# Collective approaches to communication and community engagement in the Mozambique Cyclone Idai response

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# Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| **AAP** | accountability to affected populations |
| **C4D** | communication for development |
| **CCE** | communication and community engagement |
| **CCEI** | Communication and Community Engagement Initiative |
| **CDAC** | Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities |
| **CE/AAP WG** | Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations Working Group |
| **CERF** | Central Emergency Response Fund |
| **CEWG** | Community Engagement Working Group |
| **CHS** | Core Humanitarian Standard |
| **CSO** | civil society organisation |
| **DFID** | UK Department for International Development |
| **DHC** | Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator |
| **DPS** | Provincial Directorate of Health |
| **DRR** | disaster risk reduction |
| **FORCOM** | National Forum of Community Radios |
| **H2H** | humanitarian-to-humanitarian |
| **HC** | Humanitarian Coordinator |
| **HCT** | Humanitarian Country Team |
| **HRP** | Humanitarian Response Plan |
| **IASC** | Inter-Agency Standing Committee |
| **ICCG** | Inter-Cluster Coordination Group |

| | |
|---|---|
| **ICS** | Social Communications Institute |
| **IDP** | internally displaced person |
| **IFRC** | International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies |
| **INGC** | National Institute for Disaster Management |
| **INGO** | international non-governmental organisation |
| **NGO** | non-governmental organisation |
| **OCHA** | United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| **PSEA** | protection from sexual exploitation and abuse |
| **ToR** | term of reference |
| **TWB** | Translation Without Borders |
| **UNDAC** | UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination |
| **UNICEF** | United Nations Children's Fund |
| **WASH** | water, sanitation and hygiene |
| **WFP** | World Food Programme |

# 1 Introduction

Recent years have seen a growing emphasis within the humanitarian sector on better communication and community engagement (CCE). The idea that communities affected by crisis should be involved in a meaningful two-way dialogue with the humanitarians seeking to assist them has been laid out in a number of key guiding documents over the past decade. These include the 2014 Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), the 'participation revolution' envisioned under the 2016 Grand Bargain, and the 2017 Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Commitments on Accountability to Affected People. Together, these highlight three core components of effective CCE: participation, information sharing with affected communities, and feedback and complaints (CDAC Network, 2019).

As this trend has developed, several actors have worked to emphasise the potential for collective approaches to CCE – supplementing or integrating existing agency or programme-level activities – to improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian responses (CDAC Network, 2017). For the purposes of this research, a collective approach is defined as:

> A multi-actor initiative that encompasses the humanitarian response as a whole, rather than a single individual agency or programme, and focuses on two-way communication: providing information about the situation and services to affected communities; gathering information from these communities via feedback, perspectives and inputs; and closing the feedback loop by informing the communities as to how their input has been taken into account. The goal of a collective approach to CCE is the increased accountability to and participation of affected communities in their own response.

Collective approaches can potentially add value to a response by reducing duplication, providing people with better-quality, more consistent information, and mitigating language and cultural barriers to information uptake. They can also reduce over-burdening and assessment fatigue, improve understanding of people's priorities and strengthen analysis and advocacy. Ultimately, they offer an important route for affected people to influence the strategic direction of humanitarian responses (CDAC Network, 2019). However, they are still a relatively novel concept within the humanitarian system. First piloted in Haiti during the 2010 earthquake response, collective approaches have been implemented in various forms across multiple contexts in recent years. Some have been established at the onset of major crises, for example in the wake of the 2015 Nepal earthquake; others have been set up mid-way through protracted crises, as in the Central African Republic; and in some cases they have been initiated to support emergency preparedness, as in Fiji and Vanuatu.

There is no single model for a collective approach, with different versions developed in accordance with the needs and constraints of different contexts. The core of most approaches tends to be a coordination platform – such as a community engagement or accountability to affected populations (AAP) working group. Coordination efforts are often supplemented by common services – such as hotlines, rumour tracking, or inter-agency feedback platforms. These components may be tightly linked under a single overarching strategy or programme, or function more loosely as a collection of services fulfilling complementary objectives. In general, collective approaches aim to complement rather than replace agency-level CCE activities, and indeed depend on such activities in order to function effectively. Wherever possible, guidance

documents advocate for collective approaches to incorporate an inclusive range of actors beyond the international humanitarian architecture. These include national governments as primary duty-bearers to their populations, and local media and civil society organisations (CSOs) with longstanding links to affected populations (Peer 2 Peer Support, 2017; CDAC Network, 2019).

This case study examines the case of the collective approach to CCE established in Mozambique following the onset of Cyclone Idai in March 2019, focusing on emergency response and early recovery in the 12 months following the cyclone. Together with case studies on Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Indonesia and Yemen, it forms part of a larger study commissioned by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on behalf of the Communication and Community Engagement Initiative (CCEI).[1] The study aims to identify solutions to address current bottlenecks and challenges to collective approaches to community engagement, as well as develop evidence of the added value and limitations of collective approaches. Mozambique was selected in order to understand what lessons can be drawn from efforts to establish a collective approach within a rapid scale-up, natural hazard-related disaster with a substantial international presence.

## 1.1  Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach involving 40 key stakeholder interviews with national and international actors involved in the Cyclone Idai humanitarian response (see Table 1 for a breakdown). Interviewees included relevant cluster or working group coordinators, as well as staff at UN agencies, donors, international

non-governmental organisations (INGOs), local civil society organisations, the Red Cross movement, community leaders and government officials. Participants were recruited via snowball sampling based on the initial recommendations of key stakeholders within the CCEI. Community representatives were government-linked ward leaders from Beira City and neighbouring rural areas in Dondo district, and were recruited with support from UNICEF.

Data collection took place in two phases: an initial phase of remote interviews in English with predominantly international respondents was carried out by the authors between January and March 2020, while a second phase of interviews in Portuguese with national respondents was carried out by a local research firm in Mozambique during April and May.

### 1.1.1  Limitations

Delays in securing permissions to conduct fieldwork meant that the in-country phase of the research coincided with the imposition of a state of emergency by the Government of Mozambique. Enacted as part of emergency measures in response to the Covid-19 global

## Table 1: List of key stakeholder interviews

| Stakeholder type | Number of interviews |
| --- | --- |
| INGOs | 13 |
| Local NGOs and CSOs | 8 |
| UN agencies | 7 |
| Community representatives | 4 |
| Red Cross Movement | 4 |
| Donors | 3 |
| Government officials | 1 |
| **Total** | **40** |

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1   In an effort to strengthen collective approaches, the CCEI was established in January 2017 as a collaboration between the Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) Network, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and UNICEF. The initiative seeks 'to organise a collective service' and create 'a more systematic and coordinated approach … through a harmonised, timely, systematic and predictable collective service'. Its overall objective is to help improve the quality and effectiveness of humanitarian response by ensuring that affected people have life-saving, actionable and useful information on the humanitarian situation; and that feedback and concerns inform humanitarian response (CDAC Network, 2017). At the time of writing, the CCEI has been absorbed into IASC's Results Group 2 on accountability and inclusion. Results Groups work on behalf of IASC's Operational Policy and Advisory Group to drive change across a range of identified priority areas within the international humanitarian system.

pandemic, this suspended international travel entirely and placed significant restrictions on domestic movements. Consequently, planned focus group discussions with affected community members could not take place. The few community members that were interviewed were male local leaders, often with links to the government, thus excluding the perspectives of more marginalised sections of the community. In addition, planned comparisons between community experiences in camp and non-camp settings could not be made. The lack of respondents from remote areas with less humanitarian coverage is an additional gap. Wherever possible, this report has therefore attempted to triangulate its limited primary data on community experiences with information from assessments, evaluations and other secondary sources. However, the relative absence of the perspectives of affected people remains a major limitation of this study.

Additional limitations were as follows: first, administrative hurdles to securing permission to carry out research meant that key government stakeholders involved in the cyclone response could not be interviewed within the timeline of the study. Second, it was not possible to identify key stakeholders involved in the Cyclone Kenneth response in conflict-affected Cabo Delgado, meaning that this case study focuses purely on the natural hazard-related disaster without being able to apply an additional conflict lens. Third, snowballing of participants via CCEI members without additional opportunities to identify participants in-country means this study is biased towards the perspectives of actors who were close to coordination structures and common services for community engagement, and does not necessarily represent the perspectives of other actors in the response more broadly. Fourth, carrying out research almost a year after the onset of Cyclone Idai may have resulted in recall bias in terms of how respondents framed past events.

## 1.2  Outline of the report

Chapter 2 provides an overview of efforts to establish collective approaches in Mozambique, as well as of the humanitarian context, before outlining the activities of the specific mechanisms set up for collective CCE. Chapter 3 examines where the collective approach added and did not add value to the response. Chapter 4 identifies lessons from the design of the collective approach. Chapter 5 examines the implications of the findings for the future of collective approaches before providing recommendations for the Mozambique context.

# 2  Collective approaches to communication and community engagement in Mozambique: an overview

## 2.1  The humanitarian context

In March and April 2019, Mozambique was hit by two powerful tropical cyclones. The first, Cyclone Idai, made landfall near Beira City on 14 March, impacting parts of Sofala, Manica and Tete provinces. The second, Cyclone Kenneth, made landfall on 25 April in the northern provinces of Cabo Delgado and Nampula. While Mozambique regularly experiences tropical storms (NOAA, 2020), the severity of both Idai and Kenneth were unprecedented, as was their arrival so close to each other. The cyclones were respectively the deadliest and the most powerful to hit the African continent since records began (IFRC et al., 2020). In Mozambique, their combined impact killed 648 people, destroyed almost 300,000 homes and 800,000 hectares of crops, and significantly impacted schools and other public infrastructure (OCHA, 2019a). The cyclones arrived when the country was already experiencing substantial difficulties. Poor rains in early 2019 had left southern parts of the country facing substantial crop losses and drought, while violence and insecurity linked to unidentified armed groups had affected parts of Cabo Delgado since October 2017. According to the August 2019 revision of Mozambique's November 2018–May 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), 2.5 million people across the country were in need of humanitarian assistance (ibid.).

The extent of the damage inflicted by Cyclone Idai alone quickly overwhelmed local preparedness mechanisms and capacity to respond. Despite investment over recent decades, pre-crisis efforts at disaster risk reduction (DRR) proved inadequate for the scale of the emergency. Early warning messages either failed to reach or were not trusted by people in high-risk areas due to both operational limitations of the early warning system itself and weakly elaborated communication and dissemination strategies. Contingency efforts such as evacuation plans for major settlements were also lacking, and community-based disaster risk management committees in affected areas were under-resourced and under-trained (Plan International and World Vision, 2019; WMO, 2019; IFRC et al., 2020). While international humanitarian actors were already active in other parts of the country prior to the onset of Cyclone Idai, they had limited humanitarian presence in cyclone-affected areas. Further, there was no permanent presence of either the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) or the global cluster system in Mozambique.

The immediate aftermath of Cyclone Idai saw a rapid and large-scale expansion of the international humanitarian presence in Mozambique. Following the government's declaration of a national emergency on 19 March and issuance of a diplomatic note verbale formally requesting international assistance, the

global IASC initiated a 'System-Wide Scale-Up' for Mozambique on 22 March.[2] This included the activation of nine clusters, the designation of a new Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator (DHC), and the arrival of hundreds of staff on surge deployment – including substantial coordination capacity from OCHA's regional headquarters.

The response to Cyclone Idai was led by the Government of Mozambique's National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), which activated four coordination hubs in areas most affected by the cyclone. By far the largest of these was in Beira, where coordination of the response was carried out through an emergency operations centre in the city's airport for the first month of the response. The INGC carried out substantial efforts in both aid provision and search and rescue, as well as setting the terms of significant aspects of the response such as determining the timetable and conditions for displacement resettlements, and prohibiting the use of cash transfer programmes. However, INGC resources and staffing capacity were severely stretched, meaning that substantial parts of the response were delegated to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and the cluster system. In this respect, several respondents highlighted a lack of integration between government and humanitarian coordination structures as a feature of the response more widely (see IASC, 2019). They also pointed to language barriers limiting closer cooperation.

The international humanitarian response in support of INGC also followed a decentralised model. In Maputo, strategic coordination was led by the HCT and national clusters. Meanwhile, the bulk of operational coordination for Cyclone Idai – including subnational cluster and inter-cluster meetings – took place at Beira level under the initial leadership of OCHA, UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) and the DHC.

Despite a substantial initial influx of resources, elements of the response scaled back relatively quickly. Many international actors concluded their deployments after four to six weeks following the initial acute phase of the emergency. The

government formally deactivated the national emergency on 14 May 2019 after just under two months. Even before this, it had taken steps to relocate many of the 150,000 people displaced by Cyclone Idai from temporary accommodation centres to permanent resettlement sites. This process was widely criticised as rushed and ad hoc, with some international actors including the Red Cross movement refusing to facilitate resettlement due to perceived failures to meet basic protection standards of safe, voluntary and dignified movement of people (Hoegl et al., 2019; Key Aid Consulting, 2019; Yarnell and Cone, 2019).

The international component of the response began to wind down shortly afterwards: the IASC Scale-Up expired at the end of June 2019, leading to a draw-down in surge staff by OCHA and other agencies, although many of the clusters remained activated. From April 2019, agencies already began to divert limited funds and staff to respond to the impact of Cyclone Kenneth in Cabo Delgado. As the crisis lost international attention, funding to meet the remaining humanitarian needs proved difficult to secure; as of April 2020, Mozambique's HRP was only 48% funded (FTS, 2020), with 1.85 million people still requiring assistance (OCHA, 2020a). Coupled with substantial access barriers to more remote areas even months after the cyclones hit, this led to a patchy response in which some areas were the focus of substantial attention from humanitarian actors while others received little to none (Key Aid Consulting, 2019).

## 2.2 Efforts at establishing a collective approach to CCE in Mozambique

A collective approach to CCE was never formalised in Mozambique. From March 2019, the Mozambique HRP identified CCE as a cross-cutting priority activity, highlighting the need to 'promote accountability to, and two-way communication with, affected people and strive to meet their information needs'

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2    IASC adopted a revised definition of 'System-Wide Scale-Up' in November 2018, replacing the previous terminology of 'Level 3' or 'L3' responses.

(OCHA, 2019a: 22). However, the HRP's strategic goals around CCE were not backed by a specific commitment to using a collective approach, and key CCE actors interviewed for this study reported that the vocabulary of 'collective approaches' was not used in the Mozambique response.

Nevertheless, from the early days of the response, significant efforts were made to establish mechanisms to enable and strengthen collective action around CCE. The Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG) was established at the subnational level in Beira as a coordination platform for CCE within the response. At the national level, Linha Verde da Resposta a Emergência 1458 (hereafter referred to as Linha Verde 1458) was established as a response-wide, inter-agency common service providing a complaints and information hotline for affected people. Various respondents for this study also highlighted other examples of collaborative work on CCE activities, such as the use of community volunteer networks by the protection and camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) clusters to provide information and receive feedback at field level. However, the majority of respondents tended to focus on the CEWG and Linha Verde 1458 as the main embodiments of efforts to establish response-wide, cross-sectoral mechanisms for CCE.[3] The function and interaction of these two mechanisms therefore forms the primary focus of this study.

### 2.2.1 The Community Engagement Working Group (CEWG)

The CEWG functioned as a cross-cutting working group feeding into the field-level Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) in Beira. As laid out in its terms of reference (ToRs) and an extensive six-month workplan, the goal of the CEWG was to 'enable two-way communications among affected populations', with a focus on information sharing, feedback mechanisms, disseminating feedback within the response, and coordination (CEWG, 2019a; 2019b).

The group was established by OCHA within two weeks of Cyclone Idai's landfall and evolved through two distinct phases roughly corresponding to the acute and early recovery periods of the wider response. Between March and mid-May, it was led by a community engagement specialist from OCHA's regional office in Nairobi, who was supported in this role by a Communicating with Disaster Affected Communities (CDAC) co-coordinator funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through the humanitarian-to-humanitarian (H2H) network, a secondee from Plan International and a UNICEF AAP Emergency Specialist – all on international surge deployments. During this period, government ownership of the body was not formalised, although CEWG leadership worked to engage INCG and local health authorities on an ad-hoc basis, and the government-run Social Communications Institute (ICS)[4] was regularly represented at meetings.

As the response shifted towards early recovery in mid-May, OCHA scaled down its humanitarian presence and both co-chairs finished their deployments. At this point, leadership of the CEWG passed to UNICEF, which deployed a new working group coordinator double-hatting as an internal communication for development (C4D) specialist. At this point, the group was also merged with a pre-existing Ministry of Health body focused on social mobilisation for immunisation and other public health campaigns. Through this, its relationship with the government was also formalised, with meetings co-chaired and hosted by the Provincial Department of Health. While in theory the group's membership was open to any stakeholders interested in CCE, throughout the response its membership was largely made up of UN agencies and INGOs, as well as one government representative from the Ministry of Health's Department of Health Promotion.

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3   Along with the PSEA Network, they are also highlighted as the main mechanisms through which the Mozambique response was seeking to achieve 'collective accountability' in the IASC Operational Peer Review of the response carried out in May and June 2019 (IASC, 2019).

4   The ICS is responsible for administering a network of local radio and TV stations across Mozambique.

Overall, health actors were increasingly well-represented after June 2019 following its merger with the health communications working group.

While the CEWG handled a diverse range of tasks over the lifetime of the response, in practice its main role was as a technical forum focused on improving the coordination, quality and consistency of information shared with affected populations. At a basic level, the group worked to regularly update the 4Ws[5] of actors running CCE activities across the response in order to reduce duplication and highlight gaps in collaboration with the water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and protection clusters. During the acute phase of the response, the CEWG:

- made substantial efforts to support local radio stations in the dissemination of emergency messaging and supporting two-way communication through interactive 'street radio', as well as coordinating efforts with the emergency telecommunications cluster and other actors to source and distribute supplies to repair damaged infrastructure;
- worked with other clusters to provide content for airtime slots offered to humanitarian agencies by some radio stations;
- encouraged the uptake of standardised messaging for affected communities, which included the collation and distribution of messaging harmonised by other clusters, as well as the development and testing of new materials on issues around protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and visibility for Linha Verde 1458; and

- served as a forum for partners to share best practices and provide training and capacity support – including free translation provided by Translators Without Borders (TWB) as a common service in the initial two months of the response.

The CEWG also made efforts to ensure that feedback from communities was collected, analysed and incorporated into decision-making forums. CCE questions were included in the initial response-wide inter-agency rapid assessment (INGC et al., 2019).[6] Several member organisations conducted ad-hoc or periodic assessments gathering community feedback at various phases in the response.[7] At the end of the acute phase of the response, the group also facilitated a standalone study focused on community and organisational perceptions of information sharing and feedback within the response (Equip Mozambique, 2019).[8] In all cases, CEWG leadership shared findings at cluster and inter-cluster level, with the results of the perception study also presented back to communities in areas where data had been collected.

However, the group never developed a more formalised way to systematically pull together, synthesise, and present feedback from different sources on a regular basis. While the group's ToR and workplan envisioned it implementing a number of data collection and analysis activities characteristic of collective approaches to CCE rolled out in other responses[9] – including rumour monitoring, feedback bulletins and a centralised

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5  4Ws matrices capturing 'who, what, when, where' are standard coordination tools used at cluster and inter-cluster level in humanitarian responses worldwide.

6  However, while three questions on CCE were included in the tool, the assessment report only provided data on a single variable – whether communities had access to the internet. As one CEWG member pointed out, this 'lost' data meant that the assessment 'definitely wasn't part of the analysis informing the response' for CCE.

7  For example, TWB carried out a study on language use and preference (TWB, 2019); a group of WASH and health-focused organisations developed and used a common tool to collect regular feedback and track rumours via UNICEF's U-Report platform; and focus group discussions were carried out jointly with the PSEA Network.

8  The study was coordinated through the CEWG and implemented by Equip Mozambique with funding from CDAC. Data collection in communities was carried out by UNICEF-supported IFRC volunteers.

9  See for example the Common Service for Community Engagement and Accountability for the Rohingya refugee response described in Bailey et al. (2018), or the Nepal Inter-Agency Common Feedback Project (CFP, n.d.).

data hub to collate feedback from different channels – these were never implemented systematically at collective level, even though some were carried out by individual agencies. Indeed, given that the CEWG never had any dedicated information management capacity or resources to implement these activities, these goals are likely to have been overambitious.

The group's activities around complaints mechanisms were similarly limited. An initial mapping of feedback mechanisms in the response was carried out by the PSEA Network rather than the CEWG. While CEWG did provide technical inputs and messaging support for Linha Verde 1458, it was not involved in its inception and design. Reflecting a wider separation within the response, the CEWG's positioning at field level also meant that while it was able to provide operational inputs to the ICCG and clusters in Beira, it had no direct means of contributing to strategic discussions at the HCT level in Maputo. While this was less of a problem in the initial phase of the response when the bulk of humanitarian coordination took place in Beira, it became more acute as the centre of gravity shifted back towards Maputo in subsequent months.

The CEWG continued to hold regular meetings until December 2019. However, as activities in Beira reoriented increasingly to early recovery, the number of attendees dropped off and meetings were held only occasionally in the first quarter of 2020. A transition plan was developed in 2019 for another agency to take over coordination from UNICEF, but this could not be implemented due to a lack of resources. At the time of writing this report, however, the CEWG had been reactivated at subnational level in response to the emerging Covid-19 pandemic, and linked to a newly-established National Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations Working Group co-chaired by UNICEF, UNHCR and World Vision International.

### 2.2.2  The Linha Verde 1458 inter-agency hotline

Linha Verde 1458 was established in Maputo by the World Food Programme (WFP) as a toll-free inter-agency hotline in support of the Cyclone Idai response, through the protection cluster. Similar to the CEWG, its objective was 'to facilitate a two-way communication between the affected population and the humanitarian response to improve assistance, to identify gaps in services, and to facilitate the urgent handling of protection cases, including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse' (Linha Verde 1458, 2020a: 3). Prior to Cyclone Idai, WFP was already running hotline services as part of complaints and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) for its programming elsewhere in Mozambique. Given this existing base of capacity and experience, WFP proposed that it establish a new hotline to serve the rapidly expanding humanitarian response.

From the start, the mechanism was well-embedded into national-level international coordination structures in Maputo. The initial concept was developed in collaboration with the protection cluster and was included as one of the cluster's projects in the March 2019 HRP (OCHA, 2019b). This led directly to a start-up grant from the UN Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), with DFID providing top-up funding to cover operations during May 2020. The project was endorsed by the HCT – of which WFP was co-chair – with WFP protection staff working closely with other clusters to establish referral pathways and ensure buy-in during its preliminary stages. Once established, the hotline was identified as a key component of the protection cluster's Idai response strategy (Protection Cluster Mozambique, 2019), as well as one of the main inputs for the PSEA Network's complaints handling process (Mozambique PSEA Network, 2019). The government was not involved in the initial design process and were only engaged once funding was secured. However, INGC was incorporated into the mechanism from an early stage in its set-up in order to better coordinate with government emergency response, as well as serving as a point of referral for complaints related to government staff. Towards the end of 2019, government collaboration was also extended to the police and national anti-corruption office.

The hotline opened for calls on 16 May, two months after Cyclone Idai first made landfall. It took the form of a subcontracted call centre, staffed by a gender-balanced team of 12 operators, initially speaking six (later 15) of the main local languages used in affected areas. Staff were given relevant training by

protection cluster technical staff and provided with lists of frequently asked questions from each cluster as a basis to respond to information requests. The system placed a strong emphasis on case management, with referral focal points established for each cluster and specific processes set up for handling sensitive cases. Clusters were asked to carry out awareness-raising through their partners, with the CEWG engaged to support the development and dissemination of visibility materials, including graphics aimed specifically at people with lower literacy. Once Linha Verde 1458 was rolled out, WFP's own implementing partners were contractually obliged to incorporate the mechanism into their complaints and feedback processes, although this does not appear to have been followed by other lead agencies.

From May 2019 to February 2020 the hotline handled around 1,000 cases per month, of which 44% were devoted to complaints and 27% to positive feedback (Linha Verde 1458, 2020a).[10] It was relatively under-used for information requests, which made up less than one-fifth of all cases. Overall, calls related to food assistance greatly exceeded the volume of those related to other sectors. WFP developed a monthly dashboard to provide numerical and narrative analysis of emerging trends (e.g. Linha Verde 1458, 2020b). This was shared via a monthly email and presented by WFP staff on a regular basis at cluster meetings and to the HCT.

In late 2019, WFP commissioned a sustainability study to explore the continued viability of the hotline as the response scaled down and reoriented towards development. This recommended the continuation of the hotline under a proposed inter-agency steering committee and with joint funding support from a broader base of organisations (Linha Verde 1458, 2020a). The HCT re-endorsed its continuation as a response-wide AAP system and PSEA reporting mechanism in March 2020, and its operations were subsequently extended through to June 2021, now co-funded through multiple donors.

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10  Linha Verde 1458 categorised cases according to four categories: 'complaints', 'positive feedback', 'requests for information', and 'requests for assistance'. Only around 20% of calls were opened as cases, with the remainder – for example calls made to test the line, pranks, etc. – were categorised as non-relevant (Linha Verde 1458, 2020a).

# 3 Added value of the collective approach

This section addresses where the collective approach added value in Mozambique and where it fell short, drawing on both interviews for this study and secondary data sources. Overall, respondents were generally positive about the approach in terms of strengthening CCE processes and coordination, as well as in laying the foundations of a viable response-wide feedback loop. However, its contributions to the strategic direction of the response were less clear and, in terms of outcomes, existing data suggests that substantial numbers of affected people struggled to access inclusive information services and complaints mechanisms. Ultimately, though, several respondents felt that what was achieved was, while imperfect, good enough or 'an excellent start' given the constraints and limitations faced by the overall response.

## 3.1 Key points of added value

At an overarching level, several UN and NGO respondents felt that the mechanisms established for collective CCE were important for opening up space for CCE as a cross-cutting issue throughout the response. Some felt the simple existence of dedicated capacity for coordination and CCE common services demonstrated a normative commitment on the part of the coordination system to doing better CCE; such activities were 'not an afterthought' but integral to the response. In relation to this, the collective approach was felt to have an important role in breaking actors out of their sectoral or programmatic silos, generating multiplier effects at both coordination and operational levels. Active engagement by the CEWG and Linha Verde 1458 across multiple

clusters and at the inter-cluster level was cited as key in catalysing clusters to be more accountable for sharing information. At the operational level, having dozens of agencies involved in promoting Linha Verde 1458 was felt to have broadened its reach and uptake beyond what might otherwise be possible.

Technical collaboration and cross-pollination of ideas were also cited as important, especially within the CEWG. According to one member, the collegiate environment of the group meant that 'it was one of the most useful working groups I attended, hands down. It provided an opportunity to think more broadly about the impacts of your programme; it was a nice space to speak creatively… and that wasn't really the case in other clusters'.

A more tangible benefit of the collective approach widely cited by aid actors was the extent to which it enabled better and more harmonised information sharing with communities. In the immediate emergency phase, several respondents highlighted CEWG's role in linking community radio stations – widely acknowledged as a critical information source for communities prior to the cyclone (UNESCO, 2011) – with the wider response. Early in the response, the CEWG developed a close working relationship with the emergency telecommunications cluster and collaborated to identify and prioritise stations in need of rehabilitation, linking them with partners able to provide resources to help. The CEWG also facilitated links between local radio actors and the cluster system in Beira to disseminate standardised humanitarian messaging during dedicated airtime slots. While there is limited data on the impact of this work, a range of respondents including local radio staff felt that

it was especially important given the vital role of radio in the local communication ecosystem (Equip Mozambique, 2019; TWB, 2019).

The CEWG was also felt to have played an important role in ensuring that harmonised messaging on key topics was effectively developed and disseminated, again leveraging its position as an inter-cluster working group to pull together expertise and resources from actors across the response. This reportedly strengthened harmonisation and consistency of messaging, and ensured that the right messaging could be made quickly available and deployed in response to specific contextual needs, for example in mitigating cholera risk in flooded areas. For many topics, this involved pulling together and disseminating messages developed prior to the crisis, although several respondents also praised the multi-actor effort led by the CEWG to craft new messages around PSEA. In this respect, the CEWG's work served as a de facto preparedness activity for the response to Cyclone Kenneth, since the messages they pulled together in response to Cyclone Idai could be immediately 'cut and pasted' by actors establishing new emergency relief activities in Cabo Delgado.

Having a dedicated inter-agency feedback mechanism in the form of Linha Verde 1458 was felt to add value in terms of the response's capacity to handle complaints and close feedback loops. First, it minimised the number of competing platforms – according to one respondent, following the establishment of Linha Verde 1458 only one other humanitarian organisation continued to run its own independent complaints hotline. Second, it established a more effective way to handle complaints, which cut across different agency mandates by developing a clearly elaborated set of referral pathways. While these took some time to become fully functional, actors involved with the mechanism felt that setting up these systems was a useful process of 'learning by doing', supporting better mapping of where actors worked and who to follow up with. Third, it created a clear avenue for the anonymous

reporting of sensitive complaints. As of April 2020, Linha Verde 1458 was the point of origin for 70% of the complaints being handled by the PSEA Network. Fourth, as many of these complaints related to government-linked local leaders,[11] Linha Verde 1458 was also felt to offer a new entry point for more systematic engagement with the government around complaints handling. As one UN staff member explained: 'By having something formal, a system where INGC is involved from the outset, now when we're seeing these issues like leaders charging for access to assistance, or PSEA complaints, we're now going to the government with specific cases and evidence from the field, rather than coming to them with hearsay. So we're strengthening INGC's awareness of their own [PSEA] codes of conduct and holding people accountable in the justice sector. But without this info it's difficult.'

## 3.2 Limitations of the collective approach

In addition to its positive contributions, evidence from this study points to a number of limitations of the collective approach, both in terms of its effect on the processes of the response, as well as its ultimate impact on affected people. Although the approach served to raise the profile of CCE within parts of the response, it also faced an uphill battle to generate widespread buy-in and interest. Some CEWG members reflected on the hard work put in by the group's leadership in advocating with other clusters around CCE, but noted that this was not always reflected in a similar level of engagement from clusters, especially during the early stages of the response. Similarly, actors familiar with Linha Verde 1458 reported slow progress in persuading some agencies to engage with the hotline, whether in terms of feedback on its design and products, providing updated information to support referrals and FAQs, or

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11  A variety of actors are recognised by the Mozambican state as 'community authorities' but not formally integrated into its governance system. Following Cyclone Idai, they were often tasked with beneficiary lists for aid distributions, a practice which became the focus of allegations related to sexual exploitation and abuse within the Idai response (HRW, 2019).

incorporating the mechanism into their standard operating procedures.

Both respondents for this study and secondary sources highlighted issues related to the inclusion of more marginalised groups and locations in terms of access to both information and feedback channels. This indicates that the collective approach had limited impact in terms of fostering more inclusive CCE. Despite the CEWG's work to support standardisation of messaging materials, one respondent working for a disability-focused NGO highlighted that the lack of adaptation of communication materials to the needs of people with disabilities remained a problem, suggesting that top-down efforts at adaptation would always be unsustainable without the involvement of organisations for people with disabilities. Reflecting this, a recent review of disability access in the Mozambique response found that people with disabilities frequently struggled to access information about distributions or vaccination efforts due to their impairments (Bart and Wester, 2019).

The gender lens of the collective approach was also cited as a limitation by several respondents. For example, while 65% of people surveyed in the CEWG-led perception assessment discussed above were women, data presented in the assessment's report was not gender-disaggregated. Caller data from Linha Verde 1458 also suggests that the hotline was consistently under-used by women, who made up only 22% of all cases;[12] several respondents felt this reflected a wider gap in effective engagement of women by the response more broadly. One respondent felt that to properly address the barriers imposed by patriarchal gender norms 'you'd need a whole set of gender-sensitive engagement mechanisms, and that doesn't matter whether it's a helpdesk or a hotline'.

Finally, reflecting wider dynamics within the response, geographical coverage of many CCE activities was largely focused on hardest-hit areas of Sofala province, despite substantial needs in neighbouring Mainca and Zambezia. Similarly, areas outside of displacement and resettlement sites were also perceived as under-serviced in terms of CCE.

At a strategic level, several respondents (including several donor staff) questioned the extent to which community feedback was leading to any substantial learning or course correction in the response as a whole. This issue is closely linked to the lack of an integrated system for gathering and channelling feedback. While Linha Verde 1458 provided regular analysis of hotline data to senior levels of the response, this was not complemented by regular, systematic updates from other data sources such as agency-level feedback mechanisms. For example, one respondent noted the contrast between the vital role of community volunteers in responding to feedback and complaints on the ground and the limited extent to which the content of this feedback filtered up the chain to be shared at inter-agency level. This gap is critical given the widely recognised need for data from passive complaints mechanisms such as hotlines to be coupled with data gathered through active mechanisms like focus groups in order to produce a more complete picture of peoples' needs and priorities (CDAC Network, 2017). Ultimately, the lack of channels for wider feedback to be systematically collected and analysed before presentation to strategic decision-making structures limited the potential of the collective approach to serve as a vehicle for participation by affected people – and especially marginalised groups – in the design and implementation of the response.

In terms of overall impact, data from assessments conducted in the first few months after Cyclone Idai suggest that, despite collective efforts to strengthen CCE, people still faced significant challenges in accessing the information they needed and having their feedback taken into account. In an initial multi-sector rapid assessment carried out by the Assessment Working Group in early April 2019 in 188 communities across 14 districts, only 45% of community key informants reported

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12  While anecdotal data suggests that men were often calling on behalf of their households, the lack of women accessing the hotline directly remains problematic. Complaints mediated through male gatekeepers are likely to limit women's agency in terms of what is complained about, as well as discouraging reporting of more sensitive issues. See, for example, Crabtree and Geara (2018).

having access to information on current and future assistance, while 65% reported that information about aid entitlements in their areas was either late, unclear, or non-existent (INGC et al., 2019). According to the CEWG survey of affected individuals conducted in July 2019 as the response was moving towards early recovery, 39% of participants reported not receiving the information they needed about humanitarian aid (Equip Mozambique, 2019). This was reflected in interviews with local leaders, who highlighted information gaps around why decisions were being made, for example around beneficiary selection or duration of aid activities, as especially challenging in their communities. One explained how this played out during a beneficiary selection process for food aid shortly after the cyclone:

> We did this survey and gave it to those responsible and then they came to confirm and went. But when help came, it was not for everyone. We let the government see this, we wrote a letter to the NGOs, but there was no response … The information they gave us lacked the reasons for not having covered the other families.

As well as highlighting the weakness of information flows, the CEWG's survey reported that only 58% of respondents felt that humanitarians listened to and responded to feedback. Mirroring these issues, some community leaders reported an environment of top-down communication, in which information was passed down from both the government and humanitarian organisations without necessarily centring the needs or priorities of communities themselves:

> They must include leaders, to work with communities, to involve communities. When we have these disasters, families are suffering and thinking about the things they lost, how to recover, where to go, how to start over, in short, in all this, leaders must be instructed on how to work with their communities in these situations. Because now we just wait to hear the instructions and then go and transmit to the families (Community leader, Dondo District).

> The big challenge would be that of [providing] information that is of interest to communities at the moment, and not just the information that matters to the organisations (Community leader, Dondo District).

Ultimately, the extent to which people feel that they have enough information or are being listened to by humanitarians is dependent on a range of factors extending well beyond the collective approach, such as the wider governance of the response, the availability of resources and the prevailing socio-political dynamics around accountability more broadly. The gaps highlighted in data from the CEWG survey and other sources are not solely the responsibility of the collective approach. Indeed, that these questions were being asked at all is indicative of its impact. However, they do raise questions about its ability to influence the direction and priorities of the response. These issues are discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

# 4 Factors affecting the success of collective approaches to community engagement in the Cyclone Idai response in Mozambique

Efforts to establish a collective approach to CCE in Mozambique after Cyclone Idai were driven by strong, internationally led commitments to AAP and PSEA. Constraints related to the lack of prior preparedness around CCE, as well as the wider authoritarian character of political culture in Mozambique, meant that the approach was top-down in nature rather than locally grounded, and largely (although not exclusively) informed by experiences in other contexts. While involved to varying degrees as stakeholders and implementers, government and local civil society were not at the forefront of the design or leadership of the collective approach. The mechanisms established for collective CCE secured relatively good buy-in from humanitarian partners and were comparatively well-resourced. However, while they were perceived to have added tangible value in their respective areas of focus, they were not tied together with an overarching design. This led to a somewhat fragmented approach where different components operated in parallel, limiting their effectiveness in mobilising the complementary strengths of the actors involved.

In many respects, the experiences of the collective approach reflected wider dynamics affecting the Cyclone Idai response. Nevertheless, they offer valuable lessons for future attempts to establish new collective approaches in response to sudden-onset, natural hazard-related disasters. This section examines the strengths and limitations of the approach, focusing first on the wider enabling environment, then looking specifically at the design of the collective approach and concluding by focusing on the involvement of local actors.

## 4.1 Enabling environment

### 4.1.1 Support from senior leadership

Respondents for this study generally agreed that strong support from response leadership provided a supportive environment for 'community engagement writ large'. At HCT level, there was an especially strong focus on PSEA from the beginning of the response, sharpened by allegations of abuses in its initial weeks (OCHA, 2019c; see Box 1 for further discussion of the intersection between CCE and PSEA). Consequently, respondents reported that this made securing buy-in for Linha Verde 1458 extremely straightforward, paving the way to begin setting up the hotline almost as soon as Cyclone Idai made landfall (although as discussed below, the actual process of set-up took substantial time and the hotline opened for calls well after the acute phase of the emergency had passed). Similarly, the role of OCHA's regional office in deciding to include CCE as part of its humanitarian scale-up

## Box 1: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse – a double-edged sword for CCE?

CCE and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) are generally understood as related and mutually reinforcing sets of activities. Strong links between the two are seen as critical to ensuring affected people understand their rights and entitlements, and have access to appropriate and trusted complaints handling mechanisms when these are breached (CDAC, 2017). A number of respondents remarked positively on the especially strong stance taken by the HC in making sure PSEA was properly mainstreamed and prioritised throughout the response. They also highlighted the effective collaboration between the PSEA Network and the CEWG in conducting joint ad-hoc assessments and developing and field-testing PSEA outreach materials.

However, some respondents also observed that this focus risked becoming disproportionate relative to the scale of the issue. In particular, they felt that the attention and resources devoted to PSEA were not matched with a similar focus on 'the low-key, day-to-day, hard work [of CCE] where you'll never get bad media coverage'. For example, the PSEA Network was generally better-resourced and politically supported compared to the CEWG: UNICEF provided a full-time co-chair for the PSEA Network, while its co-chair for the CEWG double-hatted as a programme manager for internal UNICEF work. Potentially linked to this imbalance, the PSEA Network took on various tasks that would normally fall within the mandate of the CEWG, including mapping complaints mechanisms shortly after the cyclone and developing community engagement transition plans as the response began to wind down in early 2020.

Ultimately, respondents felt that, while incentives around PSEA had supported better CCE through prioritising the development of strong complaints mechanisms, they had also undermined CCE by treating it more as an instrumental approach in service of preventing abuse, rather than as a process with its own important accountability and participation objectives.

was felt to be critical in opening up 'space' for CCE within the response, which respondents described in terms of a willingness to listen and engage among agencies within the international response. However, competing priorities in the chaotic early stages of the response meant that this support was generally more passive and instrumental, rather than proactive and strategic. As one CEWG member explained, this was not necessarily a case of CCE stakeholders being actively excluded, but of only being prioritised on an ad-hoc basis rather than mainstreamed as a constant concern: '[coordination] did make some space but it's difficult. We had space when they needed us – they wanted to listen to us and recognised what we could do and used us to do that'.

Several respondents also pointed to a degree of collaborative spirit within the response more

broadly, which provided entry points for more effective engagement around CCE. In this respect, they commented on OCHA's role in establishing a coordination system that felt genuinely inclusive (at least of international actors). They also noted how a relative lack of political tension between large agencies had allowed for more straightforward collaboration across a range of issues. In both cases, the comparatively small scale[13] and collegiate nature[14] of the response relative to other emergencies was felt to be a contributing factor in terms of reducing competition and strengthening interpersonal relations.

### 4.1.2 Funding availability

Collective CCE in Mozambique was comparatively well funded. However, this funding was not distributed evenly in terms of

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13  While Mozambique saw a dramatic scale-up of humanitarian support compared to pre-crisis levels, in 2019 its response plan ranked only 15th in the world in terms of funding secured (https://fts.unocha.org/appeals/overview/2019).

14  One respondent highlighted that the response in Mozambique was less 'politicised' in terms of inter-agency competition than other contexts they had worked in. Others highlighted that the concentration of agencies operating out of Beira airport as a coordination hub in the early stages of the response was important in strengthening working relationships.

timing or across different components of the collective approach. Both Linha Verde 1458 and the CEWG benefitted from rapid access to short-term initial funding, ensuring that capacity and mechanisms for CCE were present from the start of the response. For Linha Verde 1458, access to CERF funding was critical in covering its initial start-up period and provided a platform from which to secure a longer-term grant from DFID. Similarly, immediate funding from the H2H network – also funded by DFID – helped strengthen the initial capacity of the CEWG in terms of both surge support provided by CDAC and language support provided by TWB. This was supplemented by OCHA and several other agencies deploying dedicated CCE surge capacity, meaning that CEWG membership in its early stages included an unusually large amount of dedicated technical expertise.

However, after the initial start-up phase Linha Verde 1458 and the CEWG diverged in terms of their ability to secure follow-on funding, which potentially contributed to the wider lack of coherence between the two mechanisms. Thanks to its DFID grant, Linha Verde 1458 was guaranteed a full year of operation at a very early stage in its lifetime, allowing it to operate on a more stable platform than most short-term humanitarian programming. This funding also included dedicated resources for a sustainability study, meaning that an obligation to think about how the mechanism might effectively transition out of the immediate emergency was built in from the start. However, for the CEWG the initial support provided by H2H and in-kind by other actors was relatively short-lived, with follow-on funding harder to secure. After mid-May 2019, no dedicated funds were available to support the activities of the group beyond support from UNICEF's C4D budget, leaving them largely dependent on in-kind contributions of staffing and resources. This had significant implications for the group's ability to fulfil the functions laid out in its workplan and ToRs, especially in terms of information management or establishing more holistic feedback systems to complement Linha Verde 1458. Several CEWG members expressed frustration about the draw-down in CCE capacity after the initial two months of the response, feeling this had not provided enough time to

consolidate their work or even document lessons learned from the experience.

To a degree, the uneven resourcing of different components of the collective approach is a reflection of the fragmentation of the approach itself. While individual organisations were able to secure funding for specific CCE activities, there was little evidence of any coordinated attempt to fundraise on behalf of the collective itself. CEWG coordinators interviewed for this study were primarily focused on their technical role and did not discuss fundraising as part of their responsibilities. Similarly, the workplan for the group was not costed and does not appear to have been used as a vehicle for fundraising. The fact that Linha Verde 1458 was funded so straightforwardly while other aspects of the approach were not may also be related to what one respondent described as the 'transaction cost bottleneck', where donors prefer to provide fewer grants to larger organisations like WFP, as this makes contracting, due diligence and grant management processes more straightforward. Although H2H and UNICEF both worked to mitigate this issue by serving as intermediaries passing through funding to their partners, there was again no collective decision on who should be funded to perform what specific role in the approach.

The fact that the majority of funding for collective CCE in the response came from a single donor is also both positive and negative. On the one hand, strong internal commitments to CCE by DFID were critical in ensuring that substantial resources were available quickly – and, in the case of Linha Verde 1458, that complex and time-consuming negotiations around joint resourcing were avoided. In addition, having the support of an active and engaged donor was important for securing buy-in, with DFID reportedly working hard to ensure support for the hotline among its partners and with other actors in the response. However, other donors' lack of involvement also raises questions around sustainability and buy-in. Specifically, it leaves any single-donor initiatives more vulnerable to collapse in the event of any change of policy or priorities on the part of that donor – although in the case of Linha Verde 1458 this was avoided due to the long lead-time available to WFP to secure alternative sources

of funding. Further, it means that other donors have less of a stake or interest in leveraging their potentially powerful role to demand commitments on the part of their partners to engage with efforts around collective CCE.

### 4.1.3    The politics of accountability in Mozambique

A number of respondents noted how the political environment in Mozambique constrained the space for both collective CCE and CCE within the response more broadly. In particular, they pointed to the limited space for citizen engagement and cultures of accountability in the context of a de facto one-party regime with a top-down, paternalistic approach to governance. These issues are widely reflected in secondary literature on social accountability in Mozambique. According to one study, 'most opportunities for citizen-government dialogue are highly controlled and choreographed', there is little faith that complaints to service-providers will lead to meaningful change and people fear the consequences of complaining. As a result, people's norms and repertoires for voicing feedback are not necessarily aligned with the approaches of more 'formal' complaints mechanisms (Taela et al., 2016: 7; see also Awortwi and Nuvunga, 2019). In the context of the Mozambique health system, recent research has highlighted the tendency of government service provision to adopt a 'gift' model of delivery, in which citizens have little agency and are expected to be appreciative beneficiaries. Consequently, 'the citizen receives knowledge about the health system in a vague, fragmented, concessionary process, as if it was a favour to guarantee them access to information' (Namburete, 2018; 2019). These issues point to a substantial lack of shared understanding between humanitarian actors, the government and affected populations regarding what CCE is and how it should work.

At the operational level, this was manifested in struggles to effectively engage the government across multiple aspects of the collective approach. At a basic level, several respondents reported that while individual INGC staff in Beira were broadly supportive of the activities of the CEWG, they were stretched so thin coordinating across so many different aspects of the response that they were unable to engage

with its work. However, other respondents situated this within a broader context of a limited appetite for engagement around CCE on the part of the government in general and the INGC in particular, which they perceived to view its mandate as focused more on 'hard' activities like rescue and reconstruction. As a result, the collective approach was designed and established independently of the government, though government actors were formally consulted and engaged from an early stage. For example, although the CEWG was formally integrated into government leadership under the Sofala Provincial Directorate of Health (DPS) after its merger with the health community engagement group, in practical terms the government did little in terms of the coordination or leadership of the group.

More broadly, several respondents pointed to the fact that prevailing cultural norms and power structures limited the effectiveness of complaints and feedback mechanisms employed in the response. For instance, one respondent pointed to the challenge of effectively resolving cases identified by Linha Verde 1458 involving local power-holders, arguing that they exposed deeply entrenched local-level power dynamics that could not be straightforwardly resolved via a technical case-handling system. Similarly, a study by TWB found that internally displaced people (IDPs) in temporary accommodation sites were reluctant to make complaints due in part to fear of reprisals (TWB, 2019). Similar issues were reported when it came to the wider participation of affected people in decision-making within the response, with many respondents holding up the almost total lack of consultation and communication that characterised the government-led IDP resettlement process as the most prominent example.

### 4.1.4    Language barriers

Language barriers were widely cited as posing difficulties in terms of both coordination of the collective approach and of wider challenges in communicating with communities. The lack of Portuguese-speakers among the ranks of international staff deployed on surge capacity in the initial aftermath of Cyclone Idai was reported to have exacerbated divides between both the international and government coordination

systems, and between local and international organisations. Within the CEWG, both CDAC and UNICEF worked to ensure that Portuguese-speakers led coordination from early on in the response. However, one CEWG member reported that, even though the group conducted meetings in both English and Portuguese, back and forth and sideline conversations frequently took place in English only, potentially alienating staff from local organisations. Across the response, ensuring that people were able to receive information in local languages was also a challenge for many organisations, since substantial minorities of affected people did not understand Portuguese (TWB, 2019).

### 4.1.5 The nature of the emergency

At a basic level, many respondents highlighted the challenges inherent in setting up a collective approach during a fast-onset emergency that also saw a relatively quick transition to early recovery. As one CEWG member noted, functional collective approaches can take several months, if not years, to establish themselves. Starting from scratch as they did in the weeks after Cyclone Idai, actors involved in the collective approach had to navigate both the chaos of the initial response – struggling with the competing priorities of humanitarian and government counterparts – as well as the draw-down of staffing and funds following the transition to recovery. This posed multiple challenges in terms of securing buy-in, ensuring timely delivery of services and setting strategic direction.

As one CEWG member put it, 'I would appreciate the chaos of being right at the beginning of a response. It's challenging, it's not easy, it takes a lot of time to harmonise things'. This was especially problematic when agencies were rushing to roll out their own responses and staff were working overtime. Although the CEWG was established very early on, another member felt that 'it took a lot of advocacy before being able to actually get people's attention' within the response. Attempts

to engage the government around CCE early on in the response faced similar issues. Several respondents emphasised the extent to which government capacity had been overwhelmed by Cyclone Idai and how this had limited its capacity to focus on community engagement:

> From the government side they are so stretched in an emergency, they're so stretched, it's not like they have battalions of staff. They're leading, they have to save lives – evacuations, search and rescue, this is their primary focus, as well as coordinating with us lot. They are so stretched, and there are some aspects of the response [like community engagement] that they are very appreciative that we do, and they keep an eye on them and they engage. But they have to do triage, so it's not a lack of engagement or interest from the government, it's really that they don't have a lot of resources to go round (UN staff member).

Time pressures were also a challenge in the set-up of Linha Verde 1458, which was not fully operational until two months after the cyclone made landfall. Several respondents felt that this was too long a delay, since it had missed the critical first two months of the response. However, expectations that a hotline would be up and running during the emergency's acute phase were unrealistic. Although WFP had immediate access to funds, was able to build on existing experiences of running hotlines in other parts of Mozambique as well as in other contexts, and contracted an experienced local call centre to run the hotline, the process of contracting, recruiting and training staff, securing government permissions and setting up referral pathways was a significant amount of work.[15]

These issues were compounded by a high turnover of staff and short programming timelines in the early stages of the response.

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15  While some stakeholders raised the possibility of a local actor running a hotline more quickly and efficiently, it is unlikely that this would have made a substantial difference given that many of the factors slowing down the process – such as securing government permission for a new toll-free number or forging referral pathways – would have been the same, and may in fact have been even more challenging given WFP's comparative advantage in terms of economies of scale and political clout with both the response and the government.

The rapid turnover of CEWG leadership staff and membership during the first two months following the cyclone was seen by several respondents as a limitation in terms of the group's ability to build and maintain relationships and supplement operational coordination with a more strategic approach.[16] This was exacerbated by similarly high rates of turnover among cluster leads and other points of interface between the CEWG and the rest of the humanitarian system, including the government. These dynamics were perceived to have contributed to inefficient 'waves' of momentum around CCE, in which an initial surge of activity dissipated as members left, only to have to be rebuilt as new people cycled in. The combination of membership turnover, transition of leadership, loss of dedicated funding and amalgamation with the health working group led to a substantial break in the continuity of the CEWG just as the response was shifting focus to early recovery.

### 4.1.6 Emergency preparedness

Underlying many of the above issues was the apparent lack of any emergency preparedness activities specifically focused on CCE prior to the response, meaning newly established systems had a huge amount of set-up work to do in the middle of an emergency. No respondent reported being aware of any efforts to engage in specific preparedness activities around emergency CCE prior to Cyclone Idai. This largely reflects issues in the wider response – several interviewees strongly emphasised just how unexpected the magnitude of the cyclone had been, and how rapidly it had overwhelmed pre-existing capacity to respond. In this respect an IASC peer review of the response highlighted a lack of sufficient investment in DRR activities, a lack of adequately elaborated roles and responsibilities between the government and the humanitarian community, and a wider lack of institutionalisation of 'coordination structures and common standards for the response'. (IASC, 2019).

Respondents were unanimous in highlighting better preparedness as a critical change that could strengthen both collective and non-collective CCE in any future emergency response in Mozambique, highlighting the following key areas in which more preparedness could help in the event of future emergencies. First, pre-positioning key aspects of CCE programming could save time at the start of a response. For example, running regular information ecosystem assessments between disasters would ensure people's preferred and trusted channels of communication were well understood and could be incorporated rapidly into CCE strategies. Similarly, several interviewees felt Mozambique's status as a country at risk of natural hazard-related disasters justified working to develop a rapid-activation national hotline that could either lie dormant during emergencies or serve wider functions between them.

Second, working on collective CCE as a preparedness activity was seen as a way to strengthen relationships across stakeholders so that they would be more resilient during the chaos of an emergency, as well as ensuring that knowledge and experience built during Cyclone Idai was not lost and could effectively be deployed in future crises. Embedding a CCE preparedness platform within INGC, following the model employed by CDAC in various settings,[17] was seen as one option to ensure more productive government engagement. In addition, working to identify and link the roles and responsibilities of government, local civil society and international organisations could better harness pre-existing local capacity and avoid inefficiencies and missed connections. However, given the challenges highlighted above, any such efforts would need to be realistic in their objectives and expectations, and draw lessons from wider research and programming experience around social accountability in Mozambique more broadly.

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16  When UNICEF took over leadership of the CEWG at the start of June 2019, as the response was shifting to focus on early recovery, both initial co-chairs as well as much of the membership had turned over at the end of their surge deployments, and working group attendance was at one point reduced to only two organisations.

17  Lessons from these experiences in other contexts are documented in Tanner et al. (2018).

Third, collective CCE was seen to have a specific role to play in supporting wider DRR activities. For example, it could make sure that early warning systems were designed to ensure maximum reach and uptake, or it could integrate local disaster preparedness committees established under community-based DRR programming into harmonised two-way communication mechanisms with service providers.

## 4.2 The structure of the collective approach

### 4.2.1 Design

One critical challenge to the collective approach in Mozambique was the lack of strategic leadership or overarching design. As one UN staff member reflected, 'when you talk about these cross-sector wider things, there's an issue of who's going to take the lead, and if a response is underfunded sometimes these things get lost a bit'. In an internationally led humanitarian response, the HCT's role is critical in underpinning the success of a collective approach. A collective approach to AAP has been included as one of the four mandatory responsibilities around accountability in the standard ToRs for HCTs since 2017 (IASC, 2017), while IASC guidance on collective accountability highlights the importance of HCTs delineating clear responsibilities across collective approaches (Peer 2 Peer, 2017). However, with multiple competing priorities in the early stages of the response, the HCT did not take a proactive role in setting a response-wide strategy for CCE. With no clear guidance from above on what the collective approach should look like or how it should be operationalised, different actors spearheaded various components of the approach in parallel – OCHA giving way to UNICEF in the case of the CEWG, and WFP in the case of Linha Verde 1458. This fragmentation ultimately led to

persistent gaps, especially in the development of holistic and inclusive feedback mechanisms and in ensuring that the collective approach fed back into strategic decision-making.

A key shortcoming in the design of the collective approach was the relatively weak positioning of the CEWG within the overall response. According to CDAC guidance and as seen in other responses such as the Central African Republic and Nepal, a CEWG or equivalent coordination platform is generally tasked with ensuring CCE objectives are effectively met and that feedback from CCE mechanisms informs strategic decision-making at response level (CDAC Network, 2019; Barbelet, 2020). However, interviewees working in the CEWG and at UN agencies based in Maputo both pointed out that the group's mandate was not well understood across the response and that its position was inadequately formalised within the coordination architecture. The group was set up at subnational level with a focus on operational coordination at the epicentre of the Cyclone Idai response. However, it was never represented at Maputo level, reporting only as far as the Beira ICCG, and received no formal endorsement from the HCT. Positioned as it was and supported by limited capacity and resources after June, it was poorly placed to set the strategic direction for CCE.[18]

In contrast, Linha Verde 1458 occupied a much stronger position within the coordination structure; it was formally endorsed by the HCT and was well-resourced and well-integrated with the clusters at capital level. Reflecting this imbalance, while the CEWG and WFP worked closely together on the set-up and roll-out of Linha Verde 1458, the CEWG was not involved in the co-design of the mechanism prior to its launch. As one member noted, 'I wouldn't say it was set up collectively or in a joint way, it was just "there's going to be a hotline, please engage with it"'. While it was always set up to be one tool among many, it also appears that Linha Verde 1458's prominence within the response may have generated unrealistic

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18  This was demonstrated by the gradual atrophy of its strategic ambitions throughout the response: while its initial April 2019 terms of reference envisioned the group playing a key role in coordinating CCE across the response, it was not even involved in the development of a post-Idai community engagement strategy, which as of early 2020 was being handled primarily through the protection cluster.

expectations among some actors as to the problems it could solve. While it was described in one lead agency situation report as 'the main feedback communication system that is being promoted as part of AAP and PSEA activities' (UNICEF, 2019: 7), a Disasters Emergency Committee evaluation cautioned that Linha Verde 1458 had become 'over-relied on' by some agencies at the expense of other mechanisms (Key Aid Consulting, 2019: 31).

The absence of strong leadership and a unified design limited the development of more holistic and inclusive inter-agency feedback systems to accompany the Linha Verde 1458 hotline. There were cases of actors working together to provide other entry points for common complaints and feedback. For example, many agencies trained networks of local volunteers to handle cross-cutting feedback and referrals face-to-face at the community level. Similarly, UNICEF worked with local radio stations to run call-in shows where people could ask questions about the response. However, these efforts were never integrated into a wider system; the CEWG lacked the resources and political clout to do so, and no other actor had a clear mandate or interest to take on such a role. Consequently, there was no defined inter-agency process for regular joint analysis and triangulation of community feedback, and nor was community feedback included as a standing agenda item at HCT meetings. While data from Linha Verde 1458 was compiled into regular dashboards, shared directly with the HCT and published online, the CEWG fed back only as far as the Beira ICCG and did not have the information management capacity to pull together products that could be shared more widely.

### 4.2.2   Leadership

In general, respondents were positive about the organisations involved in leading different aspects of the collective approach. They felt that each organisation was able to add value in line with its capacity and mandate, with few interviewees commenting that any one organisation was inappropriate or unfit for the role it fulfilled. However, without long-term leadership from a neutral lead agency, several respondents highlighted the concern that both

the CEWG and Linha Verde 1458 remained too tightly bound to the operational priorities of their lead agency and were hence unable to contribute fully to a truly collective approach.

In general, respondents felt that having a large, well-established operational agency lead the implementation of Linha Verde 1458 made sense, highlighting several areas in which WFP had a comparative advantage in the Mozambique context. Their existing experience of implementing hotlines in other parts of the country and worldwide made WFP well-placed to apply these lessons in the context of Cyclone Idai. In this respect, they were aided by a core team of long-term national protection and CCE staff who had been working on similar programming prior to the cyclone and were able to build and sustain momentum on the hotline. This mitigated the issue of high turnover of surge staff that was widely reported to have hindered the response in its initial months. In addition, WFP's institutional positioning as HCT co-chair and its strong relationships within the cluster system in Maputo were important for securing buy-in and engagement during the set-up phase, while its central role within the response (accounting for more than half of all funds channelled through the HRP) and large number of implementing partners provided enough critical mass to ensure the hotline had widespread reach at field level. WFP's status as a large UN organisation was also critical in helping it to unlock longer-term DFID funding for Linha Verde 1458 by minimising transaction costs around contracting and risk management; this status also made it easier to secure government permission for the hotline's operation.

However, although WFP's dominant role in developing and implementing the hotline yielded gains in terms of efficiency and economies of scale, several respondents reported that it also limited buy-in. Despite efforts by WFP to emphasise the inter-agency nature of Linha Verde 1458 (the hotline had its own independent branding, for example), there remained a sense among some agencies that it was a WFP process. The fact that the overwhelming majority of calls to the hotline were related to food was also a source of debate. Some respondents

argued that this simply reflected the importance of food in the response, while others felt that it demonstrated a lack of engagement by partners outside the food security sector. As one interviewee explained, 'I think a lot of actors saw the majority of calls dealing with food and seeing that WFP ran the hotline and that made it easier for them to disengage. This made it a vicious cycle so WFP promoted this much more aggressively … than other agencies so this made it seem to be a WFP-owned process'.[19] One CEWG member also highlighted the detrimental impact that a lack of collective ownership of hotline data had on collective learning. They argued that the absence of common processes for joint analysis (analysis and presentation of data was left to WFP staff without first subjecting it to a wider joint analysis) limited scope for interpreting data from complementary sources and identifying how issues should be addressed. Conversely, other UN respondents argued that calls for feedback on hotline dashboards had met with limited response (it should also be noted that the CEWG was likewise criticised for an over-focus on operational coordination at the expense of strategic analysis).

Similar to WFP's role in Linha Verde 1458, UNICEF's leadership of the CEWG after the initial emergency phase was perceived as both a strength and a weakness. On the positive side, several respondents felt that UNICEF's C4D and public health mandate and capacity added clear value from a technical standpoint, while one added that its strong links with the ministry of public health and other government actors was useful in allowing other CEWG members to 'piggyback' on this relationship and reduce bureaucratic hurdles to effective programming. In these respects, one CEWG member queried why UNICEF had not taken up working group leadership at an earlier stage, given their consistent presence from the start of the response. However, the increasing focus on public health issues after UNICEF took over the group was also felt by some CEWG members to reflect bias towards its own organisational priorities. While these members felt that a focus

on health communication was relevant, given the priorities of the response, and to some extent the natural result of the merger of the CEWG and health community engagement group, they also perceived it as linked to UNICEF's C4D programme focus and expertise. As a consequence, it was felt to have weakened the CEWG's focus on other aspects of CCE and led to missed opportunities in fostering links with complementary processes such as Linha Verde 1458 and PSEA. While respondents did not specifically mention the UNICEF CEWG coordinator's double-hatting with UNICEF's own C4D programming as an issue, it is likely that a clearer separation of responsibilities may have mitigated any issues of bias – as would a more explicit mandate and position within the coordination structure for the group as a whole.

Fewer actors discussed the roles played by OCHA and CDAC in leading the CEWG in the response's first two months. Some felt that the combination of a UN lead agency with an NGO co-lead allowed the two to play to each other's strengths. Having an OCHA lead was felt to be critical in getting the group off the ground and ensuring it could plug into the OCHA-led coordination structure, while CDAC supplemented these institutional links with strong contacts with local media actors and Portuguese-language skills. This was critical in, for example, fostering initial linkages between the humanitarian response and community radio stations. However, for several weeks CDAC was left to lead the group alone while OCHA staff cycled out of the country. This was problematic as CDAC was a comparatively unknown actor in Mozambique, and OCHA reportedly did not commit to legitimising the CDAC coordinator's presence in the absence of their OCHA counterpart (for example through hosting them as a secondee). As a consequence, this left the group without the necessary clout to gain traction with the UN-dominated coordination system at a critical moment in a fast-moving response. Ultimately, the short-term nature of the deployments of both co-leads was felt by some to be disruptive, since it led to a disjuncture

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19  This situation may also have been linked to the fact that, while WFP distribution partners were contractually obliged to use the hotline, engagement for other partners was voluntary and based on goodwill.

between the early efforts of the CEWG and its subsequent focus under UNICEF leadership.

## 4.3 Local participation in the collective approach to CCE

### 4.3.1 The consequence of low government buy-in

As discussed above, the collective approach to CCE was primarily confined to the international humanitarian system, with limited government ownership due to stretched resources and lack of a wider commitment to social accountability. This had significant impacts in terms of the consequent disjointed flow of information between the government, humanitarian actors and affected people. This was especially acute during the process of IDP resettlement, which was led by the government whose main priority was felt by humanitarian respondents to be speed rather than quality. While CEWG members participated in wider advocacy efforts with OCHA and the protection cluster to persuade the government to share more information with affected populations, the process ended up moving faster than agencies could adapt to. As one CEWG member explained, 'there simply was no engagement with the community … the government came into the camps and told them they would have to leave by tomorrow', leaving agencies scrambling to provide services as people were shifted to empty relocation sites. More broadly, another CEWG member reported that INGC staff had been reluctant to provide clear information to communities around their government aid entitlements due to the unpredictability of their supply pipeline, worrying about the risk of raising expectations if they were later unable to deliver on them.

As several interviewees explained, it is unreasonable to hold humanitarian service providers to account for a lack of government transparency. In the words of one INGO staff member, 'it's hard to be accountable when we don't know what's going on'. However, this situation highlights the limited scope of an internationally-driven collective approach to achieve such fundamental goals as ensuring people have enough information about their

rights and entitlements, or to make informed decisions, when the government as primary duty-bearer is unwilling or unable to be accountable to the citizens it is working to support.

Without better government engagement, efforts to implement collective and non-collective approaches to CCE in any future emergencies in Mozambique risk encountering similar issues, especially in smaller emergencies with a reduced international presence. In this respect, several respondents from national NGOs emphasised that the INGC remains the mandated institution for handling emergency response after international actors leave, and ultimately needs to be centred rather than bypassed in order to ensure any efforts at strengthening CCE bear fruit. Similarly, local leaders interviewed for this study unanimously highlighted sub-district administrations as the main information channel they used during emergencies, rather than aid actors or UN agencies. All of this points to a need for substantial investment in long-term advocacy and sensitisation with the government around CCE.

### 4.3.2 Limited involvement of local organisations

Local organisations were also reported to be largely missing as owners of the collective approach. While early efforts of the CEWG were instrumental in fostering links with community radio stations, this momentum does not appear to have been sustained; in general, presence and ownership of the CEWG by local NGOs or civil society organisations seems to have been relatively limited. As with other dynamics in the response, this was not a problem unique to the CEWG. A recent report on localisation within the Idai response concluded that it was 'dominated by international actors and the government and there was little to no initial support to empower local partners and include them' (Plan International and World Vision, 2019: 6). This was linked to a failure to adequately include local organisations in emergency preparedness – meaning there was 'no time' to support or engage them during the emergency itself – set against the wider context of a historically weak civil society in Mozambique.

Local organisations in Beira were directly affected by the cyclone itself in terms of both

infrastructure damage and the traumatic impact on their own staff, limiting their capacity to participate in the initial stages of the response. Several respondents also highlighted that, although Portuguese-speaking staff were involved in CEWG coordination from early in the response, language was still likely a barrier to entry, especially in the acute phase of the response where many of the group's members were internationals conversing primarily in English.

Local NGO staff interviewed for this study suggested that the lack of involvement of local organisations as equal stakeholders in the collective approach left a gap in terms of how efficiently information was flowing to and from affected populations. They asserted that their links with communities on the ground – particularly to community representative structures – could have been better utilised to enable more rapid information dissemination and ensure that communities were actually being listened to. One argued that international organisations needed to do more to 'involve those who experience or are close to someone who experienced the problem', while another felt that local organisations had an important role to play in helping international actors 'find out how to communicate with people through what the community are actually telling them, not just coming with solutions on how to do things'. The fact that some community radio stations struggled to get even basic information from the government during the early stages of the response suggests a more fully joined-up collective approach involving both government and local organisations could play a vital mediating role in fostering more effective cooperation across this divide. Finally, limited local involvement also raises broader questions about the sustainability of the collective approach as international actors reduce their presence.

# 5  Conclusion

## 5.1    What does the response to Cyclone Idai in Mozambique tell us about collective approaches to CCE?

In many respects, the dynamics of efforts to establish collective approaches to CCE in the Mozambique cyclone response mirror those of the wider response. Limited preparedness; having to set up rapidly in a fast-moving, sudden-onset emergency; lack of clarity in links between field- and capital-level coordination; limited local engagement and weak links with a parallel government response were common features of both. It is therefore important to recognise that the ability of any collective approach to CCE to achieve meaningful outcomes is largely linked to the health of the coordination system and wider political and contextual environment in which it is embedded. However, the Mozambique experience also offers a number of specific lessons.

1.  The space and resources devoted to CCE at the very start of the Mozambique response are promising evidence of an international humanitarian system that is becoming increasingly sensitised to the idea that CCE is an essential part of any humanitarian response. Efforts to set up inter-agency mechanisms to advance CCE objectives also suggest there is growing awareness that doing collective CCE makes sense.

2.  However, goodwill is not enough. Collective mechanisms can add up to less than the sum of their parts if the relationships between them and their integration into the overall humanitarian architecture are not properly structured. Leadership structures such as HCTs need to move beyond moral support toward proactive leadership that elaborates a clear commitment to collective action

and outlines what the outcomes of such an approach should be, and who should be responsible for achieving them.

3.  Collective approaches must be able to effectively identify and close gaps in their ability to achieve their objectives. Information and feedback need to flow through a range of active and passive mechanisms that make space for marginalised populations. This suggests that an overall lead actor is needed to spearhead the strategic direction of any approach to ensure integration and complementarity among the actors and mechanisms involved, as well as adequate resources and funding to achieve these ends.

4.  Preparedness and sustainability considerations are key. Without preparedness activities, setting up collective mechanisms for CCE from scratch is likely to be a complex process and overambitious efforts may be too late to have impact at the most critical time. This points to a need to carefully consider what design of collective approach is likely to add the most value when it responds to a sudden-onset, time-bound emergency like a cyclone. In contexts where natural hazard-related disasters are frequent, better preparedness – ideally involving development and DRR actors, as well as government and civil society –  has the potential to lower start-up barriers to collective approaches.

5.  A collective approach will be limited in its ability to work effectively around common objectives if it is unable to involve both local civil society and national governments. The former has the potential to offer understanding of and closer links to those affected, especially in cases where emergencies trigger a large influx of new actors with little prior experience

in the context. The latter remain critical in their role as primary duty bearers who are ultimately responsible for the rights and welfare of their populations. Pulling together these actors is likely to be extremely challenging at the start of a fast-moving emergency. Indeed, there is a need to think through ways to involve governments that allow a collective approach to adhere to humanitarian principles of neutrality in politicised environments. However, a vision for how to include these critical stakeholders in a collective approach must be in place relatively early on in order to open up the possibility for more productive engagement in the long run, especially in terms of linking back to preparedness activities.

## 5.2 Recommendations

While the humanitarian response to Cyclones Idai and Kenneth has largely transitioned towards early recovery, substantial unmet needs remain (OCHA, 2020a). Mozambique continues to be vulnerable to climatic shocks, as demonstrated by ongoing food security concerns in areas affected by cyclones and droughts in 2019 (FEWS Net, 2020), as well as heavy flooding affecting northern areas in January 2020 (OCHA 2020b). In addition, there has been a substantial escalation of violence in Cabo Delgado since the beginning of 2020 (ACAPS, 2020) and a new country flash appeal was launched to address the humanitarian consequences of Covid-19 (OCHA, 2020b).

At the time of writing, several positive steps have been taken by the humanitarian community in Mozambique to continue implementing collective approaches to CCE. In May 2020, a national-level cross-sectoral Community Engagement and Accountability to Affected Populations Working Group (CE/AAP WG) was established under the leadership of UNICEF, UNHCR and World Vision, while the Sofala-level CEWG has been re-activated. Linha Verde 1458 operations have also been extended until May 2021, with resourcing shared between WFP and other agencies. Based on the findings of this study, this

section presents recommendations on how the collective approach to CCE in Mozambique can be further strengthened and sustained in order to respond to current and emerging crises, as well as ensure better preparedness for future emergencies.

### 5.2.1 Strengthen support for a collective approach at senior humanitarian leadership level

In Mozambique, the HCT and other humanitarian leadership actors have played a valuable role in opening up space for CCE in general. However, they could do more to create buy-in and structure for an explicitly collective approach. Possible steps they could take in this regard include:

- Integrating explicit commitments to collective mechanisms for CCE in future strategy documents such as new or revised HRPs, or an HCT Compact, and ensuring these commitments are adequately resourced.
- Formalising the status and role of the newly formed national CE/AAP WG within the national coordination architecture.
- Ensuring that there are interfaces for the CE/AAP WG or its co-chairs to engage with senior-level decision-making processes in a structured manner, for example through standing agenda points at HCT or inter-cluster coordination meetings.

### 5.2.2 Ensure that the collective approach is well-integrated and holistic

With both a national level CE/AAP WG and an extended Linha Verde 1458 in place, there are now clear opportunities to address the fragmentation and gaps identified by this study as characteristic of the collective approach in Mozambique during the response's early stages. First, the CE/AAP WG should build on its ongoing actor-mapping process to develop a strategy to make the collective approach more holistic and inclusive, and fund-raise where necessary to support its implementation. In particular, the group should prioritise ways to systematically gather and analyse data from a wide range of sources, building on the complementary strengths and presence of multiple partners to do so where necessary.

This could include dedicated programming such as listening groups (Internews, 2017), or developing ways to systematically incorporate feedback into existing agency-level complaints and feedback mechanisms. These efforts may or may not require the support of an off-the-shelf information management platform depending on their scale or complexity.[20] In all cases, however, some form of dedicated information management capacity would greatly enhance the group's ability to make sense of information coming from multiple sources. Across these efforts, care should also be taken to ensure that marginalised groups – including those with limited access to technology – can access information and feedback channels tailored to their specific needs. In this respect, it will be critical to ensure that inclusion-focused organisations are proactively included in working group membership.

Second, with Linhe Verde 1458 now feeding more closely into the CE/AAP WG at national level, this group could support stronger collective ownership of the hotline by functioning as a steering committee.[21] This committee could involve a broader range of stakeholders in analysing and interpreting its data and embed the hotline and its findings in wider discussions around CCE strategy. Doing so could foster more collective ownership, and potentially encourage more buy-in among downstream partners by re-framing Linha Verde 1458 as a response-owned mechanism rather than a 'WFP' initiative.

Third, given that the main focus for CCE coordination in Mozambique has thus far been the Beira-level CEWG, the newly formed CE/AAP WG should work with counterparts in Beira to conduct a joint learning and consolidation exercise, to ensure that experience and resources developed during the Cyclone Idai response are effectively capitalised on at national level.

### 5.2.3 Foster stronger links with the Government of Mozambique

Ensuring the engagement of government actors could potentially strengthen the collective approach in a number of ways. First, it could help ensure that CCE activities under the CE/AAP WG complement and support government-led communication efforts, such as the newly launched Covid-19 information service run through the Ministry of Health's Alô Vida hotline. Second, it could offer an opportunity to strengthen the role of CCE in INGC's preparedness planning and clarify roles and responsibilities for government and civil society actors. Third and closely related, it could open up more space for long-term advocacy with government actors on the need for greater transparency and accountability during emergencies, in order to prevent a repeat of the opaque and non-consultative IDP returns process that took place after Cyclone Idai. Linha Verde 1458's early efforts to engage INGC on issues of corruption and PSEA already provide a blueprint in this regard.

However, it is also important to acknowledge that there are multiple government entry points for CCE as a cross-cutting issue – with the Ministry of Health regarding Covid-19 and other public health issues; with INGC regarding emergency preparedness and response; and with ICS for media and public messaging. A dedicated engagement strategy is one way in which different CCE/AAP WG members could leverage their respective relationships with different actors to achieve complementary objectives.

Ultimately, the CE/AAP WG should work toward government co-creation and ownership of key aspects of its work as a means to ensure buy-in and sustainability. However, this should be framed within a realistic appraisal of prevailing political conditions within Mozambique. As such, in the interim government engagement will likely need to remain one component of a multi-pronged approach.

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20  See Barbelet (2020) for an example of how WFP's Sugar CRM platform has been used to support the collective approach in the Central African Republic.

21  The need for a steering committee is one of the main recommendations of the Linha Verde 1458 sustainability study implemented in early 2020 (Linha Verde 1458, 2020a).

### 5.2.4 Facilitate greater involvement of local civil society

As highlighted in this study, the presence of local actors could significantly strengthen systematic efforts to reach and engage with affected populations in Mozambique. However, to explore this potential, CE/AAP WG members will have to take proactive steps to remove existing barriers to entry. The current practice of holding meetings primarily in Portuguese represents an important commitment in this regard. Building on this, the group should prioritise outreach and engagement with local NGO or media federations – such as the National Forum of Community Radios (FORCOM) – in order to maximise reach.

In addition, the group should identify alternative and more straightforward ways for local organisations to feed into technical and strategic discussions around CCE beyond coordination meeting attendance and mailing list membership. These could include passive approaches, such as using dedicated WhatsApp or other social media channels, as employed by local actors for independent coordination around CCE in Indonesia (Holloway and Fan, 2020), or more active efforts such as facilitated workshops with local organisations at subnational level, as used with faith-based actors in the Democratic Republic of Congo (Balibuno et al., 2020). In all cases, emphasis should be placed first on how best to foster locally owned spaces and processes for better CCE, and then on how to ensure they feed into formal CCE coordination mechanisms. Throughout these efforts, INGOs and UN agencies that are active in the group and work with local partners should identify ways to leverage their role as intermediaries to ensure their partners have an active stake in strategy and implementation and are adequately resourced to do so.

### 5.2.5 Strengthen links with DRR processes

Given both the identified gap in emergency preparedness around CCE and CCE shortcomings in DRR processes, the CE/AAP WG should ensure that engagement with DRR forms a specific component of its strategy. This should include working with INGC and the HCT to identify much more explicit processes for CCE in future contingency plans and ensure that the complementary roles of government and CCE actors are clearly identified in both preparedness and response phases. In addition, development-focused actors engaged in DRR programming should be represented in the group's membership. This would allow for more integrated support to CCE within DRR processes, such as the strengthening of early warning systems and risk awareness, as well as ensuring that DRR-focused mechanisms for community engagement, such as disaster preparedness committees, are not working in silos from humanitarian efforts.

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## Humanitarian Policy Group

The Humanitarian Policy Group is one of the world's leading teams of independent researchers and communications professionals working on humanitarian issues. It is dedicated to improving humanitarian policy and practice through a combination of high-quality analysis, dialogue and debate.

Cover photo: Aftermath of Cyclone Idai, Mozambique, March 2019. Credit: Denis Onyodi/IFRC/DRK/Climate Centre.

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