

## QUICK GUIDE

### Protection Considerations When Surveying Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Mozambique

Since 2017, Mozambique has experienced significant internal displacement due to conflict, climate shocks and other crises. As of 2025, more than 1.3 million people have been displaced. The response has mobilized over USD 2.4 billion, involving humanitarian, development and government actors. Reliable, protection-sensitive data is essential to inform policy, programming and durable solutions. However, forcibly displaced persons are often subject to repeated surveys, which can lead to survey fatigue, retraumatization, and mistrust. This guidance note outlines key protection considerations for actors when collecting data from forcibly displaced persons and host communities in Mozambique.

#### Key principles for protection-sensitive data collection

##### Necessity and purpose of data collection

- Only collect data that is essential and has a clearly defined use.
- Avoid over-surveying: coordinate across agencies to minimize duplication.
- Clearly communicate the purpose of the survey to respondents.
- Do not link surveys to aid or benefits, to avoid creating false expectations.

##### Do No Harm

- Ensure that participation is voluntary, informed and based on free and prior consent.
- Avoid triggering trauma: do not encourage detailed recounting of traumatic experiences.
- If distress arises, interrupt empathetically and redirect to the questionnaire.
- Refer individuals to support services when needed (e.g., Linha Verde 1458).
- Consider gender (diversity) of enumerators.

#### Good practice: Applying the “Do No Harm” principle

**Case scenario:** An enumerator is conducting a survey with a woman who was displaced due to conflict. During the interview, she begins to cry while recounting how she fled her village after an attack. She starts sharing a detailed and traumatic story, even though the question only asked about the year of displacement. What should the enumerator do?



##### Pause and acknowledge:

*“Thank you for sharing. I’m really sorry this happened to you. You don’t need to go into detail if it’s painful.”*

##### Redirect with empathy:

*“We’re only asking about the year you left your home. You don’t need to tell the full story unless you feel comfortable.”*

##### Avoid probing for trauma:

Do not ask follow-up questions about the traumatic event.

##### Offer referral information:

*“If you ever want to talk to someone or get help, you can call Linha Verde 1458. It’s free and confidential.”*

##### Document respectfully:

- Record only the necessary data (e.g., year of displacement).
- Do not include personal or emotional details in the survey form.

#### ! KEY TIPS

UNHCR has provided trainings on surveying IDPs and vulnerable host communities in Mozambique to hundreds of enumerators. You can contact us at [burmeister@unhcr.org](mailto:burmeister@unhcr.org) (Senior Protection Cluster Coordination Officer).

## Confidentiality and data protection

- ✓ Collect only the minimum necessary personal data.
- ✓ Ensure secure storage and restricted access.
- ✓ Inform respondents how their data will be used and protected.
- ✓ Avoid collecting sensitive data unless absolutely necessary and with safeguards.

Please refer to [UNHCR's General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy \(2022\)](#) for more information.

## Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)

**Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA)** refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes. This includes offering aid or services in exchange for sex, sexual activity with children under the age of 18 and unwanted sexual advances or harassment.

- ✓ Enumerators must be trained on SEA principles.
- ✓ No exchange of goods/services for sex.
- ✓ No sexual activity with children under the age of 18.
- ✓ No sexual relations with beneficiaries under power imbalance.
- ✓ Mandatory reporting of SEA concerns.
- ✓ Maintain a safe and respectful environment.

### Practical guide: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)

#### Before the survey:

- Train all enumerators on SEA definitions, reporting obligations, and referral pathways.
- Distribute codes of conduct and ensure enumerators sign them.
- Include SEA awareness in community sensitization before data collection begins.

**During the survey - Example scenario:** A young man shares that an aid worker offered him food in exchange for sexual favors. He's unsure if he should speak further. What should the enumerator do?



#### Stay calm and supportive

*"Thank you for trusting me. What you shared is serious and you have the right to be safe."*

#### Do not investigate

- Do not ask for names or details.
- Do not record the disclosure in the survey form.

#### Refer immediately

*"You can report this confidentially and get help by calling Linha Verde 1458. It's free and confidential."*

#### Report internally

- Follow your organization's SEA reporting protocol.
- Use designated focal points or hotlines.

#### Document respectfully:

Never share the disclosure outside the reporting mechanism.

- REFERRAL CONTACTS**
- **Linha Verde 1458:** Free, confidential hotline for complaints and SEA reports (6h–21h daily).
  - **MGCAS Protection Directorate:** +258 21 303 000 / [protecao@mgcas.gov.mz](mailto:protecao@mgcas.gov.mz)
  - **UNHCR SEA Focal Point** (if applicable): Contact your supervisor for details.

- KEY TIPS**
- Never promise aid or services in exchange for disclosures.
  - Always prioritize the survivor's safety and dignity.
  - Ensure all enumerators know how and where to report SEA concerns.

## Practical guidance for enumerators

- ✓ Manage expectations: clarify that surveys are not linked to aid.
- ✓ Be aware of survey fatigue: many IDPs have been interviewed multiple times.
- ✓ Respect privacy and dignity: avoid intrusive or unnecessary questions.
- ✓ Use neutral and non-leading language.
- ✓ Be sensitive to vulnerabilities and trauma.
- ✓ Refer individuals to Linha Verde 1458 for complaints, SEA reports, or service information.

### Good practice: Coordination and Accountability

- ✓ **Present project to provincial and district authorities** where surveys are conducted to receive credentials.
- ✓ **Consider preparing communities** ahead of conducting survey to manage expectations and be explicit that this will be a surveying exercise, with no aid delivery. UNHCR as protection agency has a strong operational footprint across northern Mozambique and can support reach-out of communities.
- ✓ **Share anonymized data responsibly** to inform policy and programming. Use secure platforms such as the INE data portal or UNHCR's PRIMES system to share aggregated findings with stakeholders.
- ✓ **Ensure feedback mechanisms are in place for respondents.** Enumerators should inform respondents about Linha Verde 1458 (free hotline, 6h–21h daily) for complaints, SEA reports, or service information. Additionally, survey teams can provide printed flyers with contact details for UNHCR's local protection focal points.
- ✓ **Monitor and evaluate the impact of data collection on affected populations.** Conduct post-survey debriefs with enumerators and community representatives to assess whether the survey caused distress or confusion

### KEY TIPS

- Before launching a survey, convene a coordination meeting with relevant actors to get advice and review the questionnaire and agree on referral protocols.
- Maintain a shared calendar of planned surveys to avoid overlap.

## Resources and further reading

- UNHCR General Policy on Personal Data Protection and Privacy (2022): <https://www.refworld.org/policy/strategy/unhcr/2022/en/124207>
- IASC Training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-training>
- IASC Six Core Principles on SEA: <https://www.interaction.org/courses/managing-sea/data/downloads/iascsixcoreprinciples.pdf>
- Protection Cluster Mozambique - Protection Glossary (June 2022): <https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/mozambique-protection-clusterprotection-glossary-cabo-delgado-june-2022-enpt>



### For more information,

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