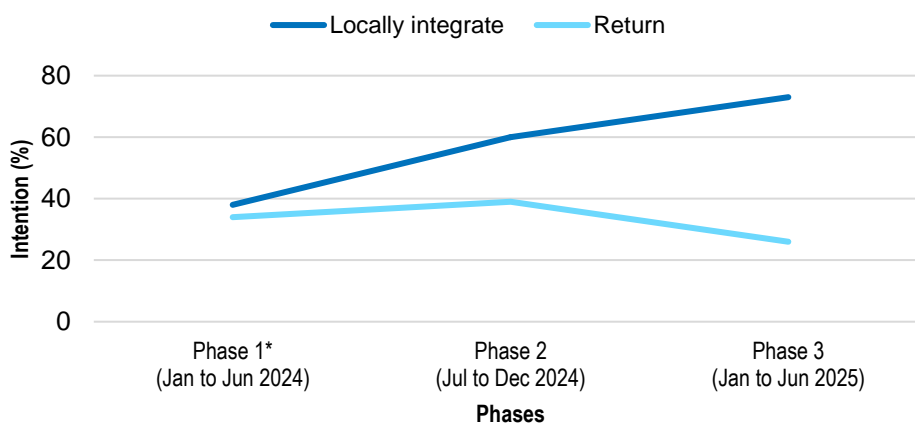
Chart 1. Intentions by province



Around three quarters of respondents intend to locally integrate and around a quarter intend to return.

- By province, IDPs in Cabo Delgado have a lower intention to locally integrate compared to the other three provinces, potentially due to their relative proximity to home and the resulting sense that home is more reachable.
- UNHCR's community consultations on durable solutions over time (Jan-Jun 2024, Jul-Dec 2024, Jan-Jun 2025) reveal a steady increase in the intention to locally integrate, accompanied by a general decrease in the intention to return, suggesting that the longer displacement lasts, the more likely people are to decide to locally integrate. This is further corroborated in the following graph.

Chart 2. Trend analysis of intentions: Local Integration vs. Return

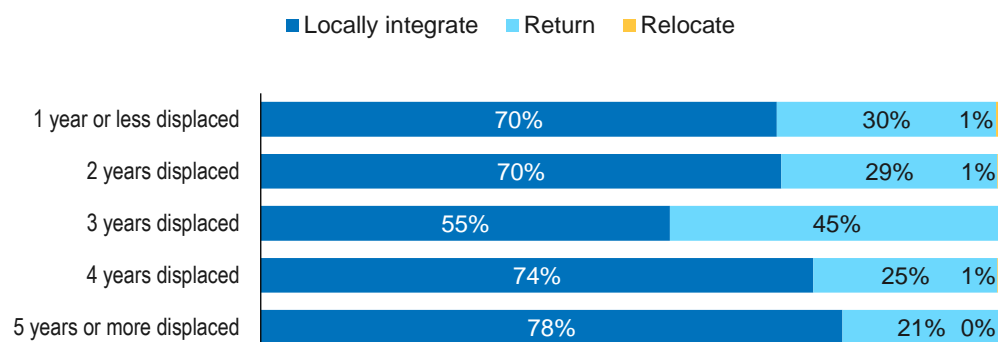


² Findings in the Intentions on Durable Solutions section are based on 5,911 IDP household interviews, 34 IDP FGDs and 9 IDP KIIs.

* Phase 1 includes only the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula.

1.2. Number of years displaced positively correlates with intention to locally integrate

Chart 3. Intentions, by length of displacement



Aligned with findings from [UNHCR's Jul-Dec 2024 Community Consultations on Durable Solutions](#), in general the longer one is displaced, the higher the likelihood of choosing local integration. People displaced for one to three years show the lowest intention to locally integrate, with a sharp increase at four and five years.



We would like to stay here for the rest of our lives."

— Displaced girls in Metuge, Cabo Delgado

Displaced woman selling products at the Gingone market in Pemba, Cabo Delgado, where she has chosen to locally integrate.

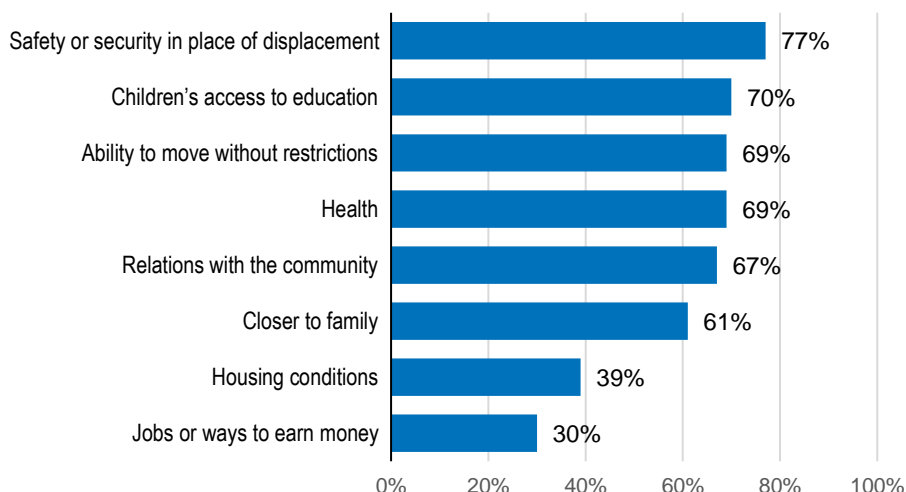
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2. Local integration intention

2.1. Security remains the main reason people intend to locally integrate

Chart 4. Reasons for intending to locally integrate

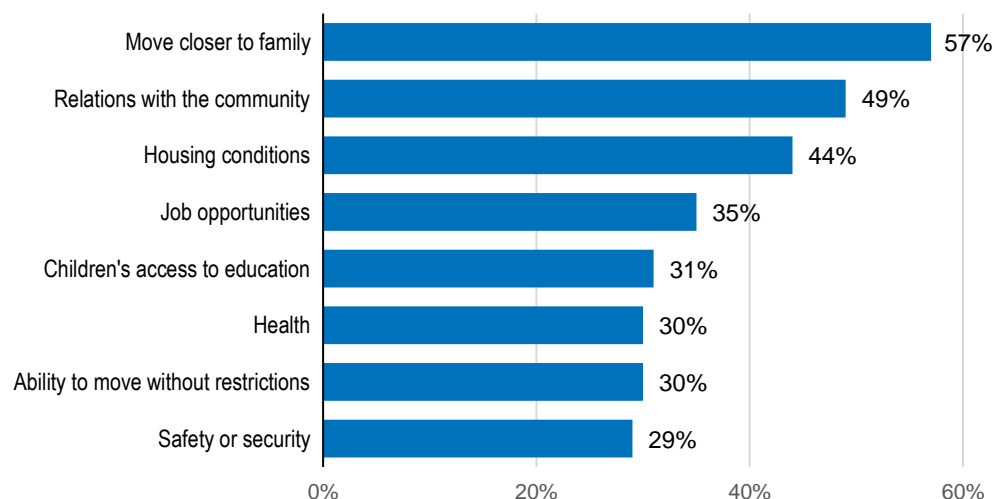


Consistent with the previous rounds of UNHCR's Community Consultations on Durable Solutions ([Jan-Jun 2024](#), [Jul-Dec 2024](#)), security in the place of displacement (and insecurity in the place of origin) remains the main reason for people's intention to locally integrate. FGDs confirm that displaced people see their current locations as safer, with better access to assistance and services, and greater long-term opportunities and stability.

3. Return intention

3.1. Familial and social relations are the top reasons people intend to return

Chart 5. Reasons for intending to return



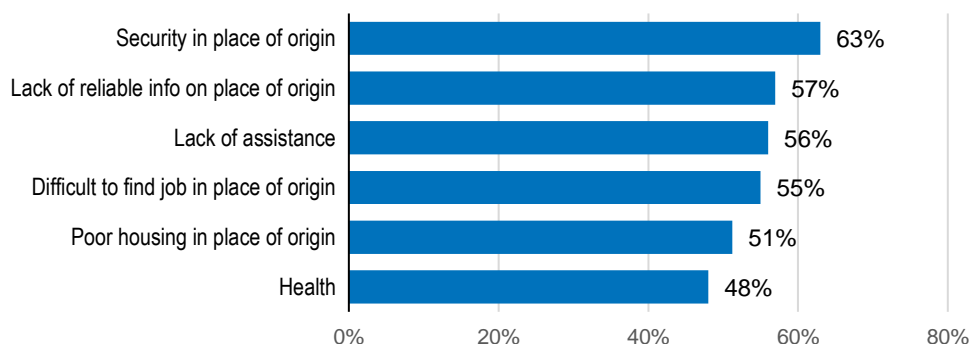
Reuniting with family and positive community relations (being surrounded by one's own community rather than host communities, where tensions often arise) proved slightly more important than material wellbeing for people deciding to return, though housing and livelihoods opportunities ranked highly as well. Interestingly, a little less than a third of people cited security as a motivation for returning, suggesting this cohort either does not feel safe in the place of displacement, or they feel their area of origin is now equally safe. FGDs added to the picture, with some people citing harsh conditions in the displacement area as another main driving force behind their desire to return, rendering their decision to return home less about promising conditions at home and more about difficult conditions in displacement areas.

The above reasons for choosing to return are fully consistent with the reasons from the previous round of [UNHCR's Jul-Dec 2024 Community Consultations on Durable Solutions](#), with respondents similarly citing family unity, improved community relations and better housing as the top three reasons for intending to return.

While IDPs cite a desire for better community relations as a main reason for wanting to return, interestingly, host communities tend to report a more positive outlook on community relations and social cohesion with IDPs. This difference in perception, while difficult to explain, could be related to a difference in power between the host community (more power) and IDPs (less power), with the former feeling more in control of local resources and the latter feeling at the mercy of their hosts, inherently creating differing feelings towards their relations.

3.2. Insecurity and lack of information on place of origin remain the main obstacles to acting on return intention

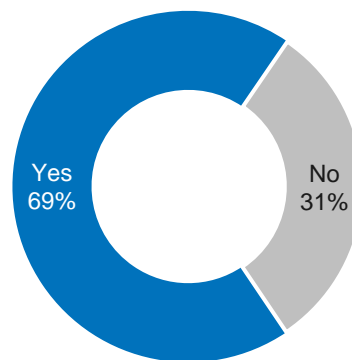
Chart 6. Obstacles likely to prevent acting on return intention



Even those who intend to return recognize security in the place of origin as the main obstacle. Displaced people in FGDs and KIIs confirmed that their decision to return is contingent on improved security conditions and the end of conflict, as well as the availability of adequate housing, access to basic services and increased livelihoods opportunities.

3.3. Most who intend to return need assistance to do so

Chart 7. Do you need assistance to return?



Among the 69% of people who need assistance to return:

- 94% need money to pay for the return
- 91% need transportation (linked to the above)
- 86% need information on the situation in the place of origin
- 89% need help finding a job in the place of origin
- 82% need assistance in finding schooling in the place of origin
- 81% need assistance in finding housing in the place of origin
- 72% need documentation.

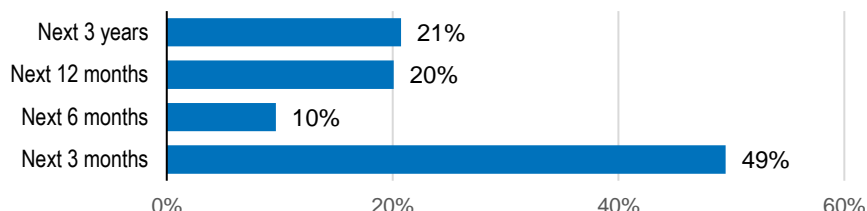


There is no information that could convince me to return home — not until this war ends."

— Displaced man in Metuge, Cabo Delgado.

3.4. Return intention timeframes range from actionable to aspirational

Chart 8. Timeframe for acting on return intention



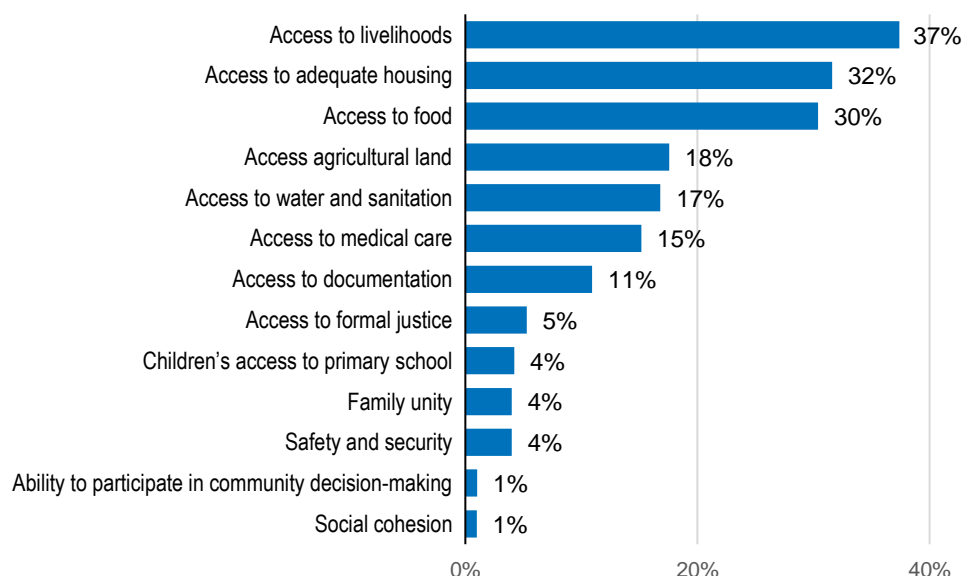
Of the 26% of displaced respondents who intend to return, a little more than half (59%) intend to do so in the next three to six months, suggesting they have a concrete plan to do so and will likely indeed act. The remainder (41%) plan to return over the next one-three years, rendering their intention likely more aspirational than actionable.

For those who intended to return in the next 3 and 6 months, their main areas of origin are Macomia, Mocimboa da Praia, Nangade, Muidumbe, and Quissanga and their main areas of displacement are Pemba, Nangade, Macomia, Mueda, and Metuge.

4. Challenges to local integration

4.1. IDPs face challenges to local integration, especially access to livelihoods, housing and food

Chart 9. Challenges to local integration



FGDs and KIs reveal that IDPs face significant barriers to local integration, particularly in accessing livelihoods, adequate housing, agricultural land and essential services. Many report food insecurity, poor housing conditions and limited access to clean water, healthcare and education, particularly affecting women, older persons and persons with disabilities. Livelihood opportunities are scarce, land access is often conditional on payment, and social exclusion and discrimination further hinder integration into host communities.

The above challenges to local integration are fully consistent with the challenges in the previous round of [UNHCR's Jul-Dec 2024 Community Consultations on Durable Solutions](#), with respondents similarly citing access to livelihoods, adequate housing and food as the top three challenges.

It should be noted that lack of access to livelihoods, civil documentation, and the formal justice system are structural issue independent of (but exacerbated by) the armed conflict and natural disasters, as host communities also report severe challenges in accessing these services. They also share safety and security concerns with IDPs, fearing the conflict could spill over into previously safe areas.

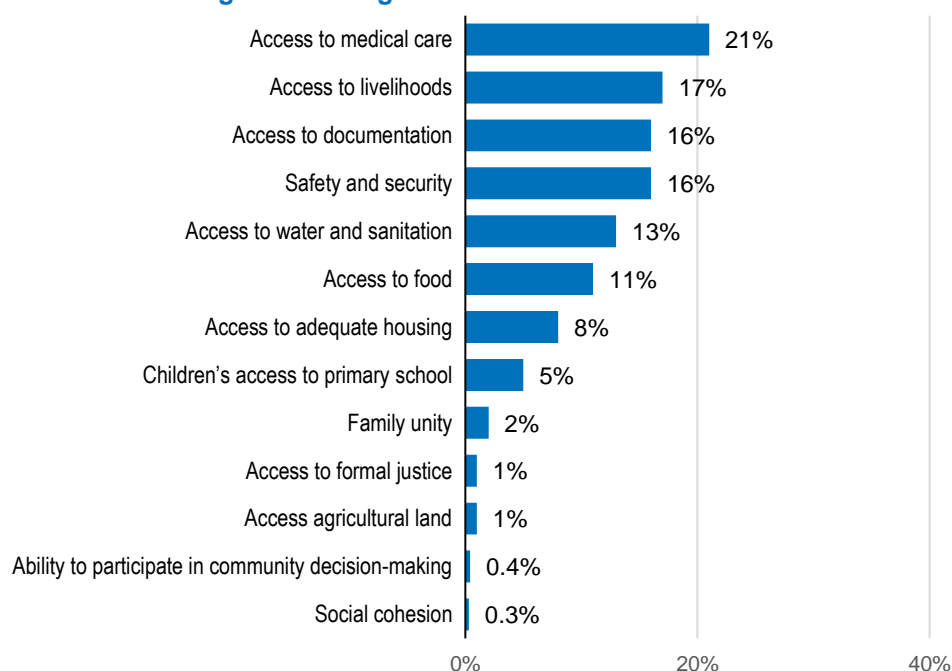
Displaced woman and her baby residing in Pemba, Cabo Delgado © UNHCR/ Isadora Zoni



5. Challenges to reintegration in areas of origin³

5.1. Returnees face challenges to reintegration, especially access to health, livelihoods, documentation and security

Chart 10. Challenges to reintegration



Findings from FGDs and KIIs reveal that the overall quality of life remains poor for many returnees, with most respondents reporting significant difficulty meeting basic needs, particularly in accessing adequate housing, food, water and healthcare. Livelihoods opportunities are scarce due to a lack of infrastructure, employment options, and secure access to land. Acquiring civil documentation remains difficult, primarily due to lack of funds to travel to district authorities where civil registries are located (in the absence of mobile brigades). While some families are able to remain united, financial constraints threaten household cohesion by forcing some members to seek opportunities elsewhere. Most legal disputes in the community are resolved through community structures, with few seeking formal legal redress.

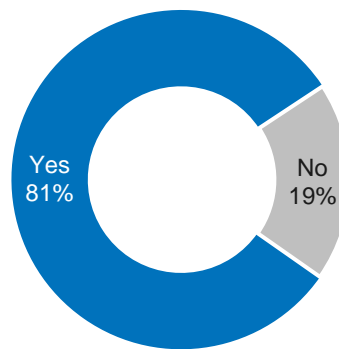
Similarities can be found between the above challenges to reintegration in return areas with those from previous rounds of UNHCR Community Consultations on Durable Solutions. In [Jan-Jun 2024](#), returnees emphasized access to food, safety and security, and access to documentation as their primary reintegration challenges. In [Jul-Dec 2024](#), the top cited challenges were access to livelihoods, healthcare and WASH. Thus, the top reintegration challenges from Jan-Jun 2025 present a mix of the top challenges from the previous rounds.

³ Findings in the Returnee Perspectives section are based on 3,276 returnee household interviews, 7 returnee FGDs and 3 returnee KIIs. The data in this section is drawn exclusively from Cabo Delgado, given that all interviewed returnees (and the vast majority of returnees in Mozambique) are located in Cabo Delgado.

It should be noted that lack of access to livelihoods, civil documentation, and the formal justice system are structural issue independent of (but exacerbated by) the armed conflict and natural disasters, as host communities also report severe challenges in accessing these services. They also share safety and security concerns with returnees, fearing the conflict could spill over into previously safe areas.

5.2. Most returnees, despite difficult conditions in their areas of origin, plan to remain there in the absence of further attacks

Chart 11. Do you plan on staying here?



While the findings showed that returnees in Cabo Delgado continue to face severe challenges to reintegration, most (81%) of returnees do not plan on leaving again in the absence of further attacks. This is corroborated by qualitative findings: no focus group discussion participant, regardless of age, gender, or other diversity factors, expressed a desire to leave unless security conditions deteriorate significantly.

The top reported reasons for having returned were family reunification (63%) and better relations with people in the community (60%) compared to relations with host communities in displacement areas, where tensions can arise. This is fully consistent with the reasons IDPs report for intending to return, further demonstrating a prioritization of familial and social relations over everything else.

FGDs, however, confirm a range of motivations behind the decision to return. Women cited improved security and a strong emotional connection to their place of origin as key drivers. Men and boys emphasized the harsh living conditions in displacement sites, highlighting return as a result of dismal conditions in the place of displacement rather than improved conditions in areas of origin. Older people expressed a desire to return to reclaim their homes and belongings.

“Life here is sad. Sometimes we don’t have anything to eat and (...) we don’t have toys. At school, we lack notebooks and pens, and some days we can’t even go. When we get sick, there’s no medicine. We wish for a better life, but it feels like no one cares about us.”

— Host community girls, Meconta, Nampula

Displaced and host community children play together at the Industrial Institute hosting site in Macomia, Cabo Delgado

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6. Information and Communication on Durable Solutions

Proportion of people who receive information on durable solutions and other matters related to their displacement

✓ **28%**
Yes

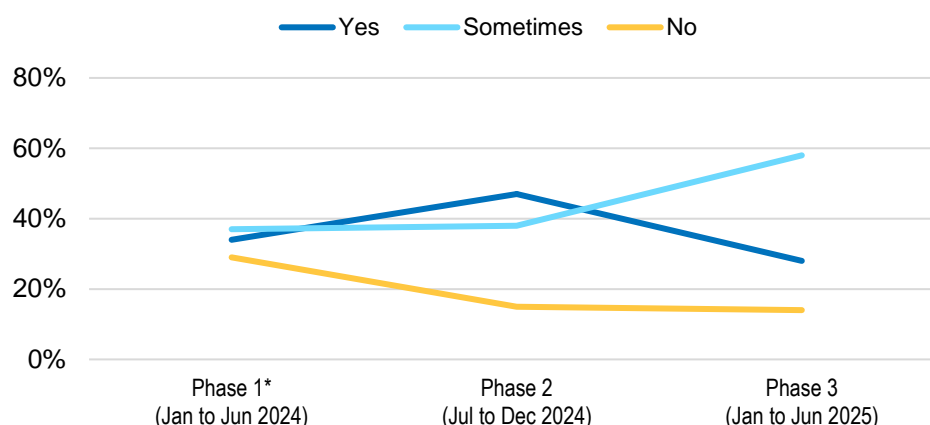
— **58%**
Sometimes

✗ **14%**
No

7.1. Many affected people still lack sufficient information, especially on livelihoods opportunities, documentation and access to land and tenure security

More than half of respondents do not receive sufficient information to be able to make an informed decisions on the most appropriate durable solutions for themselves and their families (58% only receive it sometimes and 14% never receive it).

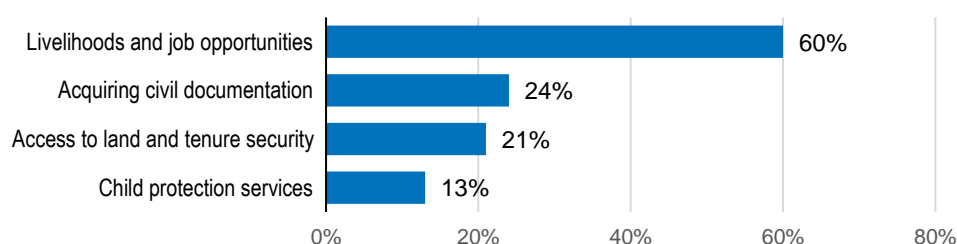
Chart 12. Trend analysis: Proportion of people who receive information



* Phase 1 includes only the provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula.

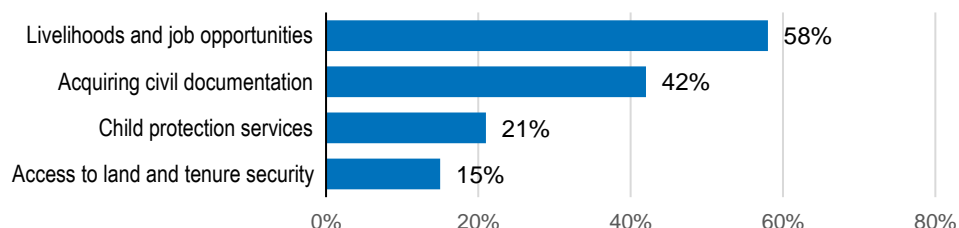
While the above trend analysis shows generally positive developments overtime, including an increasing proportion of people reporting receiving information sometimes (“Sometimes”) and a decreasing proportion of people reporting never receiving information (“No”), this progress is somewhat undercut by a decreasing proportion of people reporting receiving sufficient information (“Yes”). Interestingly, host communities also report lacking sufficient information on access to services, including health services, education, livelihoods, and civil documentation, suggesting the lack of information for many communities exists independent of (but is exacerbated by) the armed conflict and natural disasters.

Chart 13. Types of information needed by IDPs



While quantitative data showed displaced people mostly needing information on livelihoods, documentation, land/tenure security and child protection, FGDs and KIIIs add to the picture, with displaced people highlighting that information on security in areas of origin remains a top priority. Other participants consistently emphasized the need for timely updates on the availability of basic services such as food, healthcare, water, shelter, education and civil documentation in current locations. Many also requested information on livelihoods opportunities, access to agricultural land and support for small businesses. Respondents stressed that clear, accessible information on humanitarian assistance and their rights, including for persons with disabilities, is essential to make informed decisions, access support and improve their living conditions in displacement.

Chart 14. Types of information needed by returnees



There is little difference between the types of information needed by returnees, except they prioritize child protection information above land access/tenure security information compared to IDPs. FGDs and KIIIs with returnees indicate that information on security remains the most critical need, reflecting ongoing concerns about safety and stability in areas of return. Participants also emphasized the importance of receiving information on available basic services – such as food assistance, healthcare, education and shelter – as well as local employment opportunities.

7.2. People prefer to receive solutions and other information in-person from community leaders, followed by radio

Chart 15. Preferred channels for receiving information

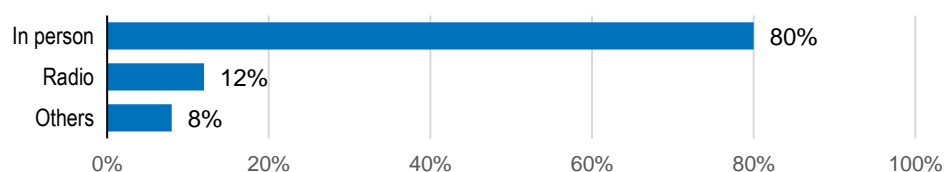
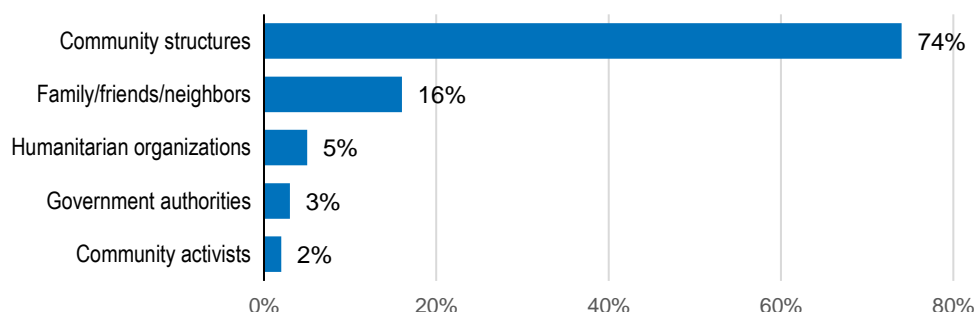
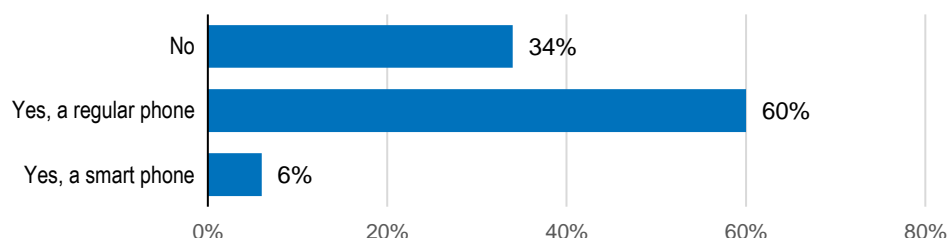


Chart 16. Preferred source of information


Consistent with previous rounds of UNHCR Community Consultations on Durable Solutions ([Jan-Jun 2024](#), [Jul-Dec 2024](#)), most people prefer to receive information in person, followed by radio. They also trust their community leaders as the source of information. FGDs and KIIs corroborate that both displaced people and returnees overwhelmingly trust community leaders to provide key information. Though not visualized in a graph, when disaggregated by displaced population type, IDPs in sites rely more on community leaders for information (79%) than IDPs in host communities (61%), who have a higher reliance on family/friends/neighbors, humanitarians and Government than IDPs in sites.

Chart 17. Ownership of telephones


Ownership of a telephone is relevant for receiving and sharing information on durable solutions and other matters related to displacement. While most people have a phone (66%), around a third do not. Gender disaggregation shows that men are more likely to own phones, with 69% having regular phones and 7% owning smartphones, compared to 55% and 6% of women, respectively. Conversely, 40% of women do not own a phone, significantly higher than the 25% of men without one. This suggests a digital gender gap, where women have less access to communication technology, potentially limiting their access to information on durable solutions, services, opportunities, and crucially, mobile money payments.

Recommendations

1 Effective durable solutions planning must continue to be informed by where displaced populations will be in the medium- and long-term, and focus equally on all durable solutions pathways.

- To know where displaced people will be in the medium- and long-term, to understand their changing plans over time, and to ensure their movements are voluntary, it is recommended that **solutions actors continue to consult communities on their intentions on durable solutions**. At the same time, these exercises must continue to distinguish between aspirational and actionable intentions. Both those who intend to stay and locally integrate and those who intend to return cite significant barriers to translating these intentions into reality, with assistance needed and a lack of preparatory actions taken.
- With such a large and seemingly growing proportion of the displaced population intending to stay and locally integrate, it is recommended that **solutions actors continue to focus as much on improving conditions in places of local integration** (including continuing to support the alternative-to-sites approach) as in places of return, ensuring safety and security; an adequate standard of living; access to livelihoods; restoration of housing, land and property; access to documentation; family reunification; participation in public affairs; access to effective remedies and justice; and social cohesion and peacebuilding between communities.

2 Solutions actors can contribute to the sustainability of local integration/reintegration by ensuring access to rights, services and information in places of displacement, return and relocation.

- It is recommended that **solutions actors continue to support displaced people and returnees to meet their long-term needs** for them to be able to locally integrate or reintegrate, respectively.
- With the top challenges to local integration being lack of livelihoods opportunities and inadequate housing, it is recommended that **development actors make large-scale investments in increasing livelihoods opportunities and access to adequate housing** in the place of local integration.
- With family reunification and better community relations in areas of origin as the top reasons reported by both IDPs for intending to return and returnees for having returned, it is recommended that **solutions actors duly foster these areas (including family tracing/reunification mechanisms)** when supporting returning IDPs' reintegration.
- With insecurity and lack of information as the top obstacles keeping those IDPs who intend to return from doing so, it is recommended that **humanitarian and Government actors systematically provide detailed information on available services in the place of origin** through regularly updated referral pathways and awareness-raising campaigns.

- It is recommended that **solutions actors proactively support host communities improve their living conditions**, specifically with increased livelihoods opportunities, better infrastructure, civil documentation and access to healthcare, as a hedge against future conflict with displaced communities, which could ultimately threaten their local integration. If host communities themselves face significant barriers in access to services and opportunities, it is difficult to expect that displaced people and returnees can reach solutions.

3 It is recommended that solutions actors continue increasing information-sharing with affected people in order to help them reach durable solutions.

- With (i) nearly three quarters of affected people lacking sufficient information on durable solutions, and (ii) lack of information on the place of origin as one of the top two obstacles for acting on a return intention, it is recommended that **information is proactively disseminated to affected people, allowing them to make informed decisions on solutions pathways**. In doing so, it is also important to ensure that women, older people, people with disabilities and others with specific needs have the same access to information as others. Information provision should include updated information on the security situation in the place of origin access to livelihoods, and access to civil documentation.
- It is recommended that **solutions actors disseminate information on durable solutions via community leaders in-person, complemented by radio spots and text messages**. In-person remains the preferred modality for receiving information, followed by radio. Mass text messages could represent a practical complement in Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa, given that most people have phones (in Zambezia, most people do not have phones). Given that significantly less women have phones, it is recommended to **identify women without phones and provide them to increase community engagement with and accountability to this group**.
- It is recommended that **information dissemination continue to be supported by existing durable solutions and community engagement coordination mechanisms**, including the national and sub-national Solutions Working Groups (SWGs) and the Community Engagement / Accountability to Affected People Working Group (CE/AAP WG).

Displaced woman consulted about conditions at a transit center in Ancuabe, Cabo Delgado.

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People in Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Niassa and
Zambezia provinces

January – June 2025



UNHCR

179 Rua Periera Marinho
PO Box 1198, Maputo, Mozambique
lefenfez@unhcr.org

www.unhcr.org

