

# Building Social Cohesion in Cabo Delgado

- Forced displacement has changed social relations in parts of Cabo Delgado. The arrival of displaced persons is associated with social disruption, tension, grievance, social fragmentation and economic upheaval. The arrival of new people under circumstances of forced movement has affected previous compositions and distributions of ethnicity and background. It has also exacerbated political, social and economic differences disrupting previous balances of tolerance, social acceptance, and cohesion.



Large majorities of forcibly displaced persons are reluctant or unable to return to a place associated with violent conflict, trauma and a lack of economic opportunities. Faced with the reality that the displaced may not return in the short to medium term, and limited options exist for other durable solutions, the government is confronted with a common dilemma: whether to pursue greater socio-economic inclusion of the displaced knowing that there are societal dynamics that may be affected and made problematic by this approach. Contrastingly, evidence indicates that not pursuing integration may have equally negative consequences. Countries that struggle to integrate

the displaced have faced residual problems such as civil unrest, citizen anger, prejudice, a continued and/or growing distrust of government, and increased armed conflict. Therefore, ensuring social cohesion among IDP and host communities in Cabo Delgado is a vital component of peace-making and stabilisation.

This brief, the first of two parts on building social cohesion in Cabo Delgado, introduces some useful concepts and tools to build trust and cohesion between host and displaced communities in Cabo Delgado, including strengthening civic engagement, resolving localised conflict, and raising awareness of human rights.

## Measuring social cohesion

Social cohesion can be defined as the “glue” or “bonds” that keep society integrated. It signifies that community members are included in governance systems in meaningful ways, and involves creating shared values, decreasing inequalities, and creating

a sense of common narrative. Social cohesion is an important driver for prosperity, peace and democracy by ensuring that societal development is equitable. Social cohesion can be measured through five positive or negative dimensions:

<i>Negative dimensions</i>	<i>Positive dimensions</i>
Isolation	Belonging
Exclusion	Inclusion
Non-involvement	Participation
Rejection	Recognition
Illegitimacy	Legitimacy

## Conflict (in the context of displaced people and host communities):

When a district, town, or village receives an inflow of displaced people it can lead to a sudden and drastic increase in the population, which strains the host’s capacity to deliver services. The impact can result in conflict. A conflict is a struggle or a difficult/problematic situation between two or more parties that can sometimes result in confrontation or physical violence. Some examples of situations where conflict can arise include resource scarcity and differences in beliefs, customs, culture, interests, thoughts and values. Displaced and host communities can encounter the following common challenges:

- Displaced people often have difficulty with social and economic integration, mainly due to the lack of civil compromise in the community and the conditions in which they live.
- The host community has unresolved issues and insufficient infrastructure and resources.
- Both communities have difficulty accessing healthcare services, educational opportunities and humanitarian assistance. In some cases, the host community al-



ready lacks resources and the displaced community receive assistance from international aid, leading to increased tension between the two populations.

- Misinformation, suspicion, paranoia and hate speech - sometimes through social media - can amplify tensions and prejudice.

Conflict leads to destructive effects: Vicious circles that perpetuate antagonistic, hostile relationships, and creates the perception that conflict and violence are the only ways to resolve disputes. The ultimate challenge for communi-

ties when building social cohesion and peace is not to escalate conflict towards destructive methods of confrontation.

In contrast, constructive conflict resolution can help to avoid stagnation, stimulate interest and curiosity in other perspectives, encourage personal and social change, and help to establish both individual and group identities. Once the benefits of positive conflict resolution have been experienced by a community, they increase the likelihood that positive solutions will be reached in the event of future conflicts - thus strengthening community resilience too.

## Phases of conflict

There are several phases of conflict in the context of displaced people and host community relations:

**Phase 1: Discomfort:** There is a misunderstanding between two or more parties, and it is detected that something is not right. At this point, it could pass and become insignificant.

**Phase 2: Misunderstandings:** Assumptions are made regarding what the other party wants or needs or is concerned with. Stereotypes can cloud judgment of the validity of what the other party wants.

**Phase 3: Incidents:** The situation escalates in response to specific incidents. Often hurtful

things are said or done, and misunderstandings become more complex and engrained.

**Phase 4: Tensions:** Tension escalates with underlying misunderstandings and reoccurring incidents. Already the relationship with the other is one of antagonist-enemy, and allies are sought to build support for respective groups. This can lead to polarizing the situation and social cohesion in the community can begin to decrease.

**Phase 5: Crisis:** This is the critical point; it is the moment when the conflict becomes evident through active conflict engagement. During this phase, there is often an urge to fight, confront or flee.

## Social cohesion: baseline assessment

An important first step to understand the dynamics of social cohesion and conflict between displaced people and host communities, in every setting where they coexist, is to conduct a baseline assessment. Key elements of the baseline assessment are the processes of stakeholder mapping and consultations:

It is important to map the zones and facilities where displaced people and host communities interact in the towns or areas where they coex-

ist, while concurrently identifying community leaders, representatives, or respected individuals. Equally, improved understanding can be gained through engagement with "focal points" or representatives that already interact with the displaced people or host community (such as faith-based groups, NGOs, humanitarian organisations, health workers, police, and cultural institutions).

Stakeholder consultations are a key mechanism

to actively engage citizens and communities to gather relevant information and understanding in the design, formulation, and evaluation of subsequent interventions. Consultations allow practitioners to learn about the feasibility of intervention options, as well as to hear stakeholders' preferences. Stakeholder consultations are therefore a key source of understanding, input, and feedback.

Examples of themes that can be discussed during stakeholder consultations are shown below, which can then be extended to inter-community dialogue:

- *Future Expectations:* Expectations of life in the next 5 years. Where displaced people would like to settle. What has been the impact for host communities on displaced families?
- *Participation and Accountability:* Are the voices of displaced people / host community heard by the government and by humanitarian agencies / NGOs? What ways would the respective communities like to have a say and be part of decision-making at their location, or at other levels such as within your community, municipality, or state? And how could this be organized so that it happens on a regular basis? If community members are sufficiently involved in the design and implementation of programmes or relevant policy process that affect their community; and, if there are opportunities to safely raise feedback or complaints about government, response organizations or others.
- *Coordination:* How communities feel towards humanitarian agencies. Are communities and humanitarian organisations communicating and coordinating effectively with each other? Are communities involved in any coordination meetings or committees?
- *Protection:* Displaced people and host community members should be asked about how safe they feel in their current location, if groups feel less safe than others and whom to go for help in case of any security issues. Displaced people and host community members should be asked about their relationship with each other and what has contributed either positively or negatively. Lastly, community members can be asked about freedom of movement as well as any issues of discrimination (age, gender, clan etc.) observed in the community.
- *Balance:* Displaced people and host community members can be asked if there is a balance between the emergency assistance they receive (food, shelter, etc.) and assistance or services aimed at longer term recovery and development (reconstruction, livelihoods, etc.). Also, if there is a need for peacebuilding or reconciliation services in the community and, if so, what would be the most effective method.

The following is a list of tips for working with host communities:

- Analyse the impact of displacement, new arrivals, additional or outstanding protection gaps and all interventions on the host community.
- Identify the host community's formal and informal leaders, including women and youth representatives, and establish contact as early as possible (through basic stakeholder mapping).
- Working with the host community, identify the protection risks facing the displaced population and discuss how to prevent them. Discuss the impact of displacement on the community's resources and daily life.
- Discuss plans with the host community and seek their ideas and perspectives.
- Ensure that interventions do not exacerbate tensions between the different communities.
- Encourage the establishment of a joint host/internally displaced committee to analyse the situation and resolve conflicts.
- Include local leaders in training programmes, such as human rights awareness.
- Where possible, ensure that the local community also benefits from services. Address host-community concerns in a timely manner.
- Monitor the dynamics between the displaced and the receiving communities.

The following is a list of tips for making initial contact with displaced communities:

- Understanding community practices and traditions prior to establishing contact can help identify the appropriate approach for engaging with different groups and members of the community. Focus on learning and listening, particularly at the beginning.
- Take every opportunity to discuss and meet informally with persons of concern (at the health centres, during registration, at food distribution points, in the queue for water).
- Those who manage to establish first contact with the humanitarian workers might become "gatekeepers": They might not mention other groups in the community that require support if they believe resources are scarce.
- Identify an existing committee or a community-based organization through which you can access the community and begin to pass on messages. Meet the host community and the authorities.
- Be aware that messages might only reach certain groups, such as other community leaders, and not all members of the community. Develop outreach strategies with the leaders and others to ensure that everyone is informed, including children.
- Make sure that information is delivered in a language that everyone can understand, is culturally sensitive and is correctly perceived and understood.
- Arrange meetings at mutually convenient and agreed times and make sure they take place on time. Do not make persons of interest have to wait.
- First impressions matter. Groups or persons in the community usually draw their own conclusions about the organization based on whom they meet with, how they behave and what happens after their visit.
- Ensure that after the first contact, immediate follow-up action is taken. Be aware of and monitor security issues.
- Transparency, respect, and consistency are essential for building trust, confidence, and collaboration.

## Conclusion

This brief focused on introducing some useful concepts to build trust and cohesion between host and displaced communities in Cabo Delgado. Part 2 will focus on initiatives to improve social cohesion between displaced people and host

communities (*through dialogue*), and initiatives to boost civic participation of displaced people and host communities (*through capacity building*). Ultimately, dialogue and capacity building seek to enhance civic engagement.

### Useful terminology and definitions

#### Internally Displaced People (IPD)

Internally displaced people, according to the United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, are “persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.”

#### Host Community

A host community, in this context, refers to the local governmental, social and economic structures within which internally displaced persons live.

#### Civic Engagement

Civic engagement is a way to encourage community participation with issues of public concern, such as service delivery and peaceful coexistence. It can help hold governments accountable for community needs and individual rights, as well as create a sense of community for all individuals, including displaced populations. Some common barriers to civic engagement that displaced populations face include fear of getting involved in public affairs, limited knowledge of the way that the new systems work, lack of time between jobs and home duties and lack of language proficiency.

#### Capacity Building

Effective civic engagement often requires community capacity building. Capacity building, in this context, is defined as the process of developing and strengthening the skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that communities need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a challenging environment. An essential ingredient in capacity-building is transformation that is generated and sustained over time from within; transformation of this kind goes beyond performing tasks to changing mindsets and attitudes.

#### Dialogue


Dialogue is focused conversation, intentionally engaged, with the aim of increasing understanding, addressing problems, and questioning thoughts and actions. It engages the heart as well as the mind. Dialogue is also a process where the participants commit to listen, reflect, and question with a curious mindset to seek a shared understanding. Ultimately, to take part in a conversation or discussion to resolve a problem.



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