

# Inclusive Accountability to Affected Populations:



## Mainstreaming Accessible Communication for Vulnerability-Based Targeting in Mozambique

### Purpose

Alongside the Disability Inclusion (DI) Roadmap 2020-2022, WFP launched a multi-year research partnership with Trinity College Dublin (TCD) to develop an evidence base for effective programming that is inclusive of food insecure persons with disabilities. This short learning paper presents a concrete example of mainstreaming in action, by presenting the results of a successful collaboration between WFP Mozambique and TCD.

The paper outlines the process to develop, test, and implement accessible communication supports for use in affected communities, along with key advice for other country offices which wish to try a similar approach.

### Primary Audience

WFP personnel working in Protection; Research, Assessment and Monitoring; and Program.

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## Background

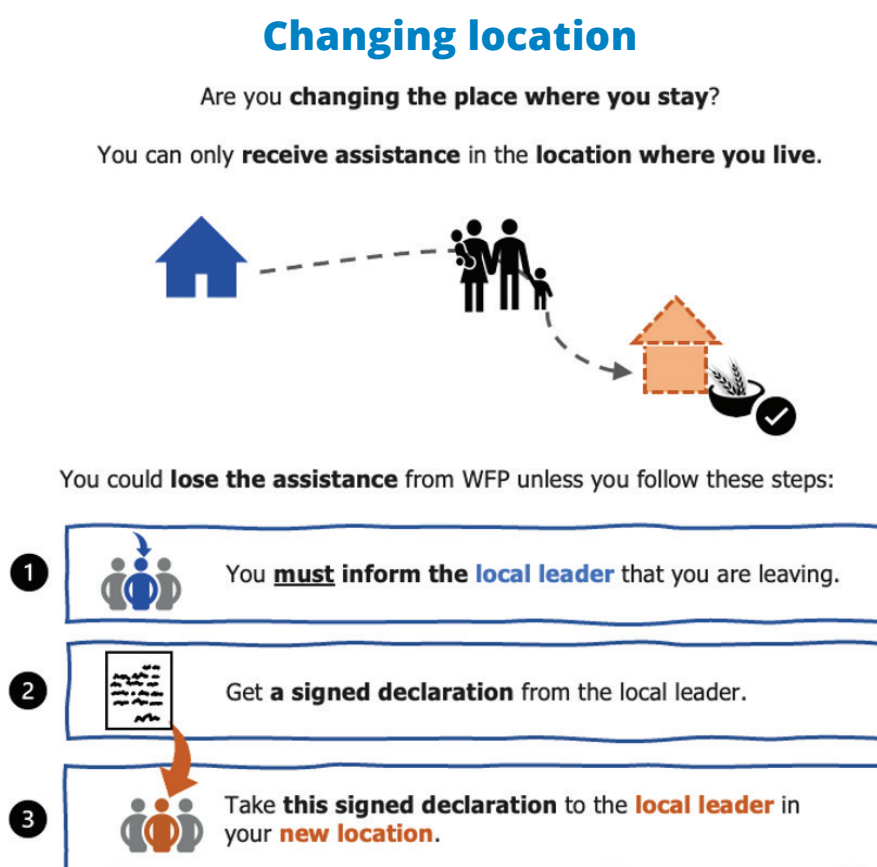
Food insecurity and poverty are widespread in Mozambique, with 80% of the population unable to afford an adequate diet.<sup>1</sup> Following the eruption of violence in 2017, almost 800,000 people are internally displaced in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, and extreme weather further contributes to ongoing insecurity. Alongside increasing need, decreasing resources necessitated the introduction of vulnerability-based targeting (VBT) to ensure WFP's life-saving assistance would reach the people in the most vulnerable situations. Given the potential for this new targeting approach to increase tensions in the community, it was vital that communities be clearly informed about the process and rationale.

15% of the world's population lives with a disability, and persons with disabilities are more at risk of living in a household experiencing multidimensional poverty, and food insecurity.<sup>2</sup> People with disabilities often face challenges to accessing both humanitarian assistance, and information about such assistance, as do indigenous populations and persons speaking minority languages.

Low literacy levels (e.g., reading, digital, numerical, and data literacy), are more common among women and girls, with literacy levels for Mozambican women less than half of that of men (28% vs 60%),<sup>3</sup> furthering the information gap and compounding exclusion for some groups.

TCD collaborated with WFP Mozambique to transform their key messages on targeting and provision of assistance into supported communication formats (Figure 1). These communication tools are designed to be more accessible to people with communication disabilities. People with communication disabilities make up a small proportion of any given population, but they are some of the most marginalized and excluded.<sup>4</sup> By prioritizing accessibility of information for this group, it also ensured accessibility for people experiencing many different types of barriers to accessing information. Reaching the furthest behind first is a key principle underpinning the SDG agenda, and WFP's mandate of 'Zero Hunger'. By prioritizing inclusion as a starting point, rather than an add-on, the result was increased access for all.

Figure 1. An example of the communication accessible tools



1 [WFP Mozambique Country Brief](#)

2 Mitra, S., Posarac, A. and Vick, B., 2013. Disability and poverty in developing countries: a multidimensional study. *World Development*, 41, pp.1-18.

3 USAID. Mozambique, Education, 2021. [\[Online\]](#)

4 Wickenden, M. (2013). Widening the SLP lens: How can we improve the wellbeing of people with communication disabilities globally. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 15(1), 14-20.

## 1. What was the gap/problem?

Amid high levels of need and displacement, insufficient resources necessitated the prioritization of assistance in Cabo Delgado, and WFP Mozambique implemented a vulnerability-based targeting approach. To increase acceptance and minimize community tensions, the protection team identified a need to ensure transparent communication with the community, in ways that different people could easily understand.

## 2. What solution did we test?

Through the global research partnership between WFP and Trinity College Dublin (TCD), researchers specialized in disability inclusion worked with Mozambique protection staff to develop communication supports, distilling complex messaging about WFP's targeting approach into simple language and accompanying graphics that could be more easily understood.

'Communication supports' are materials that are designed to help people access information, usually in the context of a conversation. These supports are typically used with people with communication disabilities – those who have difficulty understanding others or making themselves understood. Because they are based on evidence about what helps people to process information, they can be helpful to almost everyone if designed well.

### Some typical features of communication supports include:

- The use of **short sentences**. Each sentence should contain **one idea**.
- Emphasizing **key words**.
- Images that **support the main idea** of the sentence.
- A consistent style of **images**.

Communication supports can be more easily understood by people with low levels of literacy, limited education, minority language users, as well as those with cognitive or communication disabilities.

## 3. What did we learn?

**1. Simplicity is Difficult:** Conveying complex concepts such as 'vulnerability' is challenging. Work collaboratively, e.g., with community committees, to test the terms and images you use. You can see more detailed information on how we developed our materials in a forthcoming academic paper, under development (April 2022).

**2. Share Information Strategically:** Balance transparency of information with operational concerns. In Mozambique, we outlined the process of how vulnerability criteria would be established but did not share the actual selection criteria.

**3. Give Information to Get Information:** Having multiple local languages available (in Cabo Delgado there were 5) supported trust and buy-in among community committees, key messengers for WFP. During these consultations, the community also shared

useful information with WFP that was then incorporated into the communication tools.

### 4. Communication Support, not a Substitute:

Communication supports work best as part of a conversation. The conversation might be with individuals or with groups of affected people. Messages may need clarification, or may even change over time e.g., if assistance is reduced. To avoid causing confusion or rumors, do not rely on communication materials as a stand-alone information resource in the community.

**5. Provide Basic Training:** Practical training should be provided to support whoever will be using the materials and communicating the key messages. It is particularly important that follow-up training is provided to address challenges and ensure that users can confidently use the tools during interactions. In Mozambique, community committees requested role-play training to address common questions communities may ask.

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**The Power of Communication:** Community consultations in Mozambique revealed that many IDP households were living in borrowed accommodation and were regularly re-displaced as the owners returned. These families were experiencing gaps in assistance, as they were not registered in the new location. To address this, we updated accessible communication messages to include information about why and how to report a change of address (see Figure 1). As these materials roll-out, WFP Mozambique hopes that it will help to reduce exclusion errors and support continuity of assistance for households in vulnerable situations.

**6. Build for Your Environment:** In Mozambique, we laminated the communication support materials to protect them, but during field testing it was clear this wasn't enough given the harsh environment. To ensure posters could be tied to trees, draped over walls, or spread on the ground, key messages will be re-printed on highly durable banner material.



**7. Budget Appropriately:** In order to have materials ready for timely communication, you must consider the time and human resources needed, and the costs of tool translation and printing. Agreeing key messages may require coordination between colleagues, and in diverse settings multiple translators may need to be identified.



## 4. What is our advice for others?

**1. Relevance:** Expect accessible communication tools to be beneficial anywhere people face (unequal) barriers to accessing information. In Mozambique, the relevance of these tools extended beyond only supporting persons with communication disabilities, and similar applicability can be expected for other WFP activities and settings.

**2. Quality:** When developing your first set of materials, consider working with a professional with experience in supported communication (e.g., a speech and language therapist). If further language translation is needed, use a professional translator.

**3. Sustainability:** Support sustainability and cost-effectiveness by capacitating local development of these materials. Avoid the use of specialist software, e.g., the Mozambique tools were developed using Microsoft Word, and use images available under creative commons (i.e., free to use).

**4. Spill-Over Benefits:** Although it is too early in Mozambique's process to gather definitive evidence, initial learning suggests that accessible communication materials can have a significant positive impact on community engagement and trust. Accessible information about assistance may also reduce risks for vulnerable groups, and support medium-term decision making among the affected community.