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How Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessments can strengthen the evidence base of international policymaking on non-economic losses[1] in fragile and conflict-affected situations

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Summary and key messages

This policy brief presents the findings from a joint research project conducted by IMPACT Initiatives and the Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD). In exploring interplay between displacement, disasters, and non-economic losses (NELs) in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS), this paper underscores a crucial data gap. It advocates for utilizing humanitarian Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessments (MSNAs) to deepen our understanding and inform policy decisions in these complex environments. Widely used by humanitarian actors, yet under-leveraged in the global Loss and Damage (L&D) debate, MSNAs offer a robust framework for analyzing various aspects of displacement and related NELs.

The research identifies several key advantages of using MSNA data to inform the L&D debate and action, specifically on NELs:

- MSNAs provide a comprehensive picture of NELs, by covering a wide range of data on NELs related to (1) displacement patterns, (2) non-economic vulnerabilities and needs (e.g., based on service access and well-being), and (3) households' self-reported impacts of recent disasters.

- MSNA data is available for most humanitarian contexts, including FCS, which are often a blind spot for climate and disaster loss data collection.

- MSNAs provide granular data at household and individual level, which can be used to disaggregate results by many different socio-demographic and economic variables.

- They include both data from displaced and non-displaced populations, enabling holistic comparison.

- They usually cover the entire country, which can inform both the national and global debate on L&D.

- They provide comparability over multiple years, which is useful when looking at contexts of climate impacts (e.g. slow onset, creeping environmental degradation processes).

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Collectively, this data can be used to analyze NELs in displacement contexts through multiple angles, such as (1) NELs due to disaster and climate change impacts, (2) NELs due to disaster displacement, and (3) NELs due to increased vulnerabilities of displaced people to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. To illustrate the usefulness of such analysis IMPACT conducted a NELs-specific analysis of the 2023 MSNA data from Afghanistan, Central African Republic (CAR), and Somalia.

The paper also identifies several avenues for making MSNA data more actionable for the global discussions and decisions on L&D, as well as to design and implement interventions to avert, minimise and address L&D at national and local level:

- Align hazards included in MSNA indicators with global policy frameworks to ensure consistency and comparability across countries.

- Adopt specific, appropriate methods for accurately measuring exposure of populations to slow-onset disasters like drought and sea-level rise.

- Add NELs-focused data disaggregation criteria to allow for a more nuanced analysis.

- Complement MSNA data with secondary data highlighting linkages between conflict and climate change to broaden the scope of analysis to climate-related L&D suffered by populations affected and displaced by conflict.

- Triangulate MSNA data with qualitative insights from Area-Based Assessments for a more comprehensive and fine-grained understanding of impacts suffered by different individuals and groups.

- Integrate MSNA findings into national humanitarian assessments and planning processes, and international policy formulation, regarding L&D to fill existing data gaps.

About the project

This brief is an outcome of the project to "Avert, Minimize and Address Displacement Related to the Effects of Climate Change" (PAMAD). PDD implements PAMAD to assist countries and communities facing the challenges of Loss and Damage and Displacement. Under PAMAD, and in partnership with IMPACT and other partners, PDD promotes the production of evidence-based recommendations on concepts, terminology and approaches on Loss and Damage and Displacement. The project is supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad).

For more information, visit https://pamad.disasterdisplacement.org.

Filling the NELs data gap in humanitarian contexts

The scale and scope of displacement taking place in the context of disasters and the adverse effects of climate change are vast and continue to grow as climate change impacts intensify. Millions of people around the world are already being displaced every year due to weather and climate-related events and processes, such as cyclones, floods, droughts, desertification, riverine erosion and sea-level rise – and many more will be displaced in the coming years and decades.[2]

The Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC) have highlighted in their 15 observations[3] on disaster displacement and L&D the need for addressing a key data gap: "Assessment – and, if possible, quantification – of all losses and damages due to displacement is key to making them relevant for ongoing policy discussions, future mechanisms for financial and technical support, and planning of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery operations". They also pointed out that, while non-economic losses (NELs) often constitute the most significant impacts associated with displacement, they are also among the most difficult to quantify. Similarly, the submission to the 3rd Transitional Committee Meeting on L&D by the technical actors contributing to the work of the Task Force on Displacement stressed the need to quantify displacement impacts on L&D in finance and operational responses.[4]

While there is no exhaustive list of NELs, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines them as "a broad range of losses that are not in financial terms and not commonly traded in markets. They may impact individuals (e.g. loss of life, health, mobility), society (e.g. loss of territory, cultural heritage, indigenous or local knowledge, societal or cultural identity) or the environment (e.g. loss of biodiversity, ecosystem services)."[5] This brief focuses on a variety of non-economic losses suffered at the individual and household level, felt through impacts on well-being and access to basic services.

One way to identify and assess experienced NELs is through the lens of access to basic services. Many non-economic impacts are felt as reduced access to services and/ or quality of service provision - including access to water, healthcare, education and various forms of protection e.g. from Gender Based Violence (GBV). Climate impacts hinder displaced persons' access to basic services, while displacement itself represents a barrier to accessing essential services for those facing climate impacts. This vicious circle has severe implications for basic rights of people and their long-term well-being prospects.

Another way of approaching NELs is by looking at people's well-being. Displacement and climate impacts both have significant impacts on the physical and mental health of the affected population.

MSNAs: A key data source on L&D in humanitarian settings

Multi-sectoral needs assessments (MSNAs) are an important source of data on people's access to services (and the barriers people face), their well-being and their needs. These assessments are relied upon by UN, NGOs, and other humanitarian actors for planning and prioritizing their assistance in crisis settings, especially in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS). MSNAs capture a wide array of granular data based on household interviews, including indicators from all relevant humanitarian sectors/clusters: household demographics, shelter type, income and expenditure patterns, food consumption, types and levels of access to basic services, and priority needs identified by households.

MSNAs are commonly led by humanitarian cluster/sectoral coordination bodies at the country level, with technical support of IMPACT's REACH initiative.[6] The number of annual MSNAs has grown substantially over the past decade and they are now being conducted in most humanitarian crisis settings (figure 1 below).

Figure 1: Countries in which IMPACT has conducted MSNAs (2016-2023)

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2023
					Afghanistan	Afghanistan
					Bangladesh	Bangladesh
					Burkina Faso	Burkina Faso
					CAR	CAR
					Colombia	Colombia
				Afghanistan	DRC	DRC
				Bangladesh	Iraq	Haiti
				Burkina Faso	Lebanon	Iraq
			Afghanistan	CAR	Libya	Lebanon
			Bangladesh	Iraq	Mali	Libya
		Afghanistan	CAR	Libya	Niger	Mali
		Iraq	Iraq	Niger	Nigeria	Niger
		Libya	Libya	Nigeria	oPt	Nigeria
		Nigeria	Nigeria	Somalia	Somalia	oPt
	Iraq	Somalia	Somalia	Sudan	South Sudan	Somalia
Iraq	Libya	Uganda	Uganda	Syria	Syria	Syria
Libya	Somalia	Ukraine	Ukraine	Ukraine	Ukraine	Ukraine
Ukraine	Ukraine	Yemen				

Despite their widespread use in humanitarian planning, MSNAs have not been leveraged to inform the global debate on L&D and displacement. This is a significant obstacle for discussions and climate action focusing on FCS, where the scarcity of L&D data from other sources is acute, contributing to lack of visibility of related issues, and funding and operational gaps.

PDD and IMPACT Initiatives conducted a joint research project to better understand how to utilize the data gathered in MSNAs for informing the policy discussion on NELs and displacement, including in FCS. This policy brief provides an overview of the findings of this project, based on the review of indicators on displacement and NELs in the 2023 MSNAs from Afghanistan, Central African Republic (CAR), and Somalia.

Notably, while this project focuses on access to basic services as one aspect of NELs, MSNAs also cover other aspects relevant to the assessment of L&D, both economic and non-economic, such as food consumption, physical and mental health, shelter, and income and expenditure patterns. All these types of data are potentially relevant for the global discussion on L&D and should be explored in more depth in the future.

Available MSNA data and possible types of analysis regarding displacement and NELs

MSNAs include a comprehensive range of household and individual-level data that can be leveraged to better understand the dynamics and non-economic impacts of displacement:

- **Displacement status and patterns:** MSNAs categorize households based on their displacement status, differentiating between internally displaced persons (IDPs), non-displaced persons (NDPs), and, where applicable, returnees and refugees or migrants. The data usually also captures people's administrative units of origin, current host locations, whether they are living in an official displacement site or spontaneous settlement, and the reasons behind their displacement, which could be related to insecurity/conflict, unsustainable livelihoods, insufficient access to services, and various types of disasters.[7] Additionally, MSNA data often includes people's reasons for choosing their host location, the number of times a household has been displaced, the duration of their current displacement, and their movement intentions for the next six months.

- **Non-economic vulnerabilities and needs:** MSNAs include information on a broad range of elements, such as displaced and non-displaced households' basic service access (including protection, health, nutrition, shelter, education, water, sanitation, and hygiene), well-being (mental and physical health, safety perceptions, mortality, food consumption, and nutrition), and self-identification of priority needs.

- **Self-reported impacts of recent disasters:[8]** Displaced and non-displaced households also report on the impacts they have suffered in recent disasters, including those triggered by meteorological and hydrological, geophysical, and environmental hazards.

Based on the NELs data described above, the research identified several avenues of analysis that can provide useful insights for both the global debate on L&D and a more targeted and comprehensive humanitarian action (see table below):

| Analysis question	Type of analysis
1. **What do people lose due to disasters, climate change and their impacts, and how does displacement fit in people's responses to experienced L&D?**	• Analysis of who is displaced because of disaster (considering displacement as form of NEL in itself). • Comparison of additional/ secondary displacement reasons of disaster and conflict IDPs.
2. **What do people lose because they are displaced in the context of disasters and climate change impacts?**	• Comparison of vulnerabilities and needs of disaster-displaced people with those of non-displaced populations (NDPs).
3. **What do people lose when they are affected by disasters during their displacement?**	• Comparison of vulnerabilities and needs of displaced and non-displaced populations affected by the same disasters, as well as self-reported impacts of recent disasters.

Figure 2: Top 5 secondary reasons for displacement of IDPs in Afghanistan, by displacement status and primary reason.[14]

Insights from Afghanistan, CAR, and Somalia

IMPACT analyzed data from the 2023 MSNAs in Afghanistan,[9] CAR[10] and Somalia[11] to explore and gather relevant evidence on NELs. Findings for each analysis were disaggregated by displacement status, drivers of displacement, and households' exposure to recent drought or flood.[12] Depending on availability, data was further disaggregated by factors potentially shaping NELs, such as displacement frequency, duration of displacement, household size, climatic anomalies in people's home and host areas, primary income source, and income level. Such disaggregation of findings enables more nuanced understanding of L&D patterns and could shape related humanitarian interventions.[13] The following three sections present key findings from this analysis for each of the angles of analysis mentioned in the previous section.

1. What do people lose due to disasters, climate change and their impacts, and how does displacement fit in people's responses to experienced L&D?

The first type of NELs analysis that can be performed on MSNA data is to look at the multi-layered reasons that people indicate as drivers of their movement and factors in their decision to come to a specific host location. The unpacking of primary and secondary displacement reasons is crucial for better understanding the role natural hazards play, in conjunction with other factors, in triggering and shaping displacement. This section will illustrate the types of findings on displacement drivers that MSNA data can provide. It is only concerned with IDPs, while future analyses can be expanded to cover other displaced populations as well if they are included in the respective MSNAs.
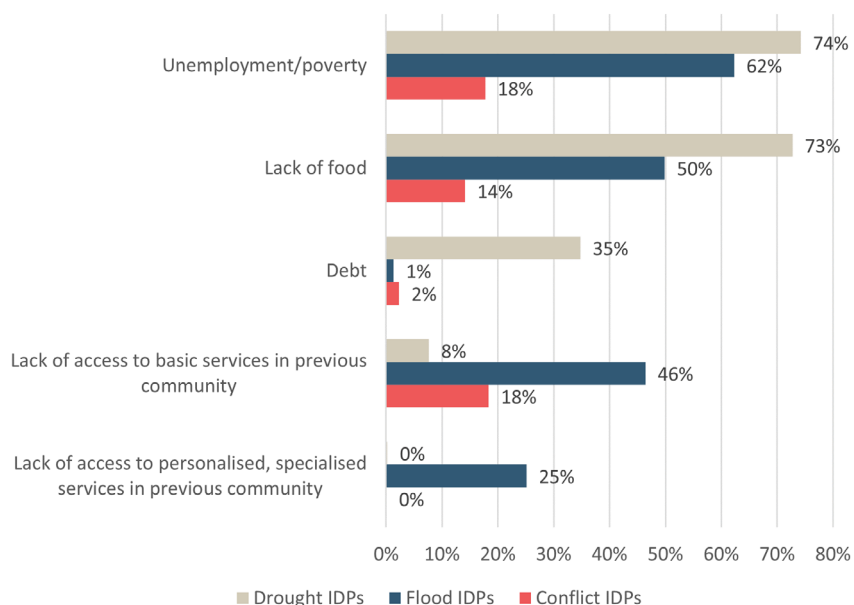
1.1. Displacement reasons[15]

In Afghanistan, the analysis of secondary reasons for displacement reveals that those primarily displaced due to drought or floods are predominantly also driven by economic factors and food insecurity (see figure 2). Those primarily displaced due to floods, also cited lack of access to services as a key driver. For conflict IDPs, on the other hand, secondary factors seemed to play a smaller role in their displacement, and they mainly cited limited access to basic services and unemployment and poverty.

Similar to Afghanistan, in Somalia, drought-related IDPs frequently cite secondary reasons for displacement related to limited livelihood opportunities (36%) and restricted access to services (27%). This contrasts with conflict IDPs, who overwhelmingly focus on security issues, with none of the secondary reasons being cited by more than 6% of respondents.

Findings from both countries illustrate how mainly drought, but also floods might undermine livelihoods, and especially floods destroy essential services, pushing individuals towards displacement as a means of seeking better economic opportunities and access to basic needs. Conflict, instead, seems to create more immediate and direct threats to personal safety and security, prompting displacement as a means of escaping immediate danger. This contrast reflects how displacements due to slow-onset disasters are typically a response to a cumulative degradation of living conditions, while conflict-related displacements are often reactive to urgent safety threats.

The analysis of Somalia also uncovers a correlation between climatic conditions and displacement triggers, illustrating the usefulness of cross-referencing MSNA data with climatic data to offer additional perspectives on displacement. IDPs from areas experiencing a decline in annual rainfall of more than 20% in the past five years compared to the previous 20 years predominantly mentioned conflict and insecurity as among the reasons for their displacement (see figure 3). In contrast, those IDPs from regions with stable or increasing rainfall more often cited loss of livestock and lack of food and water as key displacement factors.

These preliminary findings for Somalia suggest that the impacts of climate change could exacerbate conflict. Triangulation with other data sources, especially in-depth qualitative case studies, could help further unpack the underlying logic of the relationship between insecurity, loss of livestock, lack of food and water, as well as lack of livelihood opportunities as drivers of displacement.

Figure 3: Most common displacement reasons of IDPs in Somalia, by yearly rainfall anomalies in their district of origin.[16]
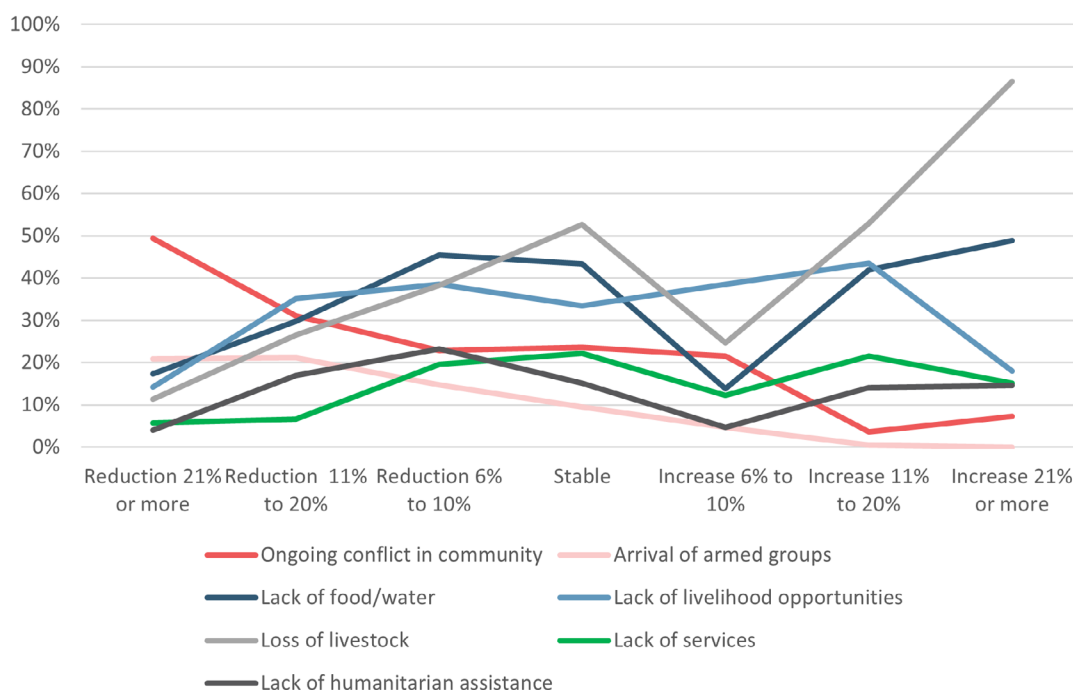
1.2. Reasons for choosing a specific host location[17]

In CAR, the reasons for selecting a host location among IDPs highlight the differing priorities based on the characteristics of their displacement (see figure 4). For those displaced by disaster,[18] the need for shelter is paramount. While the displacement reasons in CAR do not distinguish between different types of disasters, sudden-onset disasters such as seasonal floods and wildfires are generally more common than slow-onset disasters such as drought.[19]

Based on this pattern, the findings indicate that sudden-onset disasters may often leave families without adequate housing and push them to move to areas where shelter is accessible. In contrast, conflict IDPs prioritize security, underscoring the immediate threat to personal safety that conflict poses. The fact that family presence in the host area is a significant factor for both groups suggests the importance of social networks and support systems in all displacement situations.
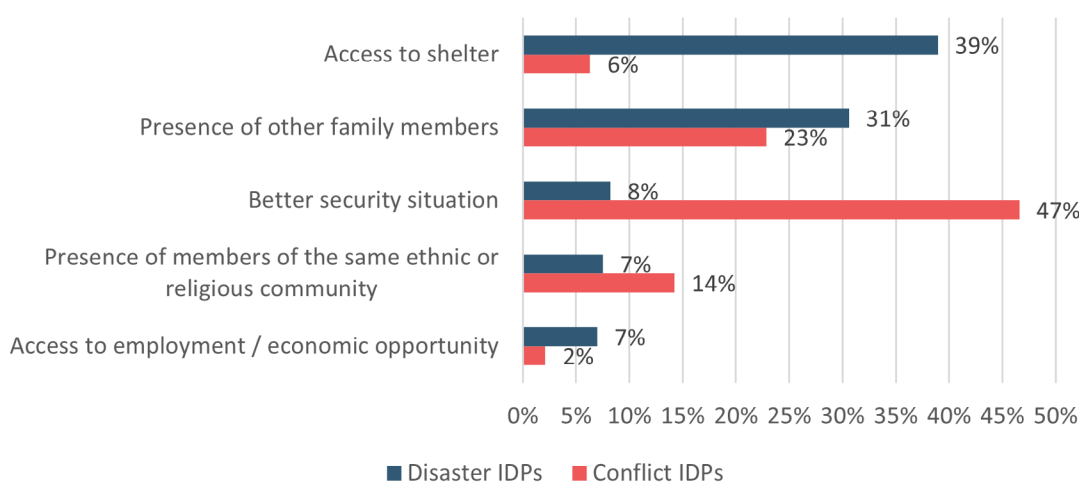
In Somalia, drought-related IDPs prioritize water availability (49%) when choosing their host location, reflecting the critical nature of water scarcity in their areas of origin. The presence of shelter (35%), food distribution (32%), health services (23%), and cash distribution (16%) are also key considerations, illustrating a broad spectrum of basic needs shaping displacement patterns. The absence of conflict in the host community is a notable factor (28%), indicating a desire for stability and safety. Conversely, for conflict IDPs, water (10%), shelter (10%), food (5%), healthcare (6%) and cash distributions (3%) were not cited as major factors. Notably, unlike in CAR, neither drought-related nor conflict IDPs cited family as an important pull factor (3-4%), suggesting that safety and basic needs take precedence over social ties in this context.

2. What do people lose because they are displaced in the context of disasters and climate change impacts?

The second type of analysis on NELs that MSNA data can perform relates to non-economic vulnerabilities and needs resulting from disaster displacement. These can be related, among others, to service access, well-being, and self-identified needs. MSNAs can be used to compare the vulnerabilities and needs of disaster-displaced (as well as conflict-displaced) and non-displaced people in a given location. This can give an approximation of NELs suffered as a consequence of disaster displacement.[20]

Figure 4: Top 5 reasons for choosing the host location in CAR, by IDPs primary displacement reason.[21]

Legend: ■ Disaster IDPs ■ Conflict IDPs

- Access to shelter: Disaster IDPs 39%, Conflict IDPs 6%
- Presence of other family members: Disaster IDPs 31%, Conflict IDPs 23%
- Better security situation: Disaster IDPs 8%, Conflict IDPs 47%
- Presence of members of the same ethnic or religious community: Disaster IDPs 7%, Conflict IDPs 14%
- Access to employment / economic opportunity: Disaster IDPs 7%, Conflict IDPs 2%

2.1. Access to basic services

This analysis explores the differences in access to basic services between drought and flood-displaced populations and NDPs. It examines how each group benefits from healthcare, water, GBV services, and education. The analysis paints a complex and context-specific picture, with displacement translating into both reduced and increased availability of services in nearby facilities (the latter likely a function of people moving from dispersed settings into areas where high numbers of people concentrate, and humanitarian actors can provide services in an effective manner). Displaced persons, however, always face specific barriers to accessing adequate, quality assistance, a testimony of the challenges embedded in the provision of basic services in complex settings characterized by sudden population movements.

In Afghanistan, the disparity in healthcare access between drought IDPs and others is stark. Only 20% of drought IDPs travel more than 30 minutes to healthcare facilities, compared to 45% of flood IDPs and 50% of NDPs. Despite geographical proximity, drought IDPs encounter significant barriers, especially regarding long wait times (53%) and costly treatments (57%). The main reported healthcare barriers for flood IDPs and NDPs were the same, but IDPs had more issues with a lack of medicines and treatments (60% vs. 36% NDPs), while NDPs had more problems with expensive medicines and services (45%, vs. 40% IDPs)

Water access varies significantly across groups in Afghanistan. While 79% of flood IDPs and 76% of NDPs access improved water sources, only 67% of drought IDPs do so. Notably, those drought IDPs that have been displaced by drought multiple times have higher access to improved water sources, suggesting adaptive measures or enhanced aid effectiveness over time.

Educational disparities between the different groups in Afghanistan are equally pronounced. Drought IDPs have a higher school enrollment rate compared to flood IDPs and NDPs (see figure 5), with improvements for children who were displaced multiple times. This might indicate resilience, displacement towards increasingly well-served areas or increased prioritization of education among drought-displaced populations. In contrast, flood IDPs face unique challenges, such as new schooling bans, particularly affecting girls (36%), highlighting the interplay of social and environmental factors in access to education.

Interestingly, those IDPs who were displaced because of a combination of drought and floods reported the highest school enrolment. As 90% of these IDPs moved areas outside of their area of origin, compared to 70% of only drought-displaced and 53% of only flood-displaced people, the good access to education could be due to school buildings not being destroyed by floods in the areas to which they moved or generally better service access there.

Figure 5: School enrolment (6-11 years) in Afghanistan, by status and primary reason for displacement.
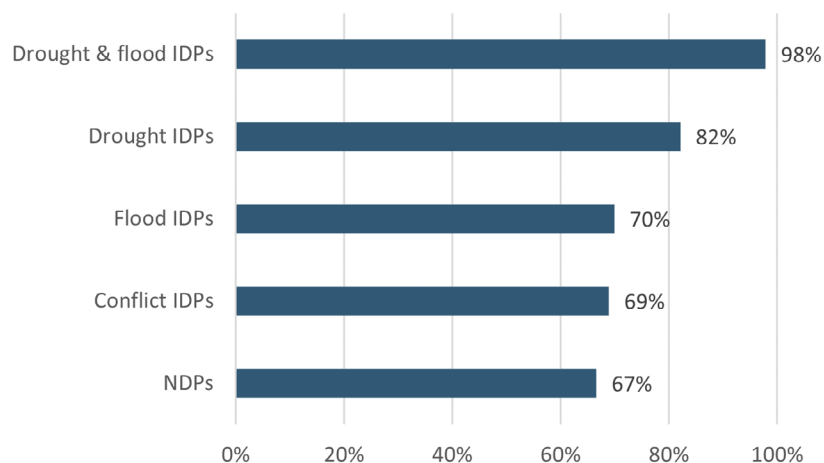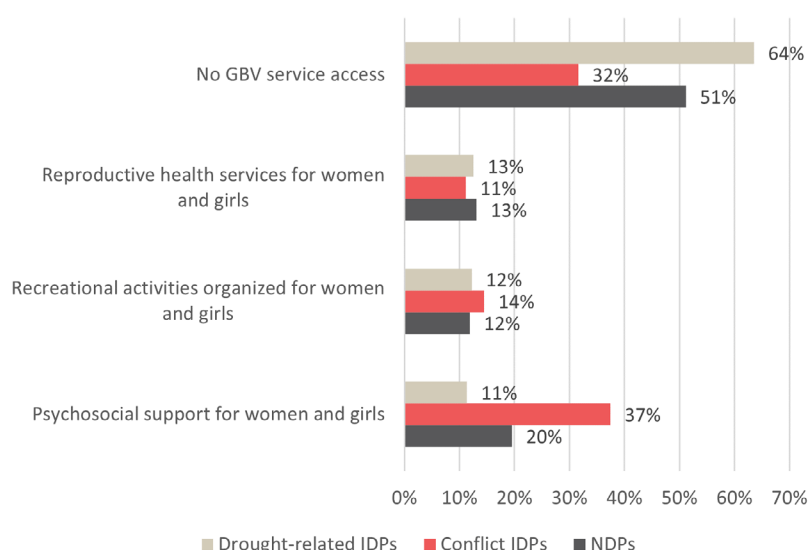

Status	Enrolment
Drought & flood IDPs	98%
Drought IDPs	82%
Flood IDPs	70%
Conflict IDPs	69%
NDPs	67%

Figure 6: Access to GVB services in Somalia, by status and primary reason for displacement.[22]

In CAR, the extended travel time for healthcare among disaster IDPs (74% travelling more than 30 minutes) compared to NDPs (62%) points to heightened accessibility issues for displaced populations. Both groups report significant financial barriers to healthcare, with 33% of disaster IDPs and 25% of NDPs unable to afford treatment. However, disaster IDPs report better access to GBV services (51%) than NDPs (26%), and higher school enrollment rates, though they face educational challenges like insufficient teaching materials and poor sanitation.

In Somalia, the increased healthcare access time for drought-related IDPs (51% travelling more than 30 minutes) versus NDPs (36%) and their broader range of healthcare barriers, including cost (28% vs. 16% for NDPs), highlight the compounded vulnerabilities faced by displaced populations. Interestingly, conflict-displaced IDPs could access healthcare quicker (32% travelling more than 30 minutes) and reported barriers less frequently than both other groups: 58% compared to 76% drought IDPs and 61% NDPs. It should be investigated if this difference is due to the healthcare needs of drought-related IDPs being less visible for humanitarian actors and/or being more difficult to address, compared to conflict IDPs.

The escalating severity of water shortages with repeated displacements, and the shift towards using more surface water, underscores the deteriorating living conditions for those disaster IDPs repeatedly displaced. The lower school enrollment rate for drought-related

IDPs and limited access to GBV services compared to NDPs and conflict-related IDPs (see figure 6) further illustrate the complex challenges in accessing basic services for disaster displaced populations.

2.2. Well-being

This section explores the impacts of disaster displacement on well-being as part of NELs, focusing on protection concerns.

In Afghanistan, the higher incidence of protection incidents involving women among flood IDPs (18%) compared to drought IDPs (6%) and NDPs (13%) highlights elevated risk following displacement by flood. The data reveals that flood IDPs displaced once face more threats (24%) than those that have undergone multiple displacements (9% for twice, 0% for three or more times) suggesting an adaptive resilience or improved protective measures over time. Further analysis could also ask if increasing security with more displacements is due to settlement in safer areas.

Drought IDPs' perception of social and community areas as unsafe for women in Afghanistan (see figure 7) indicates a broader issue of gender-based insecurity in these settings. The identification of markets as particularly unsafe for women among flood IDPs underscores the need for targeted interventions in these areas. Somewhat in between the two types of IDPs, NDPs also considered markets and social and community areas as the most unsafe zones for women.

In CAR, the higher occurrence of household well-being incidents reported by disaster IDPs (17%) versus NDPs (8%) reflects the heightened vulnerabilities faced by displaced populations. However, the lower reporting of safety and security concerns for girls among IDPs (16%) compared to NDPs (26%) is noteworthy. The specific concerns related to abduction (29% vs. 5% for NDPs) and early pregnancy (24% vs. 9% for NDPs) among IDPs indicate specific risks that need addressing within the displaced communities.

In Somalia, the higher reports of safety and security concerns among drought IDP households (14%) compared to NDPs (7%) point to the additional risks faced in displacement. The increased indication of distress in children among IDP households (12% vs. 8% for NDPs) highlights the specific psychological impact of displacement on younger family members. The decrease in both safety concerns and children's signs of distress with multiple displacements could indicate either an adaptation to the challenging circumstances or a selection effect where those remaining in displacement are better able to cope or find safer environments. Further analysis could shed more light on these underlying factors.

Figure 7: Top 3 areas in the current location considered unsafe for women in Afghanistan, by status and primary reason for displacement.[23]


2.3. Self-identification of priority needs

This section illustrates how disaster IDPs and NDPs perceive their priority humanitarian needs.

In Afghanistan, the prioritization of food by all groups, with the highest emphasis among NDPs (89%), followed by drought IDPs (82%), and flood IDPs (78%), underlines the widespread impact of food insecurity across different populations. The increasing importance of livelihood support for drought IDPs, especially those displaced three times or more (81%, vs. 57% for IDPs displaced once), suggests a growing economic vulnerability and the need for sustainable income sources over time. The specific emphasis on drinking water as a priority for drought IDPs displaced once (50%) reflects immediate survival needs post-displacement.

In Somalia, the high prioritization of food, drinking water, and shelter by drought IDPs (see figure 8) illustrates the focus on meeting immediate survival needs in the face of an acute humanitarian crisis. The fact that many NDPs also reported similar needs, points to widespread challenges to satisfy basic needs in the country for both displaced and non-displaced people. Healthcare needs, instead, were slightly more frequently mentioned by NDPs than IDPs, indicating potentially lesser needs among the disaster IDPs. However, the increased healthcare needs for disaster IDPs displaced two or more times (47%) compared to those displaced once (38%) suggest a cumulative effect of displacement on health vulnerabilities. Conversely, the decrease in shelter needs with three or more displacements might reflect IDP's ability to establish somewhat stable living conditions over time and through multiple movements.

In CAR the common emphasis on food as a priority need among both disaster IDPs (30%) and NDPs (28%), although lower than in Afghanistan and Somalia, is an indicator of generalized food scarcity. The more pronounced need for shelter among disaster IDPs (16%) compared to NDPs (7%) highlights the additional challenges faced by displaced populations in securing adequate and safe living conditions.
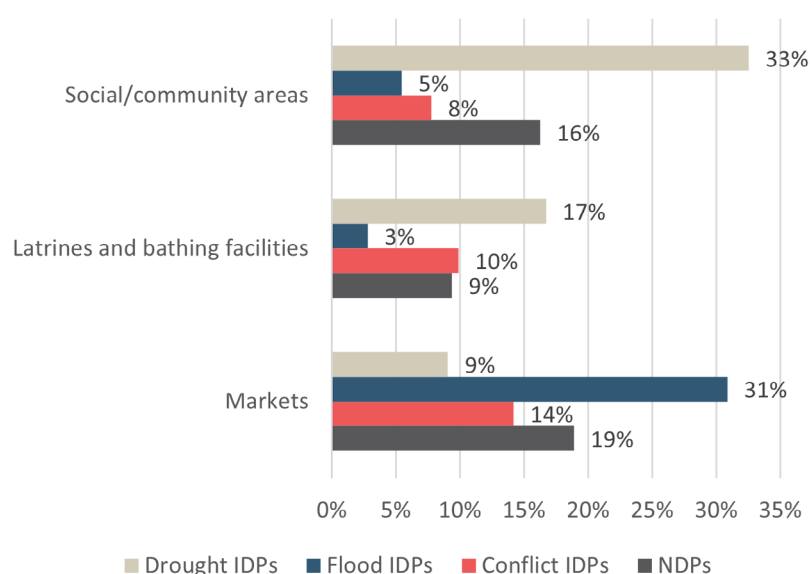
Figure 8: Top 5 priority needs identified by households in Somalia, by displacement status and primary reason.[24]

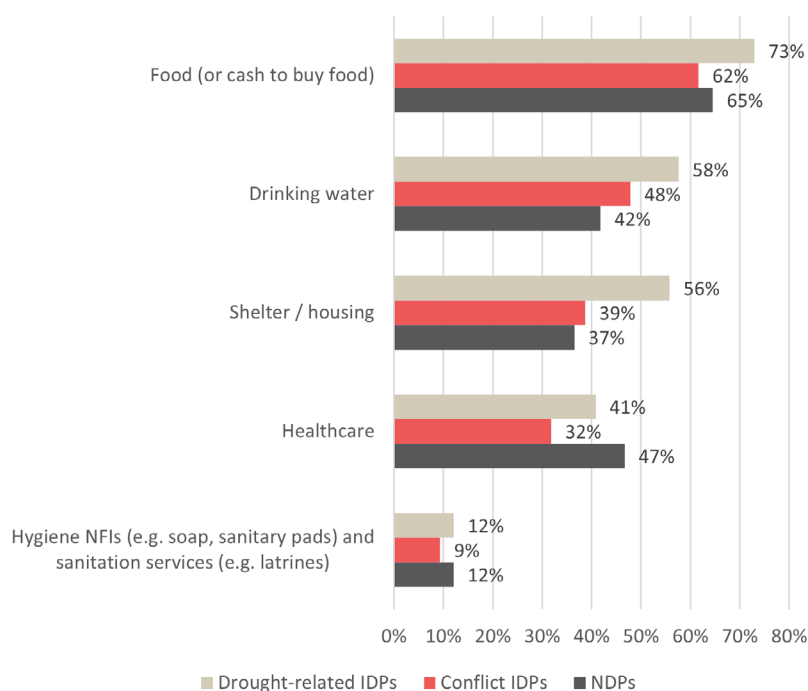Legend: Drought-related IDPs · Conflict IDPs · NDPs

- Food (or cash to buy food): 73%, 62%, 65%
- Drinking water: 58%, 48%, 42%
- Shelter / housing: 56%, 39%, 37%
- Healthcare: 41%, 32%, 47%
- Hygiene NFIs (e.g. soap, sanitary pads) and sanitation services (e.g. latrines): 12%, 9%, 12%

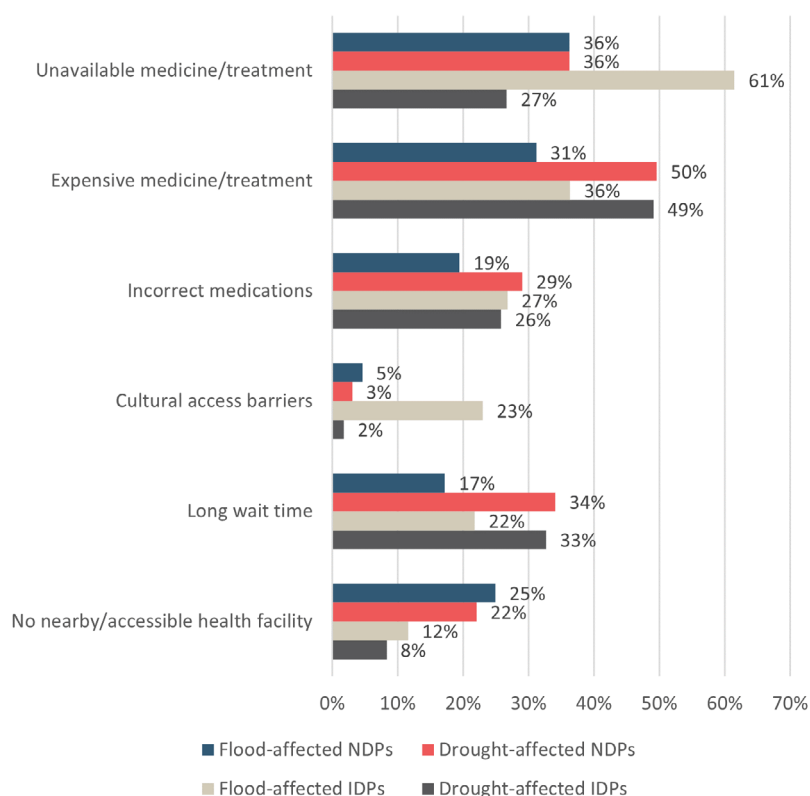**Figure 9: Barriers to accessing healthcare in Afghanistan, by displacement status and type of disaster recently experienced.[25]**

Legend: Flood-affected NDPs · Drought-affected NDPs · Flood-affected IDPs · Drought-affected IDPs

- Unavailable medicine/treatment: 36%, 36%, 61%, 27%
- Expensive medicine/treatment: 31%, 50%, 36%, 49%
- Incorrect medications: 19%, 29%, 27%, 26%
- Cultural access barriers: 5%, 3%, 23%, 2%
- Long wait time: 17%, 34%, 22%, 33%
- No nearby/accessible health facility: 25%, 22%, 12%, 8%

3. What do people lose when they are affected by disasters during their displacement?

A third type of analysis of NELs and displacement that can be performed using MSNA data is the comparison of vulnerabilities and needs of IDPs and NDPs both affected by the same disasters, as well as self-reported impacts of recent disasters. This can shed more light on how displacement (regardless of its causes) could make populations more vulnerable to disaster.

3.1. Access to basic services

This section analyzes the disparities in access to basic services between IDPs and NDPs affected by drought or flood. It highlights how each population group accesses healthcare, water, GBV services, and education.

In Afghanistan, the differences in access to healthcare and water between IDPs and NDPs affected by drought and flood highlight the elevated vulnerabilities of displaced populations. Drought-affected IDPs generally have closer access to healthcare facilities than NDPs (33% vs. 55% with over 30 minutes travel time), suggesting that displacement may lead to settlement in areas with better healthcare coverage (42% of drought-affected IDPs are located in Kabul province, compared to 11% NDPs). However, time spent accessing healthcare increases for drought-affected IDPs displaced multiple times, suggesting a gradual strain on resources or a progressive shift towards less well-served settlements. Flood-affected IDPs face more significant healthcare barriers (see figure 9), such as the unavailability of specific medicines and cultural limitations, than their NDP counterparts, indicating an exacerbation of these challenges due to displacement.

In terms of water access, drought-affected IDPs have less access to improved sources (63%) compared to NDPs (74%), showing increased vulnerability due to displacement. In contrast, flood-affected IDPs have better access than NDPs (85% vs. 68%), possibly due to relocation to areas with better infrastructure.

School enrollment is notably lower among flood-affected IDPs (47%), compared to flood-affected NDPs (63%) and drought-affected IDPs (77%) and NDPs (61%). This more detrimental impact of floods on education for displaced persons could be due to the destruction of primarily ad-hoc school buildings.

In CAR, IDPs impacted by drought or flood access healthcare facilities faster than NDPs (49% vs. 67% with over 30 minutes travel time), potentially reflecting their settlement in areas with a greater density of healthcare facilities. However, IDPs more frequently report the unavailability of specific treatments or services (27% vs. 17%), indicating that quality of care becomes an increasing challenge.

IDPs also experience water shortages more frequently (74% vs. 62%), underlining their increased vulnerability. Notably, IDPs have better access to GBV services than NDPs (39% vs. 23%), which shows increased protection for displaced women and girls experiencing disaster.[26] Despite similar school enrollment rates between IDPs and NDPs, IDPs face more significant challenges due to a lack of staff (see figure 10), pointing to potential reduced quality of children's learning experience.

Figure 10: Top 5 reasons why children affected by recent drought or floods in CAR could not study under acceptable conditions, by displacement status.[27]
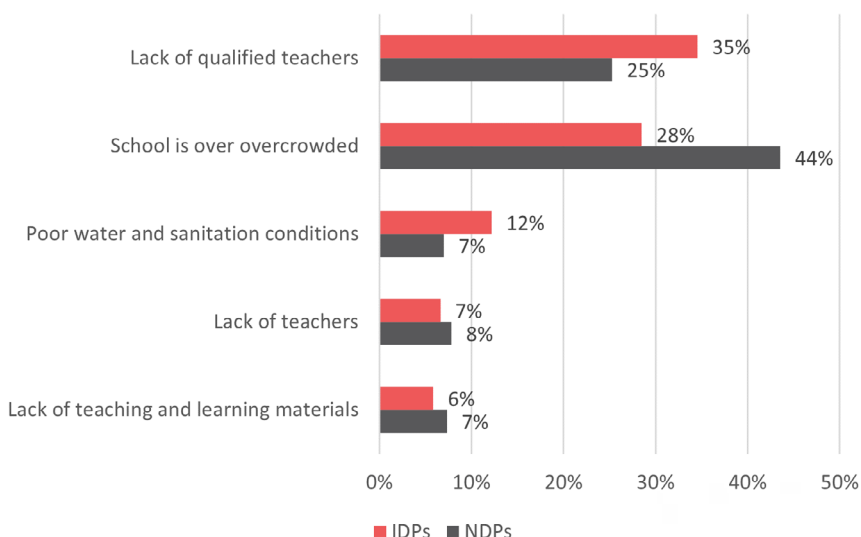
In Somalia, drought-affected IDPs are more likely to spend over 30 minutes accessing healthcare than NDPs (51% vs. 36%), which could reflect movement to less accessible areas. The higher cost barriers for IDPs (36% vs. 27%) suggest increased financial strain due to displacement.

Notably, water access is equally challenging for both groups (both 49% accessing improved sources), but NDPs rely more on surface water (25% vs. 15% for IDPs). A larger share of drought-affected IDPs reports that they either rely on less preferred (unimproved/untreated) water (41% vs. 16% for NDPs) or surface water (16% vs. 9%) as drinking water to adapt to problems with accessing water. This points to elevated health risks for IDPs. Finally, school enrollment is lower for displaced girls (23%) and boys (20%) compared to NDPs (29% and 31%, respectively), with the cost of education being a significant barrier, especially for IDPs (75% for girls and 74% for boys), highlighting the exacerbated educational challenges faced by displaced populations.

3.2. Well-being

This section examines the well-being of populations affected by drought or flood, focusing on protection-related concerns and how they vary between displaced and non-displaced groups.

In Afghanistan, flood-affected IDPs experience more frequent protection incidents involving women (29%) compared to drought-affected IDPs (19%), and NDPs affected by either drought (18%) or floods (16%). This indicates heightened vulnerability for women in displacement settings, especially following floods. The prevalence of threats of violence, especially among flood-affected IDPs (21%), calls for improved security measures and support services for displaced women in these areas.

In CAR, drought- or flood-affected IDPs and NDPs reported similar levels of threats to their household members' well-being (9% and 10%, respectively) and of concerns for the safety and security of girls (34% for IDPs vs. 31% for NDPs. However, when looking at the types of safety and security concerns for girls (see figure 11), disaster-affected IDPs report significantly higher rates of sexual harassment or violence than NDPs. As in Afghanistan, this highlights a distinct vulnerability for girls and women within displaced populations, necessitating targeted protection measures.

Figure 11: Top 3 types of safety and security concerns for girls in the host location in CAR affected by recent drought or floods, by displacement status.[28]
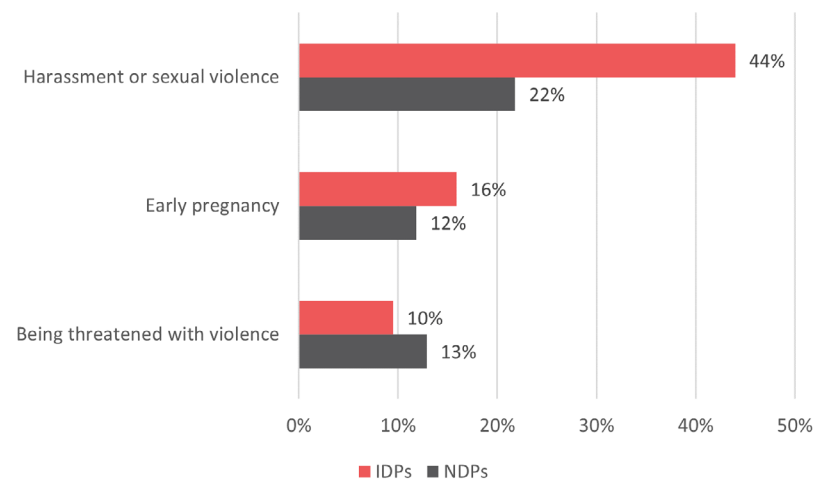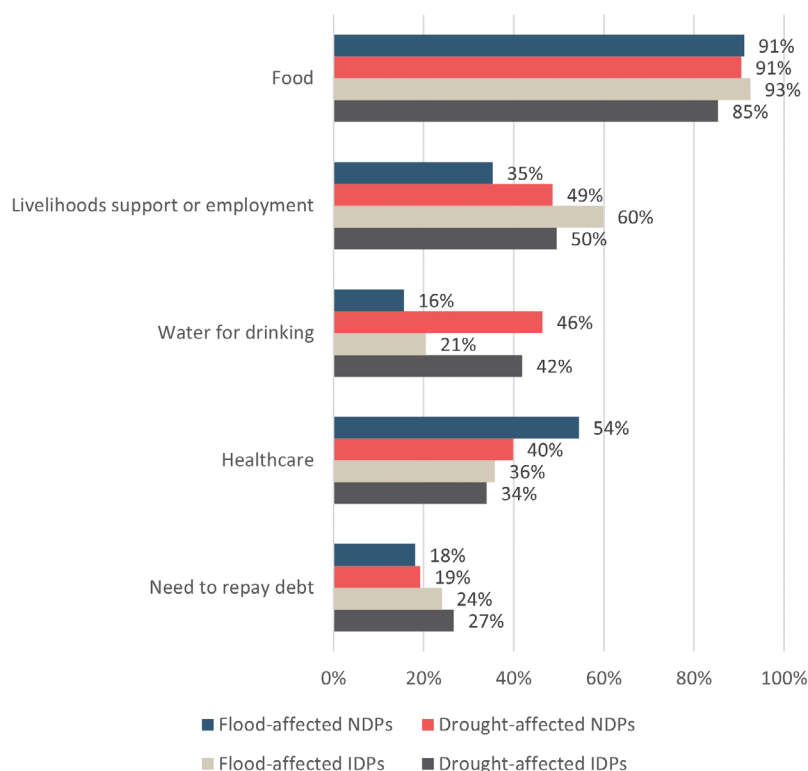

In Somalia, drought-affected IDPs report more often security concerns (45% vs. 25% for NDPs) and threats in host communities (28% vs. 18% for NDPs), showing that displacement intensifies vulnerability to violence and insecurity. Moreover, the increased signs of distress among displaced children (49% vs. 35%) reveal higher psychological and emotional impacts on displaced families, underscoring the need for mental health and psychosocial support in these communities.

3.3. Self-identification of priority needs

The selected findings below illustrate how displaced and non-displaced populations affected by recent droughts or floods prioritize their humanitarian needs.

In Afghanistan, food is the primary need indicated by all groups (see figure 12), regardless of their displacement status or type of disaster experienced. This indicates a universal impact of disasters on food security. Livelihood support seems to be much more critical for IDPs affected by floods than for NDPs affected by the same disaster, reflecting the additional strain caused by displacement.

In CAR, the prioritization of food and shelter by IDPs (34% and 14%, respectively) compared to NDPs (19% and 9%) underscores the immediate impact of displacement on basic needs. Conversely, NDPs place a greater emphasis on healthcare (20% vs. 7% for IDPs), suggesting that while IDPs are focused on immediate survival needs, NDPs, possibly having stabilized their basic needs, are more concerned with health services.

Figure 12: Self-identified priority needs in Afghanistan, by displacement status and type of disaster recently experienced.[29]

In Somalia, while both IDPs (84%) and NDPs (82%) affected by drought show a similar prioritization of food as key need, IDPs exhibit a greater need for water (63% vs. 48% for NDPs) and shelter (44% vs. 31%). This indicates the compounding challenges of displacement on accessing essential resources. Similar to Afghanistan, NDPs place a higher emphasis on healthcare (47% vs. 37% for IDPs), while they are less concerned with better access to water or housing.

### 3.4. Self-reported impact of recent disasters on the household[30]

This section explores the self-reported impact of recent disasters on households, illustrating how different types of disasters affect access to basic needs and services.

In Afghanistan, the data reveals that both IDPs and NDPs affected by drought face substantial challenges, but to varying degrees. A larger proportion of NDPs report diminished or lost sources of income (80% vs. 65% for IDPs) and limited access to food (77% vs. 60% for IDPs), suggesting that drought impacts the livelihoods of NDPs more severely than those of IDPs. Flood-affected IDPs appear more impacted in terms of income loss (82% vs. 74% for NDPs) and food access issues (82% vs. 64% for NDPs), indicating that displacement exacerbates the vulnerabilities caused by floods.

The notably high impact on shelter among those affected by both drought and floods in Afghanistan, especially for IDPs (39% reporting loss or severe damage), underscores the compounded hardships faced by those experiencing multiple disasters. Drought-affected IDPs were more impacted in terms of water access (54%) than other groups, while flood-affected IDPs report the highest loss or diminished access to healthcare (35%), highlighting specific vulnerabilities associated with each type of disaster.

In Somalia, IDPs reported very similar impacts of drought compared to NDPs (see figure 13). On the other hand, the greater effect of drought on NDPs' access to livelihood activities underscores a more acute impact on the economic activities of the non-displaced. This disparity could stem from the changes in livelihood practices already adopted by IDPs as part of their displacement.

Figure 13: Top 5 impacts of recent drought on households in Somalia, by displacement status.[31]
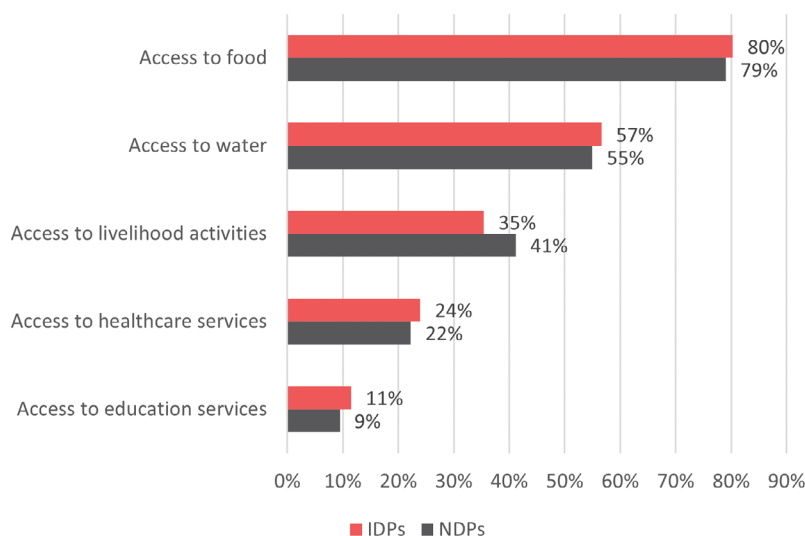
Avenues for better utilizing NELs and displacement data from MSNAs

As illustrated by the findings from Afghanistan, CAR and Somalia presented above, MSNAs provide a rich source of granular, quantitative data on displacement and NELs in humanitarian crisis settings, including in FCS. However, the global review of displacement and NELs indicators and the three-country analyses also show that more work needs to be done to further improve the availability, interpretation, and impact of this data. The following points summarize key avenues for making MSNA data more actionable for the global discussions and decisions on L&D, as well as for action and support on L&D (and broader climate action efforts) at national and local levels.

1. Better standardization across countries and alignment to global policy frameworks

Questions and response options capturing displacement and disasters should be more consistently included across MSNAs to facilitate cross-country comparison and inform global discussions.

The Somalia MSNA illustrates the usefulness of including both a question on the single most important displacement reason and another question on all relevant reasons, as together they enable to better capture interlinked and indirect drivers of displacement. It could also be useful to explicitly ask respondents to directly link the primary reason to a subset of the secondary reasons. This can help shed light on the interplay of climate change impacts with other drivers of displacement.

Moreover, MSNAs should capture a more comprehensive list of hazards and be better aligned with global policy frameworks on Disaster Risk Reduction and Loss and Damage. For example, the UNDRR/ISC Sendai Hazard Definition and Classification[32] could be used as the basis for such alignment. Hazards, especially those on which households are likely to have clear perceptions – such as floods, storms, and wildfires, could be included as explicit response options in MSNAs. Furthermore, hazards that are collectively listed as "shocks" during displacement should ideally be also disaggregated in the questions on reasons for displacement – and vice versa.

2. Specialized measurement of slow-onset disasters

On the other hand, disasters associated with slow-onset hazards like drought and sea-level rise require specific methods of data collection. Due to the absence of a clear triggering event and the creeping character of their impacts, remote sensing methods and key informant interviews may be better suited than household interviews to measure whether an area has been exposed to and affected by such hazards. Such area-level data, ideally disaggregated in time series, can then be incorporated into the MSNA data to enable the disaggregation of the results of the analysis by the level of exposure to such hazards.

3. More (and more specific) data disaggregation criteria

Analyses of MSNA data commonly disaggregate indicators according to displacement status, administrative unit and a few additional socio-economic characteristics. Further disaggregation specifically relevant to disaster displacement can reveal complex interdependencies and contribute to more effective interventions. As this preliminary analysis has started investigating, this could include breaking down findings based on the reason for displacement, exposure to recent disasters, duration and recurrence of displacement, among others.

4. Leveraging time series data for enhanced analysis of NELs in disaster displacement contexts

It would also be useful to explore ways to incorporate time series data in MSNA methodologies to deepen our understanding of NELs associated with displacement. Such data can illuminate how the duration and timing of displacement impact the resilience and losses experienced by IDPs.

Time series data allow for tracking changes over time in key indicators such as mental health, social cohesion, cultural heritage, and sense of security, which is essential to understand and differentiate between the immediate and long-term impacts of displacement on individuals and communities.

Examining how these indicators evolve from the onset of displacement through different phases – including protracted displacement and eventual return, resettlement or local integration – allows for the identification of critical periods when interventions are most needed to address NELs.

Additionally, understanding the temporal aspects of displacement helps in recognizing patterns of resilience and adaptive capacities within displaced populations. Integrating longitudinal insights into MSNA frameworks will enable a more nuanced assessment of the impacts of displacement, the pathways towards durable solutions and facilitate targeted, effective response strategies that address both immediate and enduring needs of IDPs.

5. Analysis of displacement due to the interplay of conflict and climate change

The correlation of conflict drivers with periods of significantly lower rainfall levels identified in the analysis of the Somalia MSNA data and historical precipitation data[33] described above illustrates the relevance of assessing climate-related NELs for all people coming from areas acutely affected by climate change and disasters, and not just for displaced populations that have indicated disasters as their primary displacement reason.

Complementing MSNA data with data from other sources establishing linkages between conflict and climate impacts or disasters for specific areas can facilitate the integration of such conflict-displaced populations into the NELs analysis.

6. Triangulation with Area-Based Assessments

Qualitative data from Area-Based Assessments (ABAs) can add context to the quantitative data collected through MSNAs. This can provide a more in-depth understanding of the NELs and other challenges that IDPs face, and help compare trends in barriers to accessing essential services, land tenure dynamics, and livelihood opportunities between displaced persons and host communities.

Such localized analyses can also help better understand the perspectives of local stakeholders and service providers in the areas of displacement, and measure how the inflow of displaced persons impacts their capacity to provide basic services, the availability of agricultural land, and the viability of markets to meet the needs of a growing population, affecting not only IDPs but also the overall social and economic well-being of host communities and societies.

If conducted in risk-prone areas and areas of origin, such assessments can also serve as a basis for understanding the environmental conditions triggering potential displacement and/or hindering the restoration of livelihoods that is essential to allow for durable solutions for displaced persons. ABAs commonly consist of interviews with community leaders, host community members and service providers, and geospatial analysis, allowing to create a composite picture of the impact of displacement and environmental risks in a specific location.

7. Integration into national and international policy frameworks

Lastly, data from MSNAs on NELs and displacement should be integrated into both national humanitarian planning processes and policy formulation on climate change and disaster displacement and national and global level. This could range from adding MSNA-based indicators on NELs and displacement to the country's Humanitarian Needs Overview or National Adaptation Plan to informing the discussions and decisions of international bodies like the UNFCCC on climate-related L&D.

Methodology

The 2023 MSNAs in Afghanistan, CAR, and Somalia include 16,055, 12,500, and 10,497 household surveys, respectively. All three MSNAs covered the entire country. While the data of the MSNAs is statistically representative, the findings presented in this brief are only indicative, due to the further disaggregation for the purpose of the NELs-focused analysis. IMPACT used R software for the quantitative analysis of the MSNA data from each country. The analysis is based on a subset of the overall samples, covering only IDPs and NDPs. Findings were mainly grouped by (1) displacement status and reason and by (2) exposure to recent disaster, as seen in the breakdown of the sample below. According to data availability, additional disaggregation was performed (for an exhaustive list please contact IMPACT).

	IDPs	NDPs
	Afghanistan	
Displacement status and reason	Conflict (270), drought (214), floods (121) or both (19)	12,527
Exposure to recent disaster	Drought (882), floods (78) or both (168)	Drought (6,912), floods (495) or both (1,581)
	CAR	
Displacement status and reason	Conflict (3,064), natural disaster (51)	5,928
Exposure to recent disaster	Drought or flood (240)	Drought or flood (500)
	Somalia	
Displacement status and reason	Conflict (1,794), food and water scarcity or loss of livestock (1,602)	5,934
Exposure to recent disaster	Drought (401)	Drought (486)

About IMPACT and the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)

Created in 2010, **IMPACT** is a Geneva-based NGO and the largest independent data provider in contexts of crisis. We aim to support a range of stakeholders in making better, more informed decisions in humanitarian, stabilisation, and development settings. We believe that a key pathway to better planning and decision making is direct engagement with local communities and their leaders. Through our team of assessment, data, geospatial, and thematic specialists, we promote the design of people-centred research and set standards for collecting and analysing rigorous, high quality data in complex environments. IMPACT also aims to foster partnerships and build capacities with key stakeholders.

IMPACT can be contacted at geneva@impact-initiatives.org.
Visit our website at www.impact-initiatives.org.

The **Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)** supports the development and implementation of the activities of the Platform on Disaster Displacement, a State-led initiative working towards better protection for people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change. Under the guidance of the Chair and the Steering Group, the Secretariat works with States, agencies and other stakeholders interested in implementing the recommendations of the Nansen Protection Agenda at national, regional and global levels. The Secretariat actively contributes to the Loss & Damage discussions as a member of the Task Force on Displacement under the WiM ExCom.

The Secretariat of the PDD can be contacted at info@disasterdisplacement.org.
Visit our website at www.disasterdisplacement.org.

Endnotes

1   The term "non-economic losses" will be used throughout the brief, however there is a current push by Civil Society Organizations to extend the discussion to non-economic damages as well.

2   https://www.internal-displacement.org/global-report/grid2023.

3   https://disasterdisplacement.org/portfolio-item/15-observations-on-disaster-displacement-as-loss-and-damage/.

4   https://unfccc.int/sites/default/files/resource/Addressing Displacement in Loss and Damage - Submission - Aug 2023.pdf and https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/bodies/constituted-bodies/transitional-committee/submissions-to-the-transitional-committee.

5   https://unfccc.int/wim-excom/areas-of-work/non-economic-losses.

6   To inform annual humanitarian planning milestones, REACH conducted 23 MSNAs in 2022, representing over 60% of global HNO/HRP processes and informing the cross-sectoral allocation of approximately 20 billion USD.

7   Respondents from displaced households are asked what reasons mainly contributed to their decision to leave their location of origin. There is often a follow-up question to identify the single most important reason among those mentioned. The list of response options commonly includes a few sudden onset disasters (such as flooding), and desert locust invasion. Slow onset disasters, such as drought, are often not explicitly mentioned but captured via proxies/consequences, like lack of food and water, and loss of livestock. These questions allow for analyzing what role environmental hazards and their consequences play, in conjunction with other factors, in affecting people's ability to stay in their community and forcing them to leave.

8   Respondents are asked about security, social, economic, or environment-related difficulties or shocks that the household experienced in the past three months. The list of responses commonly includes flooding or heavy rainfall, as well as drought or prolonged dry spell. As a follow up question, some MSNAs include a question about the perceived effects that each shock had on the household. These questions enable comparing the exposure to climate-related hazards and the L&D incurred by displaced and non-displaced people.

9   More information on this MSNA is available upon request. Please contact: impact.geneva.msna@impact-initiatives.org.

10   https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/country/central-african-republic/theme/multi-sector-assessments/cycle/56289/#cycle-56289.

11   https://www.reachresourcecentre.info/country/somalia/cycle/54976/#cycle-54976.

12   Depending on the availability of data in each country, drought and flood IDPs were analyzed separately (Afghanistan), aggregated to one group (CAR), or only including drought IDPs (Somalia).

13   While this was not part of the present analysis, MSNAs also enable disaggregation of findings by additional demographic variables such as disability status of household members or gender of head of household.

14   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

15   The unpacking of displacement reasons requires the presence of a multiple-choice question on such reasons in the survey, therefore only the findings from Afghanistan and Somalia are discussed here.

16   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

17   Only the CAR and Somalia MSNAs included a question on the reasons for choosing the host location.

18   The CAR MSNA aggregated all types of disasters into one category of displacement reasons, called "natural disaster".

19   https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/country/central-african-republic/vulnerability.

20   Ideally, such type of analysis would involve a comparison of households' situation before and after displacement: using longitudinal survey methodologies or, although less robust, asking displaced respondents for each survey question to compare the situation before displacement and now. However, both solutions are difficult to implement at national scale in FCS (however, for an example of large-scale longitudinal surveys in humanitarian settings, see IMPACT's longitudinal study with Ukrainian refugees and returnees).

21   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

22   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

23   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

24   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

25   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

26   It would be interesting to further analyse whether international assistance to IDP populations contribute to their increased protection.

27   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

28   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

29   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

30   Only the MSNAs in Afghanistan and Somalia include questions regarding the impact of drought and flood on households.

31   Respondents could select multiple responses, therefore the percentages do not add up to 100%.

32   https://www.undrr.org/publication/hazard-definition-and-classification-review-technical-report.

33   https://data.humdata.org/dataset/som-rainfall-subnational.