

CONTEXT

Mozambique is a 2,300km long country with a coast on the Indian Ocean. It is highly exposed to natural hazards, with the south suffering from drought and regularly being hit by cyclones, floods and tropical storms.

In 2019, two major cyclones, Idai and Kenneth, hit the center and north of the country, affecting 2 million people. By March 2020, 99,000 people continued to receive assistance in 73 resettlement sites.

CONFLICT

Since 2017, attacks from Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) in the Northern Region have resulted in a progressive increase in the number of internally displaced people, with many people often displaced multiple times. During 2020, the conflict expanded with NSAG gaining control over Mocimboa da Praia, Muidumbe, Quissanga and Macomia districts. In March 2020, 110,000 people were displaced, and by the end of the year more than half a million more people were displaced. Results from the DTM Baseline Assessment (Round 12) show the top districts of origin of IDPs are Quissanga, Palma, Macomia, and Mocimboa da Praia – the same districts where humanitarian access remains limited due to the volatile security situation in the areas. In general, there is a continued trend of displacement to district capitals and southwards, where IDPs find safety.

Drivers of the conflict remain unaddressed and humanitarian access has been severely hampered due to administrative barriers, insecurity and COVID-19. Despite being rich in natural resources, Cabo Delgado remains economically disadvantaged with little investment in education, health services, water and sanitation systems, public transport and telecommunication infrastructure. Subsequently, it ranks at the bottom in human development indicators amongst other provinces.

Conflict-induced displacement combined with previous disasters, and preexisting socio-economic vulnerabilities have outstretched the capacities of local authorities to respond and have aggravated community grievances on access to basic services.

In November 2020, nearly 80% of displaced people were living in host communities, whose living conditions were also very precarious. There were also residual shelter needs from Cyclone Kenneth (which struck the Northern Region in April 2019). The remaining 20% of people were mainly in temporary sites (schools) and on informally occupied surrounding lands. Lack of access to safe shelter for displaced people caused overcrowding in both host communities and temporary sites, contributing to health and protection risks, especially for women and children.

On March 27th 2021, Palma town was attacked, and people fled to Nangade, Mueda, Montepuez, Ibo Islands and Pemba. During the last week of July 2021, 8,086 newly displaced people were recorded, bringing the total number of people who have been displaced from Palma to approximately 80,000 people, on top of the hundred of thousands who have been displaced over the last few years. Most of the displaced families across the Northern provinces remain in need of urgent access to basic items and services, including those within Palma.

TROPICAL STORM CHALANE AND CYCLONE ELOISE

On top of the conflict, on the 30th December 2020, Tropical Storm Chalane struck in the Central Region of Mozambique. It hit locations where approximately 90,000 displaced people from Cyclone Idai were living in resettlement sites. Overall the storm affected 86,412 families (441,686 people). The most vulnerable people, who were unable to prepare/upgrade their shelter ahead the storm, were the most affected. Tropical Cyclone Eloise then struck on 23rd January 2021. It affected an area to the south of the conflict, making landfall near where the 2019 Cyclone Idai had struck. It landed as a Category 2 Tropical Cyclone.



Four major cyclones and tropical storms have struck Mozambique since 2019. This photo shows people displaced following Cyclone Eloise in 2021 which made landfall close to where Cyclone Idai had struck in 2019.



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During 2020, the conflict in the north of the country expanded and displacement increased rapidly. Many displaced people moved to temporary sites, such as this one in Cabo Delgado.

CONFLICT EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Resources were extremely limited for all responses in Mozambique, and immediate assistance was required. Different “tailored shelter packages” were provided depending on the context (rural or urban), the availability of construction materials that could be collected by the displaced population, and the capacity of partners.

In rural contexts where displaced people could access local construction materials, a simple kit consisting of Emergency Shelter (1 tarpaulin) / Non Food Items (basic household items) and tools was provided to support self-recovery. Once people relocated to plots in relocation sites (15x20m), they could set up a basic “tent type” emergency shelter where they could live while they built transitional or semi-permanent shelters.

In urban or peri-urban contexts, where access to local construction materials is more challenging, as far as possible (based on resources available and/or capacity from partners) displaced people received an emergency shelter kit with construction materials. This was to enable them to set up a basic emergency shelter and upgrade it once more materials were available (received or procured).

In all contexts, Shelter Cluster partners, aimed to identify the most vulnerable households who required technical and/or labor assistance, although resources to provide this assistance were very limited.

TARGETING

The Shelter Cluster developed assessment tools at household level with a Score Card system, and trained the enumerators of Cluster partners. It also used Displacement Tracking Matrix teams. The assessments were conducted to ensure that the right information was collected and processed, so that the most vulnerable people could be identified, and their needs properly understood. The tool required household level assessments, to avoid blanket distributions as much as possible. Despite these efforts, verification of distribution lists proved very challenging, and humanitarian actors are struggling to target the most vulnerable people.

In practice, partners had very limited freedom to identify and target the most vulnerable households based on the selection criteria defined by the Shelter Cluster. However, during early 2021, partners’ communication with local authorities improved, and advocacy efforts from the Shelter Cluster and other members of the Inter Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) were strengthened. As a result it was anticipated that it would be possible to better tailor the response based on different needs of each household being relocated.

“SURVIVAL KITS”

From October to December 2020, the 12 active Shelter Cluster partners (at that time) managed to assist 7,292 households affected by the insecurity crisis. Although significant, this only accounted for 7% of the people targeted. Given the need to respond quickly, a Survival Kits methodology was also introduced to the Cluster partners and the ICCG. In December, the Shelter Cluster started piloting the modality of Survival Kits for hard-to-reach areas. Before the attacks in Palma and subsequent evacuation, the first 146 households were assisted with these kits.

Later in January 2021, the Shelter Cluster started the development of Standard Operating Procedures for the use of Survival Kits, engaging with other sectors and standardizing the composition. The Shelter Cluster partners' contribution to these kits is 1 bag, 1 tarpaulin, 1 adapted (light) kitchen set, 1 solar lamp and 1 mosquito net (to be adapted based on the context). The kits are coordinated with WASH, Health and Food Security and Livelihoods Clusters. Collectively the kits are pre-packed together with key items from the different sectors.

RELOCATION SITES

In Mozambique, relocation sites – resettlement sites for IDPs affected by the insecurity crisis – are often promoted by local authorities for some of the displaced people. At these sites, semi-permanent and permanent shelter solutions are allowed. Each family receives a plot of 15x20m where they can settle immediately, and based on the support received or resources available, build and upgrade their shelter.

Between November and December 2020, relocations started from the most congested areas in Pemba to some relocation sites in Ancuabe and Metuge, but partners were unable to target the most vulnerable families based on

selection criteria. Relocation sites rapidly become small villages, and they are intended to become permanent settlements.

SELF HELP

Given the scale of needs and the limited resources, affected people found their own shelter solutions. A lot of this depends upon finding land that they can build on. Where people did have access to land, they usually have been able to start to recover and build shelters and houses. For these households who started building their own shelters, Shelter Cluster partners who had available resources were able to support with retrofit and/or roofing kits and technical assistance. This was to increase resilience and reduce exposure to natural hazards.

For people living in sites, depending on the context, some people received some ES/NFI assistance to start building and upgrading their shelters, but sometimes, if the relocation process was delayed, people often had to wait for more than five months to start improving their shelters. As soon as households could access more resources, they extended their emergency shelter. Some households could not upgrade the type of shelter, but instead focused on increasing the covered space. Wherever people were able to find resources, with some technical support, shelter upgrades happened.

Beyond the basic ES/NFI kits and construction tools that were provided, supporting organizations also provided trainings. Awareness on proper use of natural resources and technical guidance for building more resilient shelters was aimed at increasing effectiveness of the response, and mitigating the environmental impacts related to emergency shelters interventions (such as deforestation and soil degradation).



Support was provided to households building their own shelters using locally available materials. This included trainings and awareness raising on more resilient construction techniques, and on mitigation of the potential negative environmental impacts of shelter construction.



Emergency Shelter and Semi-Permanent Shelter (self-built) as part of the upgrade strategy within the same household, Ntokota Relocation Site, Metuge, Cabo Delgado.

TROPICAL STORM CHALANE AND CYCLONE ELOISE RESPONSE

The initial response utilized 2020 prepositioned family tents. “Accommodation centers” were established by the government as transit/temporary sites to accommodate people displaced by the storms. In some cases these were collective centers in public buildings such as schools, whereas in other cases they were temporary tented sites.

The first priority for shelter partners as advised by the government was to deactivate the accommodation centers. There was also a need to decongest the shared family tents, and support the resettlement of newly displaced families. People were moved from accommodation centers and overcrowded resettlement sites to individual plots in safe locations. Planning was difficult for agencies due to limited notice of accommodation centers being deactivated. Assistance provided included the provision of basic emergency shelter kits (2 tarpaulins and tools) and essential NFIs.

Five new resettlement sites were created and eight existing resettlement sites were extended. This created plots for 6,736 newly displaced families (an increase of 35% from the number of plots available in resettlement sites following Cyclone Idai). Resettlement sites were promoted by the government, especially for the resettlement of people who had been living in hazard-prone areas prior to the cyclones.

The 11 Shelter Cluster partners active in response to Cyclone Chalane and Eloise reached 13,000+ families with emergency shelter and NFIs, both within and outside of resettlement sites. However, there were large gaps in coverage in the provision of assistance, both to people in existing resettlement sites (8,755 households were affected) and those outside of resettlement sites (50,000 households were affected).

The Central Region Shelter Cluster was also concerned by the lack of prepositioned stock available for the 2022 rainy season and the high numbers of families continuing to live in emergency shelter since Cyclone Idai in 2019, increasing year on year, and the lack of support to move towards transitional and permanent housing solutions.



Shelter extension in Ntokota Relocation Site, Metuge, Cabo Delgado.

FLOODING IN CABO DELGADO

Meanwhile there were floods in Cabo Delgado, where the insecurity crisis continued to escalate. More than 200 households were affected by floods (and an outbreak of cholera in one area), but the lack of resources from partners and lack of land available for relocation compromised the assistance.

OVERSTRETCHED RESOURCES

In April 2021, due to the attacks in Palma, the number of displaced people reached 732,230. New arrivals were reported every-day in the relocation and temporary sites, but replenishment of stocks was very challenging due to procurement delays and lack of resources. Frustration within the sector increased. Partners were already overstretched to provide assistance to previously displaced people, and lacked the capacity to assist more.

As of June 2021, 30% of the targeted people who were displaced due to the insecurity crisis had been reached, by 15 partners, with very basic assistance. There were concerns that the situation would not stabilize and that there would be insufficient funding to upgrade or maintain shelters. There was insufficient stock in preparedness for the coming rain and cyclone season.

WHAT ABOUT HLP?

In Mozambique, the Government owns the land. People can own the houses, but not the land. People and organizations can have access to the land via use right, which can be formalized with a “Right of Use and Enjoyment of the Land” or “DUAT” in the Portuguese acronym. In order to help partners to address this situation, the Shelter Cluster has organized HLP trainings (that will continue) for Shelter and CCCM partners.

One key aspect of HLP in Mozambique is that community land rights through occupancy are often not formally registered and are thus “invisible” in formal records and official maps. Parallel informal property systems exist in peri-urban and rural settlements. In this context, conducting “due diligence” processes to understand the tenure of land for humanitarian interventions (such as shelter and the construction of infrastructure) is very important. The Cluster actively trained partners on approaches to addressing and conducting due diligence on land ownership.



Shelter phased approach development by one household in Meculane Relocation Site, Chiure, Cabo Delgado.

MAIN CHALLENGES

The lack of resources (materials and human resources) due to procurement delays and financial shortages compromised both responses (insecurity and cyclone). Considering the huge needs, Shelter Cluster partners have needed to optimize their resources by reducing shelter kits composition to the most basic package, in order to reach as many people as possible.

The application of household selection criteria is extremely challenging across all sectors, as lists of households are being prepared (and imposed) by local leaders, with very limited opportunities for partners to discuss the lists or make changes if required to ensure that the most vulnerable households are targeted. The Shelter Cluster defined assessment tools to support this and continues to advocate to local authorities and key sectors that can support, especially for the referral of the most vulnerable household to be prioritized, as partners were struggling with identification of vulnerable individuals.

Coordination. Most of the Shelter Cluster partners were not familiar with the Cluster system, nor with humanitarian interventions in insecurity crises, so they needed a lot of support and guidance. The humanitarian response increased and has continued the need to scale up.

Long lead times. Without prepositioned stock it is impossible to rapidly respond. Lead times for international procurement are many months, especially as budgets mean that airfreight is not generally possible. Considering all procurement and importation challenges faced in the country, centralizing this would benefit all Shelter/NFI partners and support both insecurity and disaster responses. With a proper pipeline system, access to items and construction materials will be more efficient.

WIDER IMPACTS

The impact of the Shelter Cluster strategy promoted from the end of 2020 is showing results, with a balance between immediateness and sustainability. Rapid Response and Early Recovery modalities were merged, taking advantage of the previous capacity built in the region by development partners. Even if most of the partners did not have the immediateness mind-set, most of the organizations deployed emergency experts to support the teams, and the Shelter Cluster proposed areas of intervention to partners based on their strengths.



Shelter Cluster partners discussing the shelter designs to be promoted during the phased approach, Pemba, Cabo Delgado.



Woman building her shelter, Meculane, Chiure, Cabo Delgado.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **Strength of coping mechanisms.** The proactiveness and coping mechanisms of affected populations in Mozambique are key factors for the effectiveness of the response. The Shelter Cluster must continue supporting these mechanisms but also increase environmental impact awareness activities and other strategies to ensure that construction materials are collected properly and from controlled sources.
- **Need for prepositioning.** To ensure adequate immediate Emergency Shelter and NFI response, considering the procurement delays (customs blockages and low local production capacity), prepositioned stock including key shelter and NFIs is essential in this context, where the number of people in need of Emergency Shelter and NFI assistance is increasing everyday due to the insecurity crisis and the exposure to natural hazards.
- **Community mobilization.** During the promotion of a phased approach to shelter, partners need to strengthen the engagement of communities from the beginning of the project planning to ensure ownership of the projects and adequateness of the approach, and agree on the timelines. Community mobilization activities need to be reinforced, and shelter teams need to have dedicated staff for this.