

Evidence on internal displacement in Afghanistan: In search of dignified life, durable solutions, and sustainable development for the Afghan internally displaced people

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	9
Acronyms.....	10
List of Figures.....	11
Executive summary	13
1 Introduction: Research context, objectives, and methods.....	20
1.1 Introduction.....	20
1.2 Research context.....	21
1.2.1 Political context.....	21
1.2.2 Peace dialogue.....	22
1.1.1 Human development context.....	22
1.1.2 Institutional context	22
1.2 The five phases of internal displacement in Afghanistan – A brief history ...	23
1.2.1 Phase 1: PDPA rule and Soviet Invasion (1978–1989).....	23
1.2.2 Phase 2: Civil war (1989 - 1995)	23
1.2.3 Phase 3: Taliban rule (1996 – 2001)	24
1.2.4 Phase 4: US-led invasion (2001 – present).....	24
1.2.5 Phase 5: US-NATO transition and present.....	25
1.3 This study.....	26
1.3.1 Study objectives.....	27
1.4 Methods	28
1.4.1 Participant Recruitment and Sampling (both IDPs and staff)	29
1.4.2 Surveys.....	33
1.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews and ‘Storytelling’	33
1.4.4 Data Collection	33

1.4.5	Data Analysis.....	34
1.4.6	Limitations	34
2	Literature Review: Conceptualising dignity and the nexus between the dignity of internally displaced people and sustainable development goals.....	35
2.1	Conceptualising dignity	35
2.2	The nexus between the dignity of internally displaced people and sustainable development goals.....	39
3	Causes of internal displacement and the journeys of displaced people in Afghanistan	42
3.1	Chapter overview	42
3.2	Causes of displacement.....	42
3.2.1	War, conflict, and violence	44
3.2.2	Drought, famine, and natural disasters.....	47
3.2.3	Other causes of displacement	47
3.3	The journeys and experiences of conflict-induced internally displaced people	49
3.3.1	Chaotic evacuation	51
3.3.2	Plight.....	51
3.3.3	Response.....	52
3.3.4	Return and re-settlement.....	55
3.3.5	Long-term settlement and integration.....	56
3.4	The journeys and experiences of disaster-induced internally displaced people	57
3.4.1	Deciding to migrate	59
3.4.2	Transition and travel.....	59
3.4.3	Response.....	59
3.4.4	Return and re-settlement.....	61

3.4.5	Long-term settlement and integration.....	62
3.5	Chapter summary	63
3.6	Key findings	63
4	Locations and socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, and the impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing.....	64
4.1	Chapter overview	64
4.2	Location of internally displaced people	64
4.2.1	Types of accommodation	65
4.3	Socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people	65
4.3.1	Poverty and livelihoods	66
4.3.2	Access to basic services and provisions.....	67
4.3.3	Jobs in displacement.....	73
4.3.4	Incomes.....	76
4.3.5	Main barriers to improving life in displacement	77
4.4	The impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing.....	77
4.4.1	Physical impact of displacement	78
4.4.2	Psychological impact of displacement.....	79
4.4.3	Experiences of violence in the host community.....	80
4.5	Chapter summary	82
4.6	Key findings	83
5	Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and the impact of humanitarian assistance on dignity in displacement.....	84
5.1	Chapter overview	84
5.2	Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people	84
5.2.1	Basic needs	85

5.2.2	Prosperity and wealth.....	86
5.2.3	Self-reliance and self-sufficiency	86
5.2.4	Protection of life, home, and family.....	87
5.2.5	Peace, safety, and security	88
5.2.6	Freedom and rights.....	88
5.2.7	Mutual respect and compassion	89
5.2.8	Religion and following Islamic values	89
5.2.9	Education	90
5.3	Conceptualisations of dignity among humanitarian aid workers	91
5.3.1	Respect of IDPs culture, religion, and values	92
5.3.2	Human rights	92
5.4	The impact of humanitarian assistance on the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan.....	92
5.5	Chapter summary	101
5.6	Key findings	102
6	Humanitarian actors' experiences of working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan: Challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance.....	103
6.1	Chapter overview	103
6.2	Challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance.....	103
6.2.1	Working with limited resources	104
6.2.2	Corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination	105
6.2.3	Disruption by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders	106
6.2.4	Identifying IDPs and those in need.....	106
6.2.5	Cultural and language differences.....	107
6.2.6	Insecurity and the politicisation of aid	107
6.2.7	Potential solutions: reaching those in need.....	109

6.3	Gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance	111
6.3.1	Internally displaced people’s most important needs and requirements.	111
6.3.2	Consideration of dignity in the provision of humanitarian aid	113
6.3.3	Incorporation of internally displaced people’s views and needs into humanitarian aid programmes.....	114
6.3.4	The treatment of internally displaced people during the provision of humanitarian aid	116
6.3.5	Durable solutions and the facilitation of self-reliance among internally displaced people.....	117
6.4	Chapter summary	118
6.5	Key findings	119
7	Dignity in humanitarian action: The call for increased support, durable solutions, and sustainable development to improve the lives and preserve the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan	121
7.1	Chapter overview	121
7.2	The role of the government and humanitarian aid organisations in protecting the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan.....	121
7.2.1	Recommendation 1: Provide aid to those who deserve it	125
7.2.2	Recommendation 2: Fair, systematic, and transparent distribution of aid	125
7.2.3	Recommendation 3: Inform IDPs about available aid and how to get it .	126
7.2.4	Recommendation 4: Ensure aid is based on IDPs needs.....	126
7.2.5	Recommendation 5: Improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations/programmes.....	126
7.2.6	Recommendation 6: Consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid.....	127
7.2.7	Recommendation 7: Show respect and kindness to IDPs when distributing aid	127

7.3	The call for increased support for internally displaced people in Afghanistan	128
7.4	Durable solutions and sustainable development	130
7.4.1	Solution 1: Provision of land and shelter.....	132
7.4.2	<i>Solution 2: Construction of clinics, schools, and capacity building centres</i>	133
7.4.3	Solution 3: Construction of roads, power stations, and factories.....	133
7.4.4	Solution 4: Restoration of houses, roads, and land	134
7.4.5	Solution 5: Agricultural assistance.....	134
7.4.6	Solution 6: Education.....	134
7.4.7	Solution 7: Job opportunities	135
7.4.8	Solution 8: Cash-based aid and capital for business opportunities	136
7.4.9	Solution 9: Skills development/training	137
7.4.10	Solution 10: Peacebuilding.....	137
7.5	Return and re-settlement.....	138
7.6	Long-term settlement and integration	140
7.7	Chapter summary	141
7.8	Key findings	142
8	Conclusions and Recommendations.....	143
8.1	Chapter overview	143
8.2	Research objectives.....	143
8.3	Summary of the research findings	143
8.3.1	Chapter 3: Causes of internal displacement and the journeys of displaced people in Afghanistan.....	143
8.3.2	Chapter 4: Locations and socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, and the impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing.....	144

8.3.3	Chapter 5: Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and the impact of humanitarian assistance on dignity in displacement.....	145
8.3.4	Chapter 6: Humanitarian actors’ experiences of working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan: Challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance	146
8.3.5	Chapter 7: Dignity in humanitarian action: The call for increased support, durable solutions, and sustainable development to improve the lives and preserve the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan	146
8.4	Recommendations for policy and practice	148
9	References	149
10	Appendix 1	153

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Acronyms

AFN	The Afghan Afghani
ALP	Accelerated Learning Programme
CESR	Centre for Economic and Social Rights
CFS	Child Friendly Space
CSO	Civil society organisation
DAESH	al-Dawla al-Islamiya fi al-Iraq wa al-Sham
GBV	Gender-based violence
GIRoA	The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
HDI	Human Development Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IDPs	internally displaced people
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
INGO	international non-governmental organisation
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (latterly, Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant)
MoE	Ministry of Education
NATO	The North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSP	National Solidarity Program
PDPA	People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan
SDGs	sustainable development goals
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USD	United States Dollar

List of Figures

Title of the Figure	Page no.
Figure 1.1 The five phases of displacement in Afghanistan from 1978 to 2020	18
Figure 1.2 The rise of displacement in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2018	22
Figure 1.3: Participants in the IDP survey disaggregated by province and gender	26
Figure 1.4: Participants in the staff survey disaggregated by province and gender	27
Figure 1.5 What is your role in working with internally displaced people in the field?	28
Figure 1.6 Internally displaced people's community group membership	29
Figure 1.7 Internally displaced people's jobs in their home communities	29
Figure 3.1 Survey participants disaggregated by rural and urban areas and their cause of displacement	40
Figure 3.2 Reasons given by conflict-induced internally displaced people regarding why they did or did not feel welcome in their host communities	52
Figure 3.3 The suggestions of conflict-induced internally displaced people regarding what would help them return to their place of origin	53
Figure 3.4 Reasons given by disaster-induced internally displaced people regarding why they did or did not feel welcome in their host communities	58
Figure 3.5 The suggestions of disaster-induced internally displaced people regarding what would help them return to their place of origin	59
Figure 4.1 Urban and rural divide of internally displaced people in Afghanistan	61
Figure 4.2 Type of settlement	61
Figure 4.3 Types of accommodation that IDPs are living in	62
Figure 4.4 Male and female internally displaced people report the barriers to receiving an adequate education for male internally displaced children in Afghanistan	68
Figure 4.5 Male and female internally displaced people report the barriers to receiving an adequate education for female internally displaced children in Afghanistan	69
Figure 4.6 Employment status of internally displaced people	70
Figure 4.7 Barriers to gaining employment for internally displaced people in Afghanistan	72
Figure 4.8 The jobs that internally displaced people have indicated they can do if they had the opportunity	72
Figure 4.9 Income per day in displacement	73
Figure 4.10 Sources of income for internally displaced people	73
Figure 4.11 The barriers that internally displaced people face when trying to improve their lives in displacement	74

Figure 5.1 The meanings of dignity in displacement according to humanitarian actors and senior staff working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan	88
Figure 5.2 The perceptions of internally displaced people regarding their treatment by humanitarian actors and staff during the provision of assistance	90
Figure 5.3 Reasons why internally displaced people felt ignored during receipt of humanitarian assistance	91
Figure 5.4 The perceptions of internally displaced people regarding the adequacy of the assistance they have received from humanitarian and government organisations	91
Figure 6.1 Solutions offered by humanitarian and government staff to overcome the challenges associated with the provision of assistance and reach IDPs who are most in need	107
Figure 6.2 Humanitarian and government staff members' responses to the question "does the aid and humanitarian assistance provided cover internally displaced people's most important needs?"	109
Figure 6.3 The disparity between the perceptions of staff and internally displaced people regarding whether humanitarian assistance covers internally displaced people's most important needs	109
Figure 6.4 Humanitarian and government staff members' responses to the question "does your organisation consider the dignity of IDPs when planning, designing, and implementing aid programmes?"	110
Figure 6.5 The disparity between the perceptions of staff and internally displaced people regarding the extent to which dignity is considered in the provision of humanitarian assistance	111
Figure 6.6. Humanitarian actors and staff members' responses to the question: "does your organisation take IDPs' opinions into account during the design and implementation of aid programmes?"	112
Figure 6.7 Humanitarian actors and staff members' responses to the question: "do you think humanitarian staff in Afghanistan treat the internally displaced people with respect?"	113
Figure 6.8 Humanitarian actors and staff members' perceptions regarding coordination between organisations, funding, flexibility of programmes, and durable solutions	114
Figure 7.1 Internally displaced people's responses to the question "what would make you more optimistic about the future?"	121
Figure 7.2 Examples of durable solutions for internally displaced people developed and implemented by humanitarian and government staff	128
Figure 7.3 Internally displaced people's responses to the question "Do you want to return to your place of origin?"	135
Figure 7.4 Barriers preventing internally displaced people from returning to their places of origin	136
Figure 7.5 Internally displaced people's responses to the question "Do you want to return to your place of origin?"	137

Executive summary

Introduction

This research offers a detailed account of Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) experiences of violence in Afghanistan and how/whether this has contributed to the loss of their dignity. The field research highlights what realistic changes would make a positive difference to leading safe and peaceful lives for IDPs in Afghanistan. In essence they need to be treated with dignity, justice and equality and be supported out of poverty and to re-build their lives and positive communities. In doing so, it is necessary to recognise and address issues that are important to the dignity and well-being of those being helped. It is thus imperative to understand what the IDPs perceive as dignity (or its loss) and how it underpins their calls for supporting their future. The main objectives of this research focused on understanding:

- causes of displacement and IDPs displacement journeys;
- the socioeconomic conditions IDPs are living in, and the impact of displacement on their physical and psychological wellbeing;
- conceptualisations of dignity from both IDPs and humanitarian aid actors and government workers
- the impact of both displacement and of assistance on the dignity of IDPs;
- actors' experiences of providing assistance;
- ways in which the dignity of IDPs might be improved; and
- how to begin to deliver durable solutions which are meaningful to IDPs.

Dignity, as defined by the IDPs, is central to this study (compare chapter 2 with chapter 5). This research focuses on the voices of the IDPs in setting out their past journeys (chapters 1 and 3) and future aspirations (chapter 7) and how best to support them now (chapters 4, 5 and 6) and to improve their long-term well-being (Chapter 7). This research adds to the existing dignity and displacement scholarship by:

(1) providing a deeper, more nuanced approach to the conceptualisation of dignity by taking account of different perspectives both from within the affected community and from those working to support them, such as donors, INGOs, and government;

(2) taking into account the conceptualization of dignity from the perspectives of the IDPs, including the cultural, linguistic, geographic and religious aspects which may have formed those values and ideals of dignity;

(3) offering an in-depth understanding of the situation, context and experiences from different perspectives, from the viewpoint of: displaced people (both men and women from various areas of Afghanistan); field staff working directly in day-to-day operation in the affected communities; senior members of international organisations; and local or national government representatives who might provide strategic and policy insights.

Background

Afghanistan has been mired in 42 years of protracted conflicts and frequent climate emergencies, including droughts and flooding. The ongoing conflicts can be traced back to the

beginning of the civil war that started in 1978 between the anti-communist guerrillas – the Mujahideen - and the Afghan Marxist government, aided by Soviet occupying forces from 1979 to 1989. The overthrow of the Marxist government in 1992 (*Afghan War 1978–1992*, n.d.) and the consequent infighting among the ruling Mujahideen groups led to the rise of the Taliban whose Islamic Emirate was toppled by the US-led NATO invasion of the country in 2001. All these events and a continued war between the NATO-supported Afghan government and the Taliban have severely limited humanitarian access throughout Afghanistan, but particularly in the most affected areas in the Eastern and Southern regions (Tronc, 2018). During the last 42 years, displacement has been a constant occurrence and has become a complex, acute, fluid, and protracted phenomena driven by a variety of complex factors including violence, drought, and natural disasters (such as floods, earthquakes, and avalanches). The history of forced displacement in Afghanistan can be split into five phases, each connected to a ruling authority, faction, war, and external interventions in Afghanistan. The years 1978 to 1989 were marked by a pro-Soviet Marxist coup followed by Soviet invasion (phase 1), with subsequent civil war emerging following the withdrawal of Soviet forces (phase 2). From 1996 to 2000, the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, maintaining social order through tyrannical means of social control (phase 3), which led to a prolonged period of US-led interventions (phase 4). Finally, 2014 onwards marks a period of gradual transition of security from US-led NATO forces to the Afghan government (phase 5). The conflicts and other factors (such as acute droughts and natural disasters resulting in the loss of lives, livelihood, poor food security and loss of livestock) have contributed to a severe, hostile and deteriorating humanitarian situation, widespread internal displacement and to the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Afghans. As of December 2018, 2.7 million Afghan refugees have been registered by UNHCR, and approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons have been registered (UNHCR, 2018). However, the numbers of unregistered refugees and IDPs are likely to be much higher. According to Filippo *Grandi* – Commissioner of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'There are currently some 2.5 million registered refugees from Afghanistan globally, while another 4.8 million have been displaced within the country...' (Reuters 2021). Most displaced people live in major neighbouring regions and large cities, such as Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz, Mazar-e-Sharif and Kabul, which have a higher than average employment and business prospects than other areas. In Afghanistan, the majority of displaced people live in informal settlements and non-official camps near or among the local communities. The most recent Human Development Report (2019) ranks Afghanistan among the lowest countries in terms of human development and gender equality (in 2018 it had a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.496 and in 2020 it was 0.511). The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), fraught with internal political divisions, conflict and corruption, has not established effective state institutions and has been largely unable to provide adequate services during the last 18 years (Zyck, 2012). Aid organisations have been actively and independently leading aid distribution throughout the country and have acted as independent and parallel structures to the government. Aside from emergency aid provided by the international community, social welfare in Afghanistan is traditionally structured on family, tribal and ethnic lines, and therefore there is a local custom of support in the community. Indeed, while there is no public welfare system, people in the community usually rely on these traditional safety nets through community structures and social relations to provide them with support when it is necessary. Where families are displaced, they are uprooted from these traditional sources of community provision and

many are left without support, and a similar outcome can arise where too many people in a community need such support.

Methods

Due to the security situation in Afghanistan the researchers were not permitted to collect field data in person. So, all data was collected from a distance either via telephone or using tablets with the assistance from local research facilitators in Afghanistan. To ensure a full range of experiences and stories, the research sample drew on the insights and experiences of displaced people, humanitarian field staff, and senior professionals (humanitarian and political). The sample was drawn from selected provinces, regions, and cities of Afghanistan. This research adopted a mixed methods approach comprising:

- two surveys (one with the IDPs and the other with staff members working at the frontline of humanitarian organizations) primarily designed to facilitate quantitative analysis of the issues related to displacement; experiences of violence, and the loss of dignity.
- semi-structured interviews (with IDPs, front-line workers, professionals, policy-makers, NGOs and with other members of civil society) which explored the reasons for displacement/migration, the journeys of the IDPs, the meaning of dignity for IDPs, the ways in which loss of dignity had been experienced, the strategies of change/adaptation both group and individual and the medium to long-term solutions each group envisaged.
- narrative/storytelling unstructured interviews which provide another, deeper, layer of understanding from the migrants/IDPs perspective.

IDP participants and field staff members (working at the frontline of humanitarian organizations) were purposefully chosen from specific areas, ensuring a cross-section of types of settlement (camps, settlements, or mixed with host-communities in both urban or semi-urban areas), types of environment (urban and semi-urban) and different parts of Afghanistan. Data was collected from 8 provinces: Kabul; Nangarhar; Paktya; Mazar; Kunduz; Herat; Kandahar; and Badakhshan. This ensured that data from across key affected regions of Afghanistan was captured. The interviews with senior staff were also purposive, they were deliberately chosen for the insight they could give to the situation and any possible solutions from a policy or strategic perspective. Before agreeing to be involved in either surveys or interviews all participants were provided with a detailed information sheet enabling them to give informed consent (or refuse to be involved).

The IDP survey was conducted in one of the local languages, Pashtu or Dari (dependent on the preference of the IDP) while the frontline staff survey was conducted in English. Each survey included both closed and open questions concerning issues about why IDPs were displaced, what sort of aid they could access, their assessment of the aid available to them and how it was distributed, their ideas of dignity and whether the dignity of IDPs was respected and their hopes for improvement and for a sustainable future. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to facilitate a deeper and more nuanced understanding of violence, their ideas of dignity and whether and how the dignity of IDPs had been respected or lost, coping strategies, recovery, basic services, emergency services and durable solutions.

All interviews were carefully transcribed in the original language, those in Dari and Pashtu were then carefully translated. At the translation stage, local Afghan experts were hired to ensure that both the verbal and non-verbal contexts of discussions - including vocalisation of the language and discourse - were accurately translated and to ensure that the translation captured nuances in meaning. Surveys were analysed using Tableau software, qualitative interviews were analysed using thematic analysis via Nvivo.

Key findings

Tracking the experiences of the IDPs in Afghanistan, this research delivers a clearer understanding of how displacements happen and are experienced; create the knowledge necessary to increase and sustain communities' resilience to violence, conflict and emergencies; explore practical solutions to provide pathways to healthier and safer lives; and prevent further internal displacements and migrations. This research contends that lasting and meaningful sustainable development must embrace a deep understanding from the perspectives of those in need, respect for their ideas of a 'good' life and a future. Through recognition of and investment in both physical needs and self-worth of individuals they have the best chance to prosper and achieve their full potential. In that endeavour, this research draws on the lived experiences of the IDPs in Afghanistan who conceptualise dignity in multiple different ways, specifically in terms of:

- peace, safety and security;
- access to their basic needs (such as food, water, and shelter);
- prosperity and wealth;
- self-reliance and self-sufficiency;
- protection of their lives, homes, and families;
- freedom and rights;
- mutual respect and compassion;
- religion and Islamic values; and
- education

The research found that the majority of IDPs had become displaced for multiple reasons, including war, natural disasters and poverty, and some had been displaced multiple times. However, the main cause of displacement for the IDPs who took part in this study was conflict and war. Most war-induced IDPs experienced severe violence and traumatic events before and/or during displacement, and many are unable to return to their places of origin due to ongoing conflict, meaning that they remain displaced for many years. Interestingly, while many IDPs suffered loss of dignity during some or all stages of their displacement journeys, others stated that they had managed to preserve their fundamental dignity in spite of the violence and poverty that they had suffered.

Findings of this study also demonstrate that the Afghan IDPs struggle to meet their most basic daily needs, and are in dire need of adequate shelter and sustainable housing for protection of their lives as well as for their dignity. In addition, it is clear that IDPs struggle to access basic services such as healthcare and education due to both poverty and a lack of available/nearby facilities. Female displaced children face additional cultural barriers to accessing education, for example armed groups and community leaders often prevent girls from attending school. Income-generating opportunities are scarce and sustainable employment opportunities are

almost non-existent. While IDPs are largely safe from conflict or war in displacement, they are concerned about the lack of job opportunities as they are living in extreme poverty and are unable to provide for their families. While Afghan government institutions lack sufficient resources to meet the needs of the IDPs, humanitarian aid plays an important role. However, there remain various challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance, including:

- working with limited budgets;
- corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations;
- disruption by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders;
- identifying IDPs and those most in need;
- cultural and language differences;
- war, insecurity and the politicisation of aid; and
- a focus on short-term provision with little or no longer-term strategic planning (little focus on finding permanent dwellings or planning new employment opportunities so IDPs can sustain themselves), this leaves IDPs in poverty and need over extended periods.

This study seeks to make positive changes to people's lives allowing them to lead safe and peaceful lives where they are treated with dignity, justice and equality, and therefore, recommend seven ways in which government and humanitarian staff can protect IDPs dignity even in short-term planning and provision of assistance:

- (1) ensure that aid is provided to those who need it;
- (2) distribute aid fairly, systematically, and transparently;
- (3) inform IDPs about the aid available and how to access it;
- (4) ensure aid is based on IDPs real needs;
- (5) improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations;
- (6) always consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid; and
- (7) always show respect and compassion to IDPs when providing assistance.

However, possibly the most important aspects of the findings are those concerning medium to long-term solutions (see chapter 7). For IDPs dignity is real and in need of protection, it is multi-dimensional and is shaped by their religion, culture and lived experiences. In discussing dignity, the IDPs agreed with humanitarian staff and government workers that dignity had to encompass respect and rights in the distribution of basic needs such as shelter, food and water. However, IDPs had a more nuanced and complex idea of dignity and frequently pointed to the ongoing war and lack of security as aspects which undermined their dignity and prevented its re-instatement. Alongside this they spoke about the dependency on emergency aid as being undignified and saw the lack of long-term sustainable development as an aspect that impacted negatively on their physical and psychological well-being but also on their dignity (especially feelings of self-dignity or self-worth).

IDPs perceptions of dignity	Humanitarian staff and government representatives' perceptions of dignity for IDPs
Peace, safety and security	Organisational rules
Prosperity and wealth	Respect and human rights
Self-reliance and self-sufficiency	Provision of emergency aid for necessities
Protection of their lives, homes and families	
Freedom and rights	
Mutual respect and compassion	
Religion and Islamic values	
Education	
Respect and human rights	
Provision of emergency aid for necessities	

It is around these longer-term goals that IDPs and aid agencies, even government respondents differed most powerfully. If humanitarian workers or government representatives acknowledged longer-term goals or sustainable development it was usually to state that it was not possible. For IDPs these longer-term more sustainable goals were essential to restore their dignity they saw the focus on short-term solutions as problematic. Overall, this research found that the focus on short-term solutions was damaging to the future of IDPs and of Afghanistan:

- Short-termism prevents long-term resettlement and re-integration.
- Short-termism sustains a dependency culture and diminishes the IDPs' dignity.
- Short-termism prevents Afghanistan advancing their sustainable development goals

Sustainable development in the form of long-term peace, job opportunities, proper housing and new supportive communities with education and health care was essential for IDPs dignity. In order to enjoy a long-term solution, they all recognized that peace and security were essential but they also called for development support in ten other areas:

1. provision of land and sustainable shelter
2. construction of clinics, schools, capacity building centres
3. construction of roads, factories, and power stations
4. restoration of houses, roads, and land
5. agricultural assistance
6. education for all children (girls and boys)
7. the provision of employment opportunities
8. capital for business investment
9. skills development and training
10. Peacebuilding

This report insists that IDPs were clearly making the following powerful points:

- Sustainable development must enable the IDPs a dignified and self-sufficient future.
- Continued displacement is a consequence of war AND contributes to its continuation: it makes IDPs vulnerable to be recruited as foot soldiers by ALL parties to the ongoing war.
- Short-term solutions contribute to increased local conflicts linked to the continued war.

The overarching message is that:

Sustainable development is necessary for both dignity and for a lasting peace.

1 Introduction: Research context, objectives, and methods

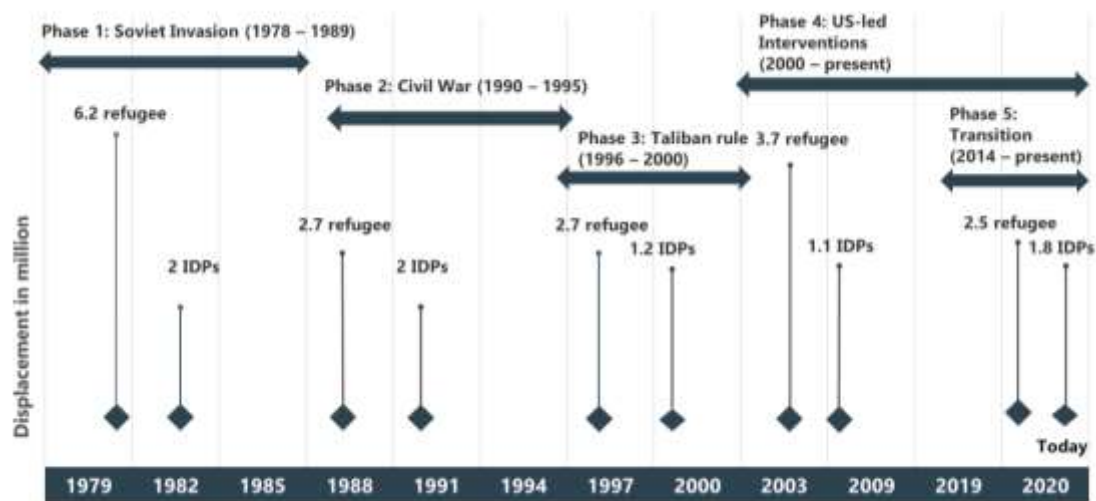
1.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the history of displacement that the Afghans have been struggling with and suffering from for over 41 years. It recounts the problematic era, from 1978 to 2020—one of the most fragile and critical periods in Afghan history. As has been done in earlier studies the 41-year period is separated into five phases (Figure 1.1). These phases are based on ruling authority, faction, war, and external interventions in Afghanistan. The years 1978 to 1989 were marked by a pro-Soviet Marxist coup followed by Soviet invasion (phase 1), with subsequent civil war emerging following the withdrawal of Soviet forces (phase 2). From 1996 to 2000, the Taliban ruled Afghanistan, inhabiting and controlling the country using violence and force (phase 3), which led to a prolonged period of US-led interventions (phase 4). Finally, 2014 onwards marks a period of gradual transition of security from US-led NATO forces to the Afghan government (phase 5).¹ For a more detailed overview of the assessment see the discussion below and Appendix 1 (compiled by Schmeidl, 2019).

Despite the evidence of periodic displacement in the time of both King Amir Abdul-Rahman Khan (1880 - 1901) and Zahir Shah (1933 - 1973), the present report does not cover these earlier periods because the reason for displacement was very different. Much of the displacement - especially during King Zahir Shah era - was not forced: it was based on the government's policy of land reform that involved allocation of arable public lands to landless citizens. As a result, hundreds of families voluntarily moved to northern and western Afghanistan with vast fertile land and water resources. During the last 41 years, displacement has become a complex, acute, fluid, and protracted phenomena driven by a variety of complex factors including violence, drought, and natural disasters (such as floods, earthquakes, and avalanches). We focus on this era and discuss the five phases of significant internal displacement in detail below.

¹ Figure 1.1 simplifies some periods to aid understanding but some of the complexity is explained here: firstly, Phase 1 should be split into the pro-soviet Marxist Coup (April 1978 - 1979) and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979 – 1989) happened in December 1979, while the pro-Soviet Marxist coup took place in April 1978. Phase 4 might be split into 2001-2002 US-led intervention; 2002 – 2006 Post-Bonn period; 2007 – 2014 – Deterioration of Security. This then leads into our phase 5 Security Transition 2015 – present (see Schmeidl, 2019).

Figure 1.1 The five phases of displacement in Afghanistan from 1978 to 2020²



1.2 Research context

Before setting out a detailed discussion and overview of the phases, it is important to set the background in which the research was conducted. Afghanistan has been mired in 41 years of protracted conflicts and frequent climate emergencies, including droughts and flooding. It has been a failed state since the beginning of the civil war that started in 1978 between the anti-communist guerrillas and the Afghan communist government, aided by Soviet troops. This led to the overthrow of the government in 1992 (*Afghan War 1978–1992*, n.d.). The rise of the insurgent groups, such as the Majahiddin, Taliban and, more recently ISIS have limited humanitarian access throughout Afghanistan, but particularly in the most affected areas in the Eastern and Southern regions (Tronc, 2018). The most notorious violent conflict has been firstly, that between the Taliban on the one side and the US and the Afghan government on the other and secondly, that between the DAESH and Taliban on the one hand and the US and the Afghan government on the other. These and other factors have contributed to severe, hostile and deteriorating humanitarian situations, widespread internal displacement and to the emigration of hundreds of thousands of Afghans. As of December 2018, 2.7 million Afghan refugees have been registered by UNHCR, and approximately 1.8 million internally displaced persons have been registered (UNHCR, 2018). This situation has been exacerbated by a series of acute droughts and natural disasters resulting in the loss of lives, livelihood, poor food security and loss of livestock.

1.2.1 Political context

The northern, eastern and southern parts of Afghanistan have experienced continuous violent conflict, whereas central and the central highland region have been able to establish relatively stable regional government. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), fraught with internal political divisions, conflict and corruption, has not established functioning state institutions and has been largely unable to provide a functioning services during the last 18 years (Zyck, 2012). Aid organisations have been

² *Ibid* – figure 1.1. is intended as a clear and simplified breakdown of the main phases of displacement, for the detail please see the text as when things are simplified they lose some of the important information.

actively and independently leading aid distribution throughout the country and have acted as independent and parallel structures to the government. In Eastern parts of Afghanistan the GIRoA has regained control of major regions, cities and towns from Taliban and ISIS but, even here, it needs to establish a constructive relationship with local communities and create localised service delivery which will support long-term stability.

1.2.2 Peace dialogue

At the end of February 2020, following more than eighteen months of peace negotiations between the United States and Taliban an agreement was reached which included a partial ceasefire. This agreement included prisoner releases and plans for an intra-Afghan negotiations concerning a permanent and comprehensive cease-fire and a plan for the future of Afghanistan. In September 2020 the first steps towards the intra-Afghan negotiations started with peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban.

1.1.1 Human development context

The most recent Human Development Report (2019) ranks Afghanistan among the lowest countries in terms of human development and gender equality (in 2018 it had a Human Development Index (HDI) value of 0.496) and it had a particularly poor record on schooling. However, according to the HDI human development in Afghanistan is improving, between 1990 and 2018 it's HDI value increased from 0.298 to 0.496, an increase of 66.4 percent (UNDP, 2019).

1.1.2 Institutional context

The 41-year-long war deteriorated institutional capacity to deliver the most basic services, such as health, education, and other social welfare services aimed at citizen well-being and protection. The government's capacity to properly register and provide protection to displaced people has been significantly strained. International humanitarian organizations largely provide basic assistance in order to protect life. Aside from emergency aid provided by the international community, social welfare in Afghanistan is traditionally structured on family and tribal hierarchies, there is a local custom of support in the community. Therefore, while there is no public welfare system, people in the community usually rely on these traditional safety nets through community structure and social relations to provide them with support when it is necessary. Where families are displaced they are uprooted from these traditional sources of community provision and many are left without support, a similar outcome can arise where too many people in a community need such support. Building on the National Solidarity Program (NSP), Afghanistan has commissioned a new agreement with the international community to establish a framework for realizing the government's vision of self-reliance for local communities. They have also set up partnerships between the Afghan state and the thousands of communities in the country. The Citizen Charter is a government initiative funded by donors and aiming to provide every community with basic services, based on the community prioritization. The Charter highlights inclusive development and accountability with a focus on vulnerable groups, such as IDPs, women, returnees, and the poor. The Charter is the foundation for the Afghan government's self-reliance vision to provide every village and city with basic services, united community-level financial reporting and budgeting so they can oversee their own development goals, monitor the quality of service delivery, and report grievances to

authorities and civil society. Once it is fully operational it will give a voice to vulnerable groups such as women, IDPs, returnees, and the poor (GIRoA, 2020).

1.2 The five phases of internal displacement in Afghanistan – A brief history

1.2.1 Phase 1: PDPA rule and Soviet Invasion (1978–1989)

According to the World Peace Foundation (2015), a minimum of 500,000 people lost their lives during this period (WPF, 2015). In April 1978, the pro-Marxist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) brought down the nationalist government led by President Mohammad Daoud through a military coup (britannica, 2019). However, within short order, the new pro-Soviet Marxist government in Afghanistan drew the anger of other Afghan political groups – initially supported by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the USA, which launched attacks to unseat the regime (WPF, 2015). As the pro-Soviet regime was in danger of collapse, it asked Soviet military forces for support. The arrival of around 100,000 Red Army soldiers in Afghanistan led a more fully-fledged war between them and the Western-supported Mujahideen (holy warrior).

The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) invested in a 10-year multi-billion dollar project aimed to support the anti-communist Mujahideen rebels, in what Galster (2001) called the CIA's largest and most successful covert operation. According to the National Security Archives (Galster, 2001), members of Congress eventually succeeded in galvanizing congressional support for a stronger rebel military force in Afghanistan. Galster (2001) further states:

Despite signs of corruption in both the military and humanitarian aid programs as early as 1982, Congress ultimately provided nearly \$3 billion in covert aid for the Mujahideen, more than all other CIA covert operations in the 1980s combined. By 1987, the United States was providing the rebels with nearly \$700 million in military assistance a year, more than what Pakistan itself was receiving from Washington (Galster, 2001: in the section on Congress and US Aid).

This in turn led to support of the mainly Pakistan-based Afghan resistance (the Mujahideen) which was a collection of various political, ideological, tribal, language, and religious anti-Soviet movements that led to the overthrow of the Soviet-supported Najeebullah government, and the subsequent civil-war in Afghanistan in 1990 (Ruiz, 2001: 11). Thus, the war in Phase one led to vast destruction in many parts of Afghanistan, and caused over 1.2 million casualties, including those of over 6 million refugees and countless internally displaced people (Colville, 1997; Westad, 1994).

1.2.2 Phase 2: Civil war (1989 - 1995)

Despite the withdrawal of defeated Soviet forces from Afghanistan fighting continued between the last PDPA government under Dr Najibullah and the Mujahideen. Although PDPA rule ended in April 1992, fragmentation among the Mujahideen factions intensified fighting among them that resulted in civil war and continuation of chaos for citizens in Afghanistan. According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), the United States, Saudi Arabia, and to a lesser extent Iran and China channelled an estimated \$6 to 12 billion to Mujahideen groups, while the Soviet sent approximately \$36 to \$48 billion to support the

government in fighting the western-backed proxies in Afghanistan (Human Rights Watch, 2005: 13).

Government forces were guilty of considerable human rights violations. However, research indicates that the inter-factional fighting among the various Mujahideen groups that fought for power also resulted in substantial violations of human rights. These included summary executions, abuse of prisoners, abduction, disappearances, rape, sexual violence, imprisonment, rocketing, shelling, artillery attacks, pillage and looting and other forms of torture (Aliase Hassany, 2009; Human Rights Watch, 2005). These atrocities and human rights violations led to a massive surge of internal displacement and of international refugees. According to UNHCR in 1997, some 2.7 million Afghan refugees were living in Iran and Pakistan, which was then the single biggest refugee caseload in the world for the 17th consecutive year (Colville, 1997).

1.2.3 Phase 3: Taliban rule (1996 – 2001)

The inter-factional fighting and violence between key Mujahideen factions continued through to 1995. The continued anarchy resulted in the emergence of the Taliban who started taking province after province without much resistance from warring Mujahideen factions. The young Taliban, most of whom were students at *madrassas* (religious schools) launched major offensive attacks in September 1996 in eastern Afghanistan that resulted in the takeover of Jalalabad (Ruiz, 2001: 13). After two weeks, they captured Kabul and fighting continued in northern Afghanistan. Although the Taliban successfully ended anarchy and restored order through much of Afghanistan, their rule (based on a selected interpretation of Islam) turned Afghanistan into a closed state, a closed community. Afghanistan in this time is sometimes compared to or said to be experienced as a form of prison, especially for women and religious minorities whose rights and freedoms were seriously curtailed. Furthermore, during this period violence continued as the Taliban committed massacres, tortured certain groups or people, carried out extrajudicial executions, persecutions of certain groups (especially religious minorities or Shia Muslims), and group supported gender sexual violence and crimes (Drumbl, 2020). According to Drumbl (2020), this violence and the Taliban regime triggered new displacement. Many educated élite and professionals fled to Pakistan and Iran including ethnic minorities such as the Hazara, fearing discrimination by the fanatical Sunni Taliban (Ruiz, 2001: 9).

1.2.4 Phase 4: US-led invasion (2001 – present)

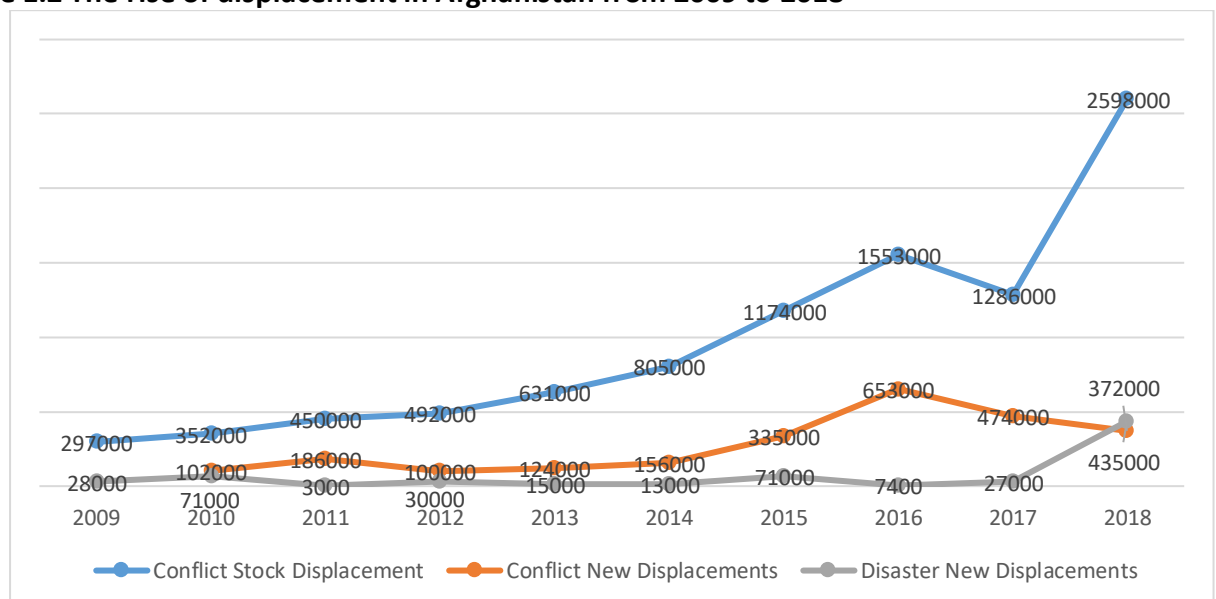
In 1993 the Mujahideen government invited Usama Bin Laden and his 'Arab Afghans' to live in Afghanistan. In 1996, when the Taliban regime came to power in Kabul it continued to host Usama Bin Laden and his 'Arab Afghans'. However, in November 2001, following the 9/11 terrorist attacks that were linked to Usama Bin Laden and to his followers, the Taliban regime was toppled by the USA supported by Afghan warlords. The US invasion and post-Taliban administration(s) in Afghanistan began with a legacy of drought, acute poverty and prolonged civil war in Afghanistan, which resulted in widespread landmines throughout the country, malnutrition, and poor education and health. Although there was no major internal displacement in the immediate aftermath of the 2001 invasion, at least 700,000 people remained internally displaced (from the effects of previous phases) and 3.6 million Afghans continued to live in refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran and some in camps in other countries (Ruiz, 2004). Initial military, humanitarian, recovery, and reconstruction projects

facilitated by US and international donors created employment opportunities, education for children, reconstruction, and development throughout the country (Beath et al., 2010). Consequently, more than 5.8 million refugees (who fled to other countries) and some displaced people have been able to return to Afghanistan since March 2002, which is the largest repatriation in the world (Crawford, 2015).

1.2.5 Phase 5: US-NATO transition and present

The gradual reduction of US-NATO forces and transfer of security and counterterrorism functions to Afghan National Security Forces (ANDS) started in 2014. In 2013 Koser identified three major factors that may lead to an increase in internal displacement during the NATO security transition to Afghan government. Firstly, it was suggested that if provincial cities were to ‘fall’ to insurgents, this would push out large numbers of people seen as loyal to the government, specific political parties and the Afghan National Security Forces. A second risk factor is the rise of both old and new warlords and their militias. Internal turf battles, like those that plagued the country in the 1990s pre-Taliban era, were predicted to arise and to cause local displacement, including in urban areas. Third, if the current skirmishes that are common, especially in the south and east of the country, turn into more systematic armed clashes, then significant localized internal displacement is likely to occur. As well as these conflict-related displacements it was predicted that internal displacement may increase for two other reasons. Firstly, due to a reduction in livelihoods might lead to migration in order to ‘chase’ jobs or to find aid. Secondly, the change and likely resultant upheaval and increase in violence would reduce capacity to cope with seasonal climatic events, which would then spur further displacement for a significant number of people. Unfortunately, each of these predictions has proven to be true and further internal displacement has occurred since 2014 (see Figure 1.2). Indeed, official figures show that the number of IDPs has grown more quickly in the last 3-4 years than at any time in the past decade.

Figure 1.2 The rise of displacement in Afghanistan from 2009 to 2018



Data sources: IDMC and IOM monitoring centre <https://www.internal-displacement.org/countries/afghanistan>

So, in 2009 the number of IDPs due to conflict was recorded to be around 297,000 individuals with a further 28,000 disaster-induced displacements (a total of around 325,000). However, by 2018 this number had increased dramatically (IDMC, 2020) so that there were estimated to be 1,728,157 IDPs currently living in host communities throughout Afghanistan (International Organisation for Migration (IOM), 2018; see Figure 1.2). Furthermore, the number of displaced persons in Afghanistan continues to rise so that, according to IDMC (2020), in 2019 about 461,000 new displacements triggered by conflict and violence were documented in 32 of 34 provinces. These people were largely displaced by fighting and attacks involving insurgents (Taliban, ISIS), other non-state armed groups and government forces. Added to these were 117,000 new disaster displacements recorded in 2019. Of these, 111,000 were triggered by flooding in the western provinces of Badghis, Helmand, Herat, Farah, Ghor, and Kandahar (IDMC, 2020). These figures are necessarily estimates because there are discrepancies between the data provided by various agencies. This is understandable, recording in such a volatile and fluid situation is challenging and exact data is almost impossible to record. Despite this, international and local NGOs agree that official recording and registration of IDPs is likely to be an underestimate and will always lag behind what is happening in the constantly changing context. Despite being inexact it is important to continue to estimate numbers and at the end of 2019 there were around three million people living in displacement in Afghanistan (IDMC, 2020).

Most displaced people choose to live in major neighbouring regions and large cities, such as Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz and Mazar-e-Sharif, which have a higher than average employment and business prospect than other areas. In Afghanistan the majority of displaced people live in informal settlements and non-official camps near or among the local communities. Displaced people affected by war, conflict, and violence have largely chosen to live in rural areas outside major cities and in the regions, whereas those affected by drought and natural disaster have chosen urban settlements for life and livelihoods. These trends are based on their return and settlement plans and prospects: drought-induced IDPs prefer settlement in host-communities which they view as likely to be permanent; whereas conflict-induced IDPs view their displacement as temporary and express the desire for immediate return once peace and security is restored in the 'home' area.

1.3 This study

IDPs in Afghanistan have been the subject of previous studies (E.G. IDCM, 2020; IOM, 2018; Schmeidl, 2019; and UNHCR, 2018). Our research adds to these by:

(1) providing a deeper, more nuanced approach to the conceptualisation of dignity by taking account of different perspectives both from within the affected community and from those working to support them, such as donors, INGOs, and government;

(2) taking into account the conceptualization of dignity from the perspective of the IDPs which would take account of the space, place and history (cultural, linguistic and religious) in which they live and which can be observed in their experience, events and practice and referenced and disclosed in discourse and meaning;

(3) offering an in-depth understanding of the situation, context and experience of different actors, such as different groups of displaced people, field staff working directly in day-to-day operation in the affected communities, more senior members of international organisations working in headquarters (removed from IDPS) and

local or national government representatives who might provide strategic and policy insights.

This research therefore, reflects and records the complexity of the situation and the nuances and richness of relations among and between all the different actors at play in the lives of IDPs.

1.3.1 Study objectives

The research focused on understanding:

- causes of displacement and IDPs displacement journeys;
- the socioeconomic conditions IDPs are living in, and the impact of displacement on the physical and psychological wellbeing of IDPs
- the conceptualisations of dignity among both IDPs and actors (those working to deliver aid to IDPs);
- the impact of displacement and the delivery of assistance on the dignity of IDPs;
- actors' experiences of providing assistance;
- ways in which the dignity of IDPs might be improved; and
- how to begin to deliver durable solutions which are meaningful to IDPs.

The study highlights what realistic changes will make a positive difference to leading safe and peaceful lives for IDPs in Afghanistan where they are treated with dignity, justice and equality and allowed and supported to move out of poverty and re-build (or build new) healthy lives and communities. Clearly, this will have the potential to impact on and shape the way in which sustainable governance and sustainable human development are delivered in Afghanistan.

Sustainable governance and sustainable human development are at the core of the project. As discussed below in Chapter 2, sustainable development requires just institutions, alleviating poverty, education etc. all of which are central to dignity and this was one reason the research focuses on dignity. However, that focus was also chosen to ensure that the full needs of IDPs, both their physical needs and that necessary to sustain their self-respect and autonomy, were at the core of the research. This required research which could deliver recommendations to ensure:

- access to and fairer distribution of material needs to relieve immediate problems;
- the prospect of future lives which include a secure environment in which IDPs are able to make use of resources or opportunities;
- lives which are not chosen by others, not imposed from outside, but which are meaningful to each community or group and to each individual within that group ('agency freedom').

The research therefore recognised that lasting and meaningful sustainable development must embrace a deep understanding from the perspective of those in need, respect for their idea of a 'good' life or a future. Through recognition of and investment in both physical needs and self-worth of individuals they have the best chance to prosper and achieve their full potential. This development of the whole person helps to build sustainability of the community; each person who increases their own capacity adds to the

viability and well-being of him/herself and makes a contribution to the progress, emotional growth and material prosperity of others in their community so supports development more broadly. As noted above, to achieve this it is necessary to recognise and embrace issues that are important to those being helped, that go to the core of what is essential for their well-being, this requires a respect for their dignity. Therefore, to support meaningful sustainable development it is imperative to understand what the IDPs perceive as dignity (and loss of it) and how it underpins their calls for supporting their future. This is the other reason why dignity, as defined by the IDPs, became central to the research.

Therefore, this research focuses on the voices of the IDPs in setting out their past journeys and future aspirations and how best to support them now and to improve their long-term well-being. This learning was given greater depth through drawing both on the experiences of those delivering support to IDP and those with a strategic over-view.

1.4 Methods

The research adopted a mixed methods approach comprising:

- two surveys (one with the IDPs and the other with staff members working at the frontline of humanitarian organizations) primarily designed to facilitate quantitative analysis of the issues;
- semi-structured interviews with IDPs as well as with front-line workers and with professionals, policy-makers, NGOs and other civil society which will explore the reasons for displacement/migration, the journeys of the IDPs and the strategies of change/adaptation both group and individual.
- narrative/storytelling unstructured interviews which provide another, deeper, layer of understanding from the migrants/IDPs perspective.

The numbers of males and females involved in each of these methods of data collection is set out in Table 1 and each of these elements of the research is discussed in more detail below.

Table 1: The data collection methods and the number of respondents disaggregated by gender³

Research tool	Male	Female	Total
Interviews with IDPs	156	105	261
Interviews with humanitarian field-staff	32	8	40
Interviews with senior staff	8	5	13
Storytelling with IDPs	10	10	20
Surveys with IDPs	239	288	527
Surveys with Staff	82	14	96
Total	527	430	957

³ There was no overlap between those who participated in the surveys and those who were interviewed or were involved in storytelling

1.4.1 Participant Recruitment and Sampling (both IDPs and staff)

To ensure a full range of experiences and stories, the research sample drew on the insights and experiences of displaced people, humanitarian field staff, and senior professionals (humanitarian or political) in the provinces, regions, and cities of Afghanistan. Care was taken to ensure that the views of both men (55%) and women (45%) were captured (see Table 1). This array of participants and geographic spread ensured a more holistic understanding of displaced people (from a practical, experiential, and strategic perspective) and ensured that findings were not merely relevant to one community or area. Before agreeing to be involved in either surveys or interviews all participants were provided with a detailed information sheet enabling them to give informed consent (or refuse to be involved).

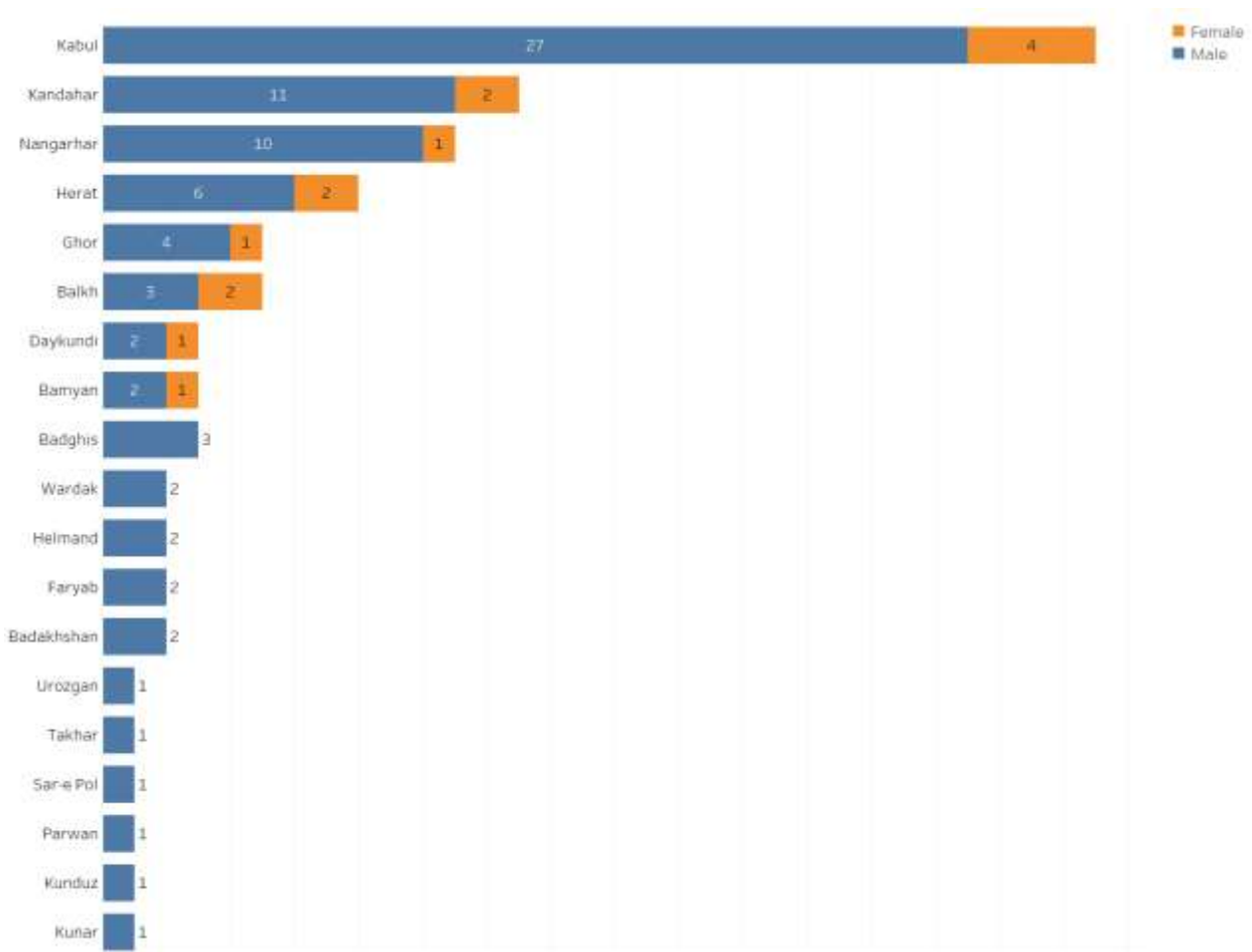
The areas from which IDP participants and field staff members (working at the frontline of humanitarian organizations) were selected were purposefully chosen, ensuring a cross-section of types of settlement (camps, settlements, or mixed with host-communities in both urban or semi-urban areas), types of environment (urban and semi-urban) and different parts of Afghanistan (data was collected from 8 provinces: Kabul; Nangarhar; Pakya; Mazar; Kunduz; Herat; Kandahar and Badakhshan). This ensured that data from across Afghanistan was captured (see Figures 1.3 and 1.4).

Figure 1.3: Participants in the IDP survey disaggregated by province and gender⁴

Province	Gender		Grand Total
	Female	Male	
Badakhshan	4	12	16
Balkh	19	19	38
Herat	50	45	95
Kabul	4	12	16
Kandahar	72	71	143
Kunar		1	1
Kunduz	25	31	56
Laghman	2		2
Nangarhar	108	38	146
Paktia	2	8	10
Grand Total	286	237	523

⁴ Four of the IDPs who participated in the survey are missing from this table.

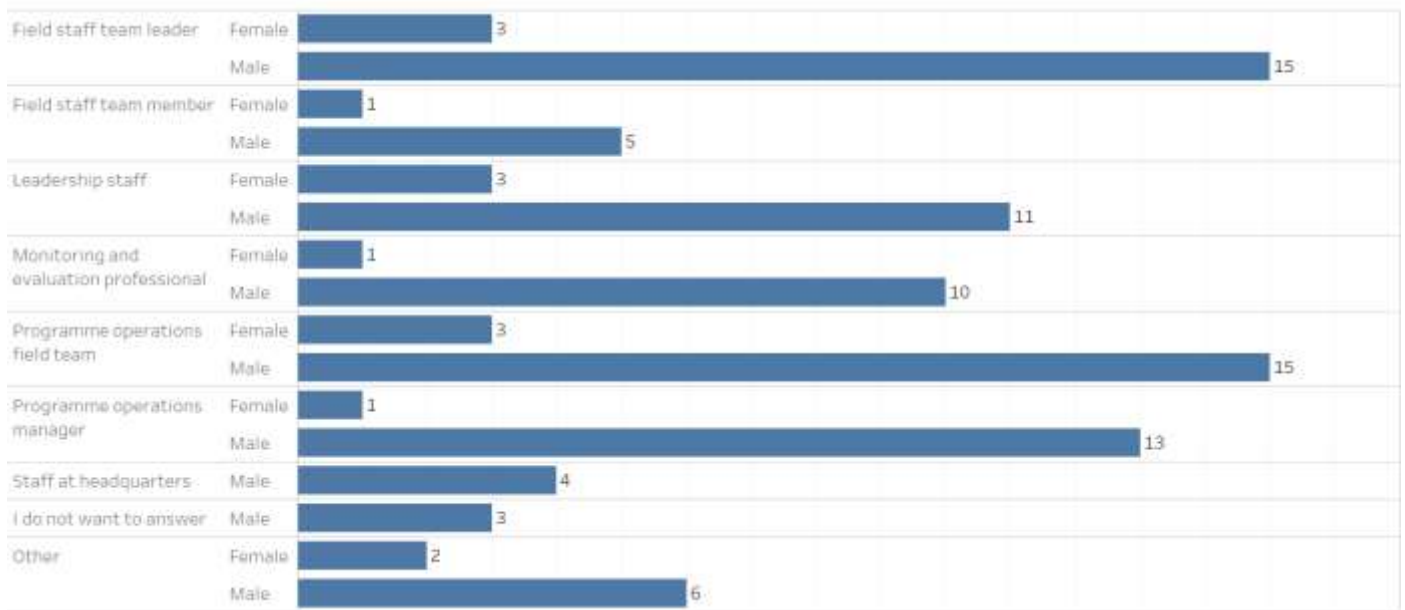
Figure 1.4: Participants in the staff survey disaggregated by province and gender



Purposive sampling was also used to choose individual staff members participating in surveys or interviews, ensuring that representatives from all types of organisation were included. The interviews with more senior staff were also purposive, they were deliberately chosen for the insight they could give to the situation and any possible solutions from a policy or strategic perspective. However, individual IDPs were largely randomly selected whether they were participating in the survey, interviews or storytelling. Research facilitators (discussed in section 1.1.4) identified areas and communities in which displaced people were located and then individuals were largely randomly asked to participate. Despite this random selection the research facilitators were careful to ensure that there was a reasonable gender balance and that the sample included both general community members and community leaders (see Figures 1.6 and 1.7).

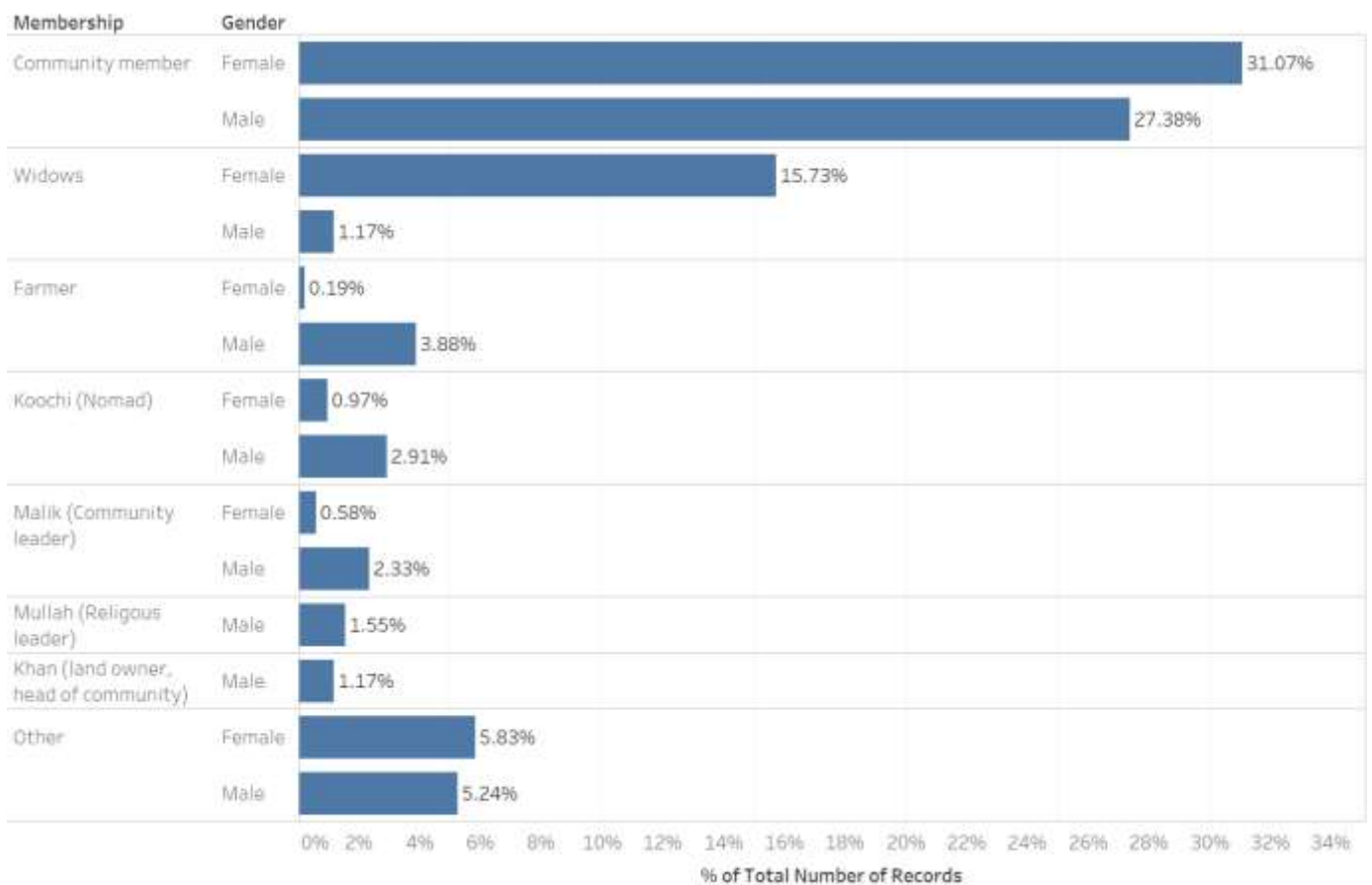
Information concerning the profiles of the field-staff who participated in this study are found in **Error! Reference source not found..** They include those working directly with displaced people, representatives of International NGOs, state actors, local NGOs, and the UN. Those interviewed included participants from major headquarters in Kabul and regions such as Herat, Jalalabad, and Kandahar as well as field-staff working in direct capacity with displaced populations in camps or host communities.

Figure 1.5 What is your role in working with internally displaced people in the field?



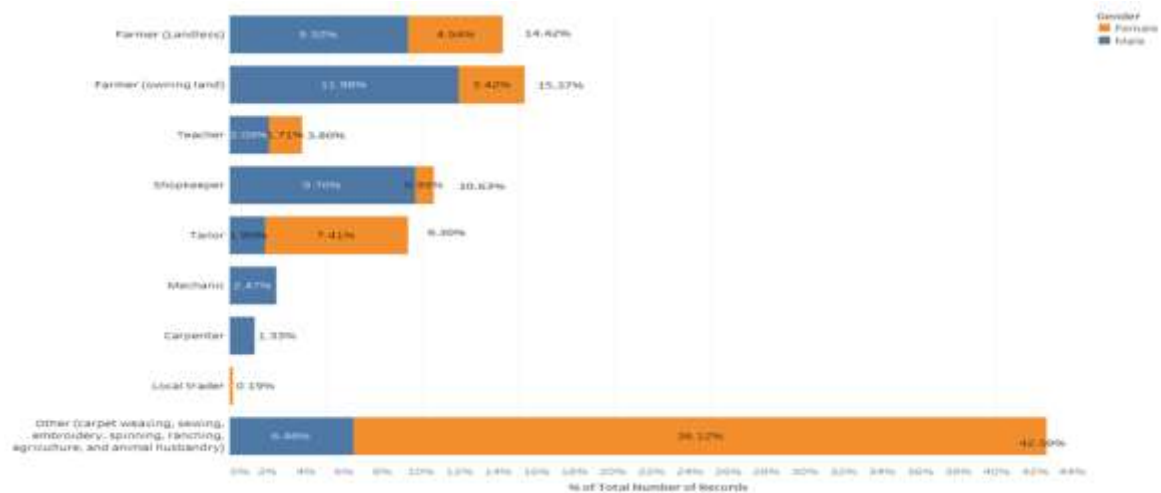
Information concerning the profiles of the displaced research participants (IDPs) in the survey are highlighted in Figure 1.6. This profile demonstrates that IDP participants were drawn from across the community and represent a good cross-section of the community, it includes: community members; widows (widowers); farmers; Koochi; Malik; Mullah; and Khan. The participants represented both those with status in the community, such as Malik and Khan who have inherent power and wealth in the community, as well as ordinary members. To reflect real community membership most participants were non-status individuals, such as normal community members, widows and farmers.

Figure 1.6 Internally displaced people’s community group membership



The wide representation of IDP participants is also demonstrated from the diverse work they performed in their home communities (see Figure 1.7). Male IDPs were most likely to be farmers as is the case throughout Afghanistan. The female participants were most often engaged in home working (much of which would not be paid, or not attract significant remuneration). As in most of Afghanistan this work would include activities such as carpet weaving, sewing, embroidery, spinning, minor agriculture and animal husbandry.

Figure 1.7 Internally displaced people’s jobs in their home communities



1.4.2 Surveys

Two surveys were conducted; one with the IDPs and the other with staff members working at the frontline of humanitarian organizations. The surveys were designed to obtain data from large numbers of participants so as to ensure that the research reflected the views of as broad section of the IDP or humanitarian aid worker communities and to facilitate quantitative analysis of the findings. The surveys were developed following the systematic literature review and communication with a sample of IDPs and those working in the field.

Each survey included both closed and open questions concerning issues about why IDPs were displaced, what sort of aid they could access, their assessment of the aid available to them and how it was distributed, their ideas of dignity and whether their dignity was respected and their hopes for improvement and for a sustainable future. Open or free-text questions ensured the true views and experiences of a large number of participants were recorded. The free-text questions in the IDP survey were important as they allowed participants to relate aspects of their 'stories' in their own words so highlighting their experiences, challenges and successes. In some cases they provided considerable detail and this provided deep and rich data from over 527 participants. The IDP survey was conducted in one of the local languages, Pashtu or Dari (dependent on the preference of the IDP) to ensure that IDPs could participate freely and were relaxed when they were participating. The field-worker survey was conducted in English, the common language for all workers.

1.4.3 Semi-Structured Interviews and 'Storytelling'

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to facilitate a deeper and more nuanced understanding of violence, dignity, coping strategies, recovery, basic services, such as food security, access to shelter, and the use of durable solutions and emergency services in general, in response to the challenge of displacement. The interviews were open and, within a loose or partial structure, allowed the interviewee to control the shape thus permitting them to highlight the complexities of the research context from their own perspective. Interviews with IDPs were conducted in local languages, Pashtu or Dari, and used participant-centred techniques, listening to the participant and permitting them to lead the interview whilst still ensuring information was obtained in all the areas covered by the interview schedule. This method elucidated a more personal account. The interviews with workers and higher-level strategic participants were generally conducted in English and followed a more traditional semi-structured interview pattern.

Added to the interviews were a small number of 'narrative/storytelling' interviews. These were unstructured and provided a detailed understanding entirely from the migrants/IDPs perspective with no 'agenda' from the interviewer. They allowed participants to explain the complexities of the situation from their perspective and permitted a clearer grasp of the impact on their dignity of various aspects of their journey as well as capturing real insight into their desires for the future.

1.4.4 Data Collection

Due to the situation in Afghanistan the researchers were not permitted to collect the data in person so all data was collected via telephone or using tablets. This meant that it was necessary to recruit local research facilitators to support the research. The research

facilitators were either field-based humanitarian actors or local government actors based in the 8 areas included in the study. They were recruited following advice from Afghan academics with a knowledge of working with IDPs. The research facilitators located possible participants (following instructions from the researchers) and then facilitated the communication by providing phones or tablets which participants could use to talk to the researchers.

1.4.5 Data Analysis

The surveys were analysed using Tableau software, permitting detailed systematic analysis of both the quantitative and qualitative responses to the survey questions. This software was used to record the coding of the data as well as to produce outputs and allow cross-referencing between various findings. It is important to note that most of the Tableau figures (those represented as bubbles) used in this report are based on the qualitative responses to open-ended questions. Because these responses were not standardised they permit a more personal and exact understanding of the situation. However, this also means that some of the percentages in these figures are very low. All interviews were carefully transcribed in the original language, those in Dari and Pashtu were also translated. At the translation stage, local Afghan experts were hired to ensure that both the verbal and non-verbal contexts of discussions including vocalisation of the language and discourse were translated accurately to ensure that meaning was not lost. Following this, interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, to identify common themes and patterns in the data and Nvivo was used to record the analysis of all interviews.

1.4.6 Limitations

There were two main limitations of this study. The first is that, as noted above, all of the research was conducted via the telephone with the help of local research facilitators, rather than 'on the ground' by the research team. While this was necessary due to the poor security situation in Afghanistan, this meant that it was more difficult to build a rapport with the participants, and some participants may not have felt confident expressing themselves over the telephone. To counter this, the researchers conducted a large number of surveys (many with free text answers some of which are very detailed) and interviews which resulted in a rich and detailed dataset. Secondly, the majority of the research facilitators were male, and therefore female participants may have been reluctant to talk to a male researcher due to cultural issues, or to disclose some of their experiences relating to violence or sexual abuse. Despite this, the researchers managed to recruit a balanced number of male and female participants, there are a significant number of female issues reported, including rape, and the written answers in the survey were written by the women in private and may not have been similarly affected.

2 Literature Review: Conceptualising dignity and the nexus between the dignity of internally displaced people and sustainable development goals

2.1 Conceptualising dignity

This section offers a brief overview of dignity and how existing conceptualisation is interlinked with displaced people. Dignity is a complex concept, its meaning will differ depending on whether it is viewed from a philosophical, legal, medical, bio-ethical, psychological, behavioural or cultural perspective (Mattson and Clark, 2011; Pritchard, 1972). However, as a fundamental aspect of a democratic society, dignity is frequently central to discussions concerning violations of rights, freedoms and social justice (Misztal, 2012). This rights and justice approach is central to understanding how the IDPs in Afghanistan perceive dignity and loss of dignity.

In very general terms, dignity is an assertion of shared humanity (Glasius and Pleyers, 2013) and deemed to be 'a strong predictor of life satisfaction' (Hojman and Miranda, 2018: 2). In modern societies, the notion is related to social inclusion, participating in community life (Sen, 1999) or shaping one's own life (Nussbaum, 2000: 73). The exact meaning of dignity can be affected by the culture and historical events of a society because dignity is a socially constructed term and context is a crucial component to any application and consideration of dignity to a specific case or group (Reaume, 2003). From this it is clear that dignity cannot be encapsulated in one ubiquitous framework because it is innately a political, philosophical, theological, and subjective issue (McCrudden, 2013). In this report, we look into dignity broadly through social science literature and in the context of displacement. We do that because in many traditional models or theories, the lived experience of affected people is absent, ignored or presumed by the theorist. These conceptualisations seldom gather or report affected communities' views on dignity (Grandi, Mansour and Holloway, 2018) so are blind to its real nature (Kriegel, 2017). In these understandings of dignity a discipline, state or large organisation sets out its definition and then examines whether that is being respected in particular contexts. This is a top-down conceptualisation (Patrick and Simpson, 2019) which is often invoked in modern humanitarian aid programmes or state-led assessments of their record on respecting the dignity of a group. The common and traditional approach which ignores the importance, experience and perception of dignity (and loss of it) from the perspective of the 'victim' group is, in effect, an act of denial; it imposes the view and perspective of the powerful on the experience of the vulnerable, denying their voice.

Dignity is a term which needs to be studied and understood. In particular, how it is used: to decide where control lies; by the powerful to assert their interests; and by the vulnerable to ask that their humanity be respected. It is used in social justice, for example, in discussions about violence, poverty, homelessness, war, the displacement of peoples and distribution of humanitarian aid (Bostrom, 2009; Anidjar, 2018). Such diverse application of dignity arises partly because it plays a key role in international human rights movements, and it features prominently in many documents that ground political principles for many nations. As a source of political goods (Bennett, 2016), dignity potentially serves as common ground to identify and secure shared interests such as justice and human entitlement in local through to global spaces (Mattson and Clark, 2011; Nussbaum, 2009). Dignity is also a

moral mandate and places an absolute obligation on conscience and is thereby capable of enhancing political actions (Bennett, 2016: 142). It posits humans as part of the human family (ibid), and is claimed to be 'inalienable' (Kolani, 1976). This claim for 'dignity' first appears in the work of Immanuel Kant (1785), one of the earliest and still one of the leading thinkers to consider dignity.

For Kant (1785), all humans command dignity due to autonomy and their moral/ethical capacity. His thesis was that no individual should be treated as a means to an end because to do so would be to undermine their dignity. Each person is an end in themselves meaning that each individual's autonomy or choice should be equally respected. This means that everyone is worthy of respect and, as a rational being, each person possesses an unconditional and incomparable worth: namely dignity. From a Kantian perspective, dignity refers to an absolute inner value that is characterised in terms of autonomy (Bayefsky, 2013; Misztal, 2012). Human beings are rational or have the capacity for rationality and decision-making which forms the basis of dignity (Kant, 1785). For Kant, dignity is intrinsic, extended to all humans even those who are vicious or bad or whose mental capacity is not yet formed or is reduced or destroyed. The crucial point is that Kant's idea of dignity is both inalienable (Leung and Cohen, 2011; Reaume, 2003) and normatively inviolable (meaning secure from attack, assault or trespass).

Building on Kant's ideas, some theorists have split dignity into two aspects: inner or human dignity and social dignity (Kateb, 2011). This categorisation probably encapsulates the most important aspects for modern debates. Inner/human dignity relates to oneself, one's values and how one sees oneself, it is largely inward looking. Social dignity relates to relations with others and how others perceive and treat an individual but also how an individual views others. Clearly inner dignity can be affected by social dignity (the way one is treated) and *vice versa*. In this regard each person is necessarily valuable but is also valued by others (Kateb, 2011). The expectation is that everyone should respect each individual and ensure that each person enjoys agency and independence; mutual respect and dignity. This contains aspects of what is accepted as necessary to dignity, namely, respect for the individual and allowing each person to choose and empower her/himself to ensure that their choice shapes their lives such that they can be self-reliant (Mosel and Holloway, 2019). The discussion on dignity in this sense can then be extended to social status, self-worth and honour, in a broad sense, including moral autonomy (Bayefsky, 2013).

Most theorists recognise that dignity, respect and honour are linked (Herrman, 2019: 11 and Getz, 2018) though some view dignity and honour as different (Leung and Cohen, 2011). The difference may arise by accepting that in most societies some people are honoured more highly (treated with more dignity and respect) than others, they enjoy greater social standing (Schroeder and Bani-Sadr, 2017; Waldron, 2012: 201). This is clearly true and might lead one to question whether dignity is inalienable until one accepts that basic levels of respect and dignity are clearly essential both to a person's self-worth and to their ability to live a good life, it is one of the foundations of their well-being. However, just as some enjoy more than basic rights, so some enjoy higher levels of respect and dignity.

The above illustrates that understanding of dignity has evolved but offers little of practical understanding. More recently, the concept of dignity, both in theory and in

practice, has become intimately connected with the idea of human rights (Waldron, 2009; Bayefsky, 2013). The 18th and 19th Centuries European constitutions and political declarations did not feature human dignity (Bostrom, 2009). It is only in the aftermath of the Second World War that human dignity finds its way into the centre of political standards and can be found in numerous national and international declarations and in the constitutions of nation states. Indeed, almost all international instruments dealing with rights or humanitarian issues contain reference to dignity (Sensen, 2011; Schroeder and Bani-Sadr, 2017; Waldron, 2012; Bayefsky, 2013; Grant, 2007; and Bennett, 2016). For example:

We the peoples of the United Nations determine...to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person.... (Preamble of the United Nations Charter 1945).

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948).

It even underlies those which embrace group rights:

...freedom, equality, justice and dignity are essential objectives for the achievement of the legitimate aspirations of the African peoples...

(Preamble to the Charter of the Organization of African Unity, 1963;

reiterated in the preamble to the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and People's rights, 1981).

Dignity also appears in the constitutions of many states and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which states (in a section marked 'People' which follows the Preamble) that the agenda aims to '...ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality ...'. These international documents help to show that human dignity appears to be of prime importance for contemporary discussions of human rights. However, the extent to which this is real is questionable as in these documents 'dignity' is not defined nor is there any indication of how it should be interpreted or how it underpins human rights; dignity is left as a vague notion, to be interpreted differently by each reader (Sensen, 2011: 75; Bostrom, 2009). Therefore, whilst the inclusion of dignity in international and political instruments is interesting and suggests that it has a powerful social, political and human importance its underlying meaning is very unclear. The notion has been taken for granted as if the term comes with innate clarity.

As seen above, there is no 'innate clarity' about the concept of dignity. It is a very broad term which can resonate with almost any cause (Regilme, 2019: 287). So, it appeals to the Western, liberal ideas of rights as providing socio-legal protection against state power when it threatens to undermine individual rights and freedoms. It also appeals to the rights ideals of the global South and of peoples from developing countries where rights need to deliver entitlements and commodities to some of the poorest and most marginalised people as well as providing justice for peoples or groups as opposed to individuals (Fortman, 2011 and Regilme, 2019). By recognising dignity as a human right, actors from both the global North and South are able to celebrate the differences of various identities and shift the conversation toward actual policies and governance structures to support and promote justice relevant to their different contexts (Regilme, 2019; Benhabib, 2011; and Perez, 2018). This recognises that context alters the meaning of rights and dignity and that

powerful states and the international community should be prevented from imposing their ideas of rights and dignity onto less powerful states, communities and groups. Therefore, individuals and communities should be central to the discussion as to what dignity means to them and how it should be delivered, or made 'real' (Fortman, 2011 and Regilme, 2019). It is only by embracing the broader language permitted through dignity and moving away from a Western liberal insistence on a narrow group of civil and political rights to embrace economic, social and group rights that justice can be brought back to people. This wider purview will include areas of real importance to people in different situations in all parts of the world, only then can states be prevented from over-extending their powers, only then the full concept of dignity is embraced so that people can live well (Sen, 2009).

Other than the contemporary secular understandings of dignity that have been discussed, it is important to point out that the notion also has solid bases in the world's major religions - Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Confucianism, and Hinduism (Iglesias, 2001; Simion, 2016; Schroeder, 2012; Schroeder and Bani-Sadr, 2017; Lee, 2008). For Example, a human being is an avatar of a deity in Hinduism; is created in God's image in Judaism; and is a moral agent in Confucianism (Lee (2008), and even coexists with the divine through hypostatic union in Jesus Christ (Simion, 2016: 70; Lee, 2008). For its more particular relevance to this study, we briefly expand on dignity in Islam. Although 'dignity' may not have an exact equivalent in the Arabic language in which the primary sources of Islam - the Qura'an and Sunnah – are revealed, the concept of *karāma* (كرامة) is the closest to convey this meaning. *Karāma* in Arabic means dignity, honour, respect/prestige and high status (<http://www.ectaco.co.uk/English-Arabic-Dictionary/>). And with regard to inherent human dignity, the Quran says:

.. ولقد كرمنا بني آدم (Quran 17/70) that translates as: And we have indeed bestowed the children of Adam with dignity/honour... (Quran 17/70).

While dignity/honour and its various dimensions in this context are interpreted by Islamic scholars in different ways, what is important is its generality to 'the children of Adam' – all human beings irrespective of their race, gender/sex, socio-economic class, or any other individual and social attributes. While Islam emphasizes the inherent fundamental dignity of all human beings, its core is enhanced by the righteousness of a human individual as the Quran says:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he/she who is) the most righteous of you (Quran 49:13).

The criterion for 'righteousness' is complex and highly context-bound in Islam, according to Schroeder and Bani-Sadr (2017) the elevation of an individual's human dignity is directly related to the ways he/she treats other humans. Thus, violation of other people's dignity leads to the lowering of one's own dignity. Schroeder and Bani-Sadr (2017) also stress that dignified treatment of each other is closely inter-connected with freedom (from oppression and humiliation), peace and human development. And, because humans become and remain noble/dignified through virtuous acts (Quran 49:13 cited in Schroeder and Bani-Sadr 2017), virtue is realised in the expansion of freedom through development (Quran 72:14 cited in Schroeder and Bani-Sadr 2017). This understanding of dignity in Islam

has similarities with Kant’s philosophical ideas emphasising one’s obligations to uphold his/her own dignity and the obligation to others for respecting theirs. It is also similar to Sen’s ideas about the strong connections between individual dignity and human development. As will be discussed later in this report, it is the Islamic meaning of dignity that is central to the perceptions of the IDPs in Afghanistan.

As a Muslim society the concept of dignity for Afghans is strongly influenced by Islamic teachings. In Islam, dignity is inherent to all humans and is referred to in the Quran as *karāma* (dignity, honour, respect and high status in Arabic) with which all human beings are endowed. Indeed, the Quranic word– *karāma* – is used for dignity in Pashto and Dari in Afghanistan. However, this conceptualisation of dignity is further mixed with Afghan patriarchal cultural values over the centuries. Preserving the dignity and honour of the other side in any kind of relationship is fundamental in Afghanistan (Kandiwall, 2019). Thus, the concept of *karāma* is used interchangeably with *ghairat* (zeal) *nang -wa-namos* (protection of family – especially women - and its property), *izzat -wa- abro* (respect, prestige, status). As will be discussed later in this report translating these general concepts of dignity involve many dimensions including compassion and respect; protection from sexual abuse and harassment; meeting basic needs; religious and cultural values; and peace and security. For the Afghan IDPs, their *Izat -wa- Abro* is closely linked to “peace” and return to their homes. Peace and having a home (with *hujra*, men house) are particularly relevant here. If a person does not have a shelter or settlement in Afghanistan, he faces many problems. An Afghan who is living in an IDP camp in UNHCR tent cannot be hospitable person because he cannot take a guest inside the tent where his wife and other younger females are carrying out their duties. Consequently, he loses his face and dignity.

2.2 The nexus between the dignity of internally displaced people and sustainable development goals

The ongoing plights of the IDPs in Afghanistan pose a significant challenge to the delivery of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Therefore, sustainable governance and sustainable human development are at the core of this study since it focuses on the displaced people (IDPs) who are victims of violence and conflict. Few people in the world live in more abject poverty or are treated with less dignity than these people. Our study aims to suggest ways forward to establish dignity, social justice, and cultural wellbeing for these IDPs.

Our study aims to understand the IDPs in Afghanistan: the impetus for their movement, and its effects on their lives. Dignity is central to the research. Sustainable development requires just institutions, alleviation of poverty, provision of education etc., all of which are essential for dignity. Violence is another key theme as turmoil and military conflicts are at the centre of the reason for the suffering and internal displacement of people in Afghanistan. Such violence strips people of everything they have and much of what they identify with and leaves them with few possessions, often nothing. Frequently it separates them from family, community and culture, making them dependent on others to survive so it strips them of their independence and often also their dignity. Endemic violence leads to the fragility of societies and of its institutions and undermines the basics requirements for sustainable development.

One key aspect of our study is to draw out both the similarities and differences around the causes, cultures, experiences and effects of displacement/migration and explore how problems in these areas might be tackled by suggesting practical pathways to redemption and prevention and enhancing dignity and social justice for these people.

This study is predominantly linked with Goal-16 of the SDGs that ‘aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels’. Below, we specify how this study covers specific targets of the Goal-16 of the SDGs, such as:

- Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all (Target - 16.3)
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels (Target – 16.7)
- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements (Target – 16.10)

In addition to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the findings of the study are also interconnected with other goals and targets of the SDGs. Such as:

- Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages (Goal-3).
- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal – 5). More specifically: eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation) (Target 5.2)
- Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all (Goal – 6). More specifically: By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all (Target 6.1)
- By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums (Target 11.1)

No culture can thrive without security and justice so having a fair, effective and efficient justice system ability and capacity to tackle violent and other criminal activities is essential. While failure to tackle violence was one factor which prevented some countries from achieving their millennium development targets by 2015 (World Bank, 2011; OECD, 2015), there was also often an institutional failure. It is clear that sustainable economic growth goes hand in hand with sustainable governance and sustainable human development. Endemic violence and violent discrimination undermine stable institutions and access to justice, rights, jobs, education and other aspects of normal life which in turn allows violence to take hold. These problems often create a vicious circle which needs to be broken before sustainable development can flourish. Institutional stability to provide justice and protect citizens are as key as is ensuring the security of citizens.

Tracking the experiences of the IDPs in Afghanistan will: deliver a clearer understanding of how displacements happen and are experienced; create the knowledge necessary to improve the just and dignified delivery of support necessary to sustain displaced persons and their communities; explore practical solutions to provide pathways to healthier and safer lives (both short-term and more durable); and highlight the

multidimensional support necessary to help IDPs to return to their places of origin, resettle elsewhere, or integrate into their host communities. The study, therefore, seeks to make positive changes to people's lives allowing them to lead safe and peaceful lives where they are treated with dignity, justice and equality and allowed and supported to move out of poverty and re-build (or build new) healthy lives and communities.

3 Causes of internal displacement and the journeys of displaced people in Afghanistan

3.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes the causes of internal displacement and the displacement journeys of the IDPs in Afghanistan who participated in this study. Causes of displacement included war, conflict, and violence; drought, famine, and natural disasters such as floods, landslides, and avalanches; a lack of income-generating opportunities; destruction of property and land; difficulty meeting basic needs and accessing basic facilities; and loss of dignity. The findings demonstrate that the majority of IDPs become displaced for multiple reasons, with the main cause being conflict and war in their origin villages. The displacement journeys of conflict-induced IDPs highlight that the majority experienced severe violence and traumatic events during migration. In addition, many IDPs suffered loss of dignity in some form throughout some or all stages of their displacement journeys, particularly on initial arrival at their destinations and when attempting to integrate into their host communities on a longer-term basis. The response of the government and humanitarian aid organisations was frequently described as delayed, sporadic, inconsistent, and inadequate. Although life-saving assistance was appreciated, some IDPs felt that the assistance was not provided in a dignified manner, and felt that it could not solve their longer-term problems. Perhaps surprisingly, many IDPs reported that their dignity was intact in spite of the violence and poverty that they had suffered.

3.2 Causes of displacement

Of the 527 IDPs that participated in a survey of their displacement experiences, the majority (almost 80%) indicated that the main cause of their displacement was war and conflict, followed by violence, drought, natural disasters, and a lack of income-generating opportunities (Table 2). Those whose main reasons for migrating were war, conflict, and violence, were displaced to both rural and urban areas, while those whose main reasons for migrating were drought, natural disasters, and a lack of income-generating opportunities, were displaced to urban areas only (Figure 3.1).

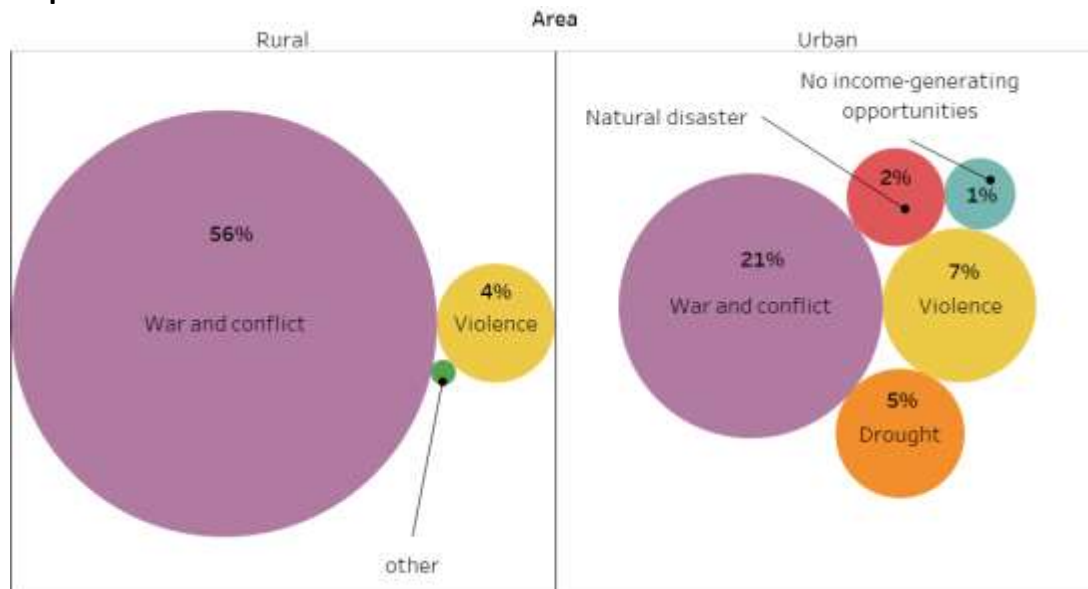
Table 2. The main cause of displacement of 527 internally displaced people in Afghanistan who took part in a survey about their experiences

Main cause of displacement	Gender		
	Female	Male	Total
War and conflict	41.9%	36.57%	78.48%
Violence	5.9%	5.33%	11.24%
Drought	2.86%	2.10%	4.95%
Natural disasters	2.48%	0.57%	3.05%
No income-generating opportunities	1.33%	0.76%	2.10%
Other	0.19%	0%	0.19%
Total	54.67%	45.33%	100%

Qualitative interviews with a further 281 IDPs identified additional factors leading to displacement, including famine, destruction of property and land, difficulty meeting basic needs, difficulty accessing healthcare and educational facilities, and loss of dignity. In addition, it was clear that the main cause of displacement varied by province. For example,

IDPs who had migrated from Kunduz, Kandahar, and Nangarhar provinces were largely displaced due to war, conflict, and violence, while those who had migrated from Ghor, Badghis, and Badakhshan provinces were largely displaced due to a lack of livelihood opportunities brought about by drought, famine, and natural disasters. Some IDPs had been displaced more than once for different reasons.

Figure 3.1 Survey participants disaggregated by rural and urban areas and their cause of displacement



The qualitative data also revealed that most often, a combination of multiple factors accounted for displacement, as illustrated by the following quotes and the case story presented in Box 3.1.

I am 40 and live in the IDPs camp. I came from Ghor province, Toolak district. Due to many problems such as ethnic conflicts, government conflicts, war, drought, and insecurity, we were forced to leave our homeland and migrated to Herat. **A113, a male IDP, Herat**

The ongoing war and lack of food, job opportunities, and access to health clinics are the reasons that forced us to migrate to Herat. **A59, a female IDP, Herat**

Box 3.1. Case story illustrating the multiple factors leading to the displacement of a female internally displaced person who migrated from Ghor to Herat

I am 50 years old and live in the IDPs camp in Herat province. We were forced to leave our home, Toolak Village, in Ghor Province, due to the ongoing war, famine, poverty, and drought. We migrated to this camp one year and three months ago. When we tried to migrate to Herat, there was war on both sides of our village. All of our tribes fled due to the pressures of war and Taliban attacks.

In our former residential area, there are mountains on all sides, and we have always been stuck between the war between the government and the Taliban. In addition to the war, water floods the mountains during the winter and causes casualties. At the moment, war is still going on in our former region.

A102, a female IDP, Herat

The various causes of displacement are discussed in further detail below.

3.2.1 War, conflict, and violence

War, conflict, and direct violence were reported to be the main causes of displacement by the majority of IDPs who participated in this study. Violence in Afghanistan occurs as a result of protracted conflicts between warring parties including the Taliban, ISIS, the Afghan government and army, coalition forces, and other armed groups. IDPs reported experiencing various forms of **direct violence and mistreatment** that forced them to leave their homelands in fear of their lives, including suicide attacks, killings, beatings, torture, persecution, and oppression.

We decided to migrate to Mazar-e-Sharif because of the severe security situation, war, murders, unemployment, killings, misery, bullying, and oppression that wounded my son and made us despair of being kidnapped. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

I am 30 years old. I cannot explain the problems which we suffered from, the Taliban came and destroyed our houses, trees, and beautiful village. They killed our children, youths, the elderly, and women. We have not found the dead bodies of some. **A143, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Extreme violence was reported to be particularly common in Nangarhar province, where ISIS have carried out a number of suicide attacks in public places in addition to coordinated assaults on civilians.

ISIS killed our people with bombs, 7 members of my family including my brother and nephews and 13 of my other relatives. In one day, ISIS killed 120 of us. **A136, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Many IDPs told of getting **caught in the crossfire** of battles between warring parties, as illustrated by the following quote, and the case story displayed in Box 3.2.

One of my children was injured when a rocket hit our home and he passed away six months ago. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

Box 3.2 Case story illustrating how a male internally displaced person living in a camp in Kabul became caught in the crossfire of the war between the Taliban and Afghan army

We had a perfect life in our village, there were schools and clinics and we were not needy. We were doing work in our farmland, and had a good relationship with our relatives and the villagers, but when the Taliban came, they treated us badly and were cruel to us. Then when the Afghan army started fighting with the Taliban, we faced many problems, bullets were fired and lots of my relatives and friends got killed and injured. My nephew was shot by a bullet, but thanks to Allah he survived.

One day I was coming home from my field; suddenly, I got stuck on the way under a tree due to fighting between the Taliban and the Afghan army, and I thought it was my last day, but fortunately, I survived. These were the problems that caused us to leave our houses and migrate here to Kabul Camp. I am happy that no one in my family was killed in the war, but our homes, clinics, and schools were destroyed.

A140, a male IDP, Jalalabad

IDPs described how battles often take place in the midst of dense rural communities populated by civilians, causing high numbers of casualties. Many recounted distressing stories of **losing family members** as a result of the ongoing conflict.

In my place of origin, my nineteen year-old son got martyred. It was the worst violence I had ever experienced. It was too painful for all of us, and we cannot forget that violence. **A16, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Woefully, I have lost my husband during the war between the Taliban and the government. My brother was killed by the Taliban as well. **A108, a female IDP, Herat**

We experienced direct violence. My youngest brother was martyred by armed groups when he went to collect some firewood. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Many IDPs reported that they were **forced to leave their properties**, often in the middle of the night, so that their houses and land could be used as a battle ground by the Taliban and the Afghan military.

The armed forces occupied our homes and told us to leave, as they were about to make our place an ambush for war. Armed groups kill anyone who stand against them, therefore we left our homeland. **A231, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

The Taliban came to our village on Sunday at midnight, they dug the yards in our houses until morning, then told us to leave as they were starting to fight. **A246, a male IDP, Kunduz**

Young male IDPs originating from remote communities related how they were forced by armed groups to **join the war** against the Afghan government, which impacted on their livelihoods and restricted their freedom.

The Taliban wanted us to join the war and to provide them with weapons, so we decided to migrate and came with several families to Herat. **A114, a male IDP, Herat**

We were threatened by the armed groups repeatedly...they forced us to fight against the government. **A198, a male IDP, Kunduz**

The Taliban and other armed groups such as ISIS also coerced and threatened IDPs into providing them with **shelter and food**, and demanded **weapons and money** to support their regime.

We lived in Nazyan district, we had land and livestock and were doing farming there, but the Taliban and ISIS attacked us and ruined our village, they destroyed our houses and land and they also took our livestock. They forced us to give them food and water otherwise they beat our father and brothers. **A123, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

We had a lot of problems in our hometown. The level of tension between the Taliban and the government was really high. Therefore, the Taliban were begging us for food, and if we didn't feed them, they beat us and physically assaulted us. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

Every night a large number of the Taliban attacked our houses and animals and killed everyone, including my nephew. It was because he worked for

the government. The Taliban pushed us hard, beat us, and demanded weapons because they heard we were with the government. **A119, a female IDP, Herat**

Similar tactics were used by the Arbaki police, the community-based local militia supported by the government.

Both armed groups and the Arbaki police forced us to work for them, for example to feed them or to help them construct their police stations.

A201, a male IDP, Mazar

Many IDPs were affected by **repeated raids** conducted by the government and international forces. Civilians were often caught up in these operations and cited them as one of the reasons why they felt forced to migrate elsewhere.

A big problem is the night-raids by the government and various threats by the armed groups. **A224, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

Though we had a difficult time with the armed groups, our biggest problem was with the government, as they used to carry out constant bombings and raids on our homes. **A227, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

3.2.2 Drought, famine, and natural disasters

Drought, famine, and natural disasters including flooding, landslides and avalanches were named as the main cause of displacement for some IDPs. These conditions led to loss of assets and agriculture and had a severe impact on IDPs livelihoods in their place of origin, forcing them to seek a better life elsewhere.

I was a simple farmer in my village. My cultivation was dependent on seasonal rainfall. When we did not have enough rainfall in our areas, we were borrowing money to supply our primary needs. I decided to migrate and try to change my life. **A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Before migrating to Herat, I was busy with farming and cultivating. Due to drought and famine, I lost all my livestock, camel, cows and sheep, this situation forced me to sell my remaining flock at a very low price to afford the migration costs of coming here. **A100, a male IDP, Herat**

For some IDPs, escalating conflict exacerbated their already volatile situations and was often seen as the “final straw” that led to their decision to migrate.

We tried to stay there, we dealt with all the problems in my origin village for more than four years. This year snow slides killed some of my neighbours, and on the other hand increasing conflicts made it unbearable, so I had to leave and come here to continue my life. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

3.2.3 Other causes of displacement

Other causes of displacement included a lack of income-generating opportunities, destruction of property and land, difficulty meeting basic needs, difficulty accessing

healthcare and educational facilities, and loss of dignity. Many IDPs migrated elsewhere, often to urban areas and cities, in order to seek **employment and livelihood opportunities**.

There was no job for our husbands, and we did not have the security and money to survive. Finally, we concluded that we had to leave and find a better place to live. **A152, a female IDP, Kabul**

I was optimistic, and was hoping to find a chance to be employed at a local level. I assumed that at least here, there should be a higher chance of me finding a job. I am looking to find a job or daily paid labour in order to meet my basic life needs. **A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I came here to find a job. The low economic status made me move here. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

War and conflict led to **widespread destruction of IDPs homes**, shops, land, and agriculture, as well as infrastructure such as roads, schools and clinics. Therefore, many IDPs were required to migrate simply to seek **shelter and a place to live**.

Our homes and properties were destroyed due to war. Therefore, we left and migrated to Kandahar. **A178, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Our houses were destroyed during the wars, and we had no place to live. **A105, a female IDP, Herat**

The commandos came and set off explosives near my shop...I lost my goods and shop. The delegation who came to the village visited my shop but didn't help me later. **A246, a male IDP, Kunduz**

IDPs described being **unable to meet their most basic needs** due to a combination of reasons including insecurity, drought, financial problems, road closures, inflation, and the rising cost of food.

We were blocked from all sides due to war and road closures, and we were unable to access our daily needs. **A174, a male IDP, Kandahar**

There was war and drought. We were not able to meet our daily needs easily, therefore we chose to migrate. **A177, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Due to insecurity, inflation, lack of health facilities, and lack of work opportunities, we were obliged to leave our place of origin and find a place to at least find something to eat and find shelter, that's why we came here. **A183 a male IDP, Kandahar**

Ongoing conflict made it difficult for IDPs to **access basic facilities** in their places of origin, including healthcare and educational facilities. Many IDPs migrated in an attempt to gain **access to education** for their children, particularly for girls, as the Taliban prohibited girls from attending school.

We didn't face any violence, but we had problems with our daily needs. For example, we could not take our patients to the hospitals due to road closure and insecurity. **A204, a male IDP, Mazar**

War, insecurity, and distance from children's education led us to migrate. We chose Kunduz because this place was secure, our children have access to education here. **A198, a male IDP, Kunduz**

I was in year 10 but the Taliban didn't let us go to school, so we left our community and came here to Herat. **A42, a female IDP, Herat**

We had very good teachers in the schools in Ghor, but unfortunately, because of Taliban insecurity and deterrence, our girls were not allowed to study, and we had to migrate. **A118, a female IDP, Herat**

Finally, some IDPs specifically cited **loss of dignity** as a cause of their displacement, and stated that they were willing to become displaced again if their dignity was not protected.

Dignity and honour means a lot to anyone, we came here because our dignity was not safe there. **A188, a female IDP, Kandahar**

We left our place because of war, our dignity was not safe there. **186, a female IDP, Kandahar**

We migrated from our villages because our dignity was insecure there. We left our place for our dignity, if our dignity is not considered here we will leave this place too. **A177, a male IDP, Kandahar**

3.3 The journeys and experiences of conflict-induced internally displaced people

The IDPs in this study who were displaced due to war and conflict often suffered extreme violence and trauma during migration. The majority of IDPs lost their livelihoods and homes due to the conflict, and while some were able to go and live with relatives, friends, or other IDPs in their host communities, others without strong social networks were forced to go and live in tents, makeshift shelters, or IDP camps in cities. Emergency humanitarian assistance in the form of food, water, cash, and portable shelter is often late, inconsistent, or woefully inadequate, and as there is a lack of employment opportunities, IDPs must rely on daily labour and assistance from relatives, locals, and aid organisations in order to meet their most basic daily needs. While a minority of IDPs return to their origin villages when conflict has ceased, for many this is not possible; their situation then becomes protracted and they remain in displacement for many years. The journeys and experiences of IDPs who were displaced due to conflict are discussed in terms of the following stages: chaotic evacuation; plight; response; return and re-settlement; and long-term settlement, involving integration into the new community. Crucially, a lot of IDPs reported experiencing loss of dignity during some or all stages of their displacement journeys. Conversely, many IDPs stated that they had managed to preserve their dignity, in spite of their traumatic

experiences and difficult living conditions. A case story of a conflict-induced male IDP who was displaced from Nangarhar to Jalalabad is presented in Box 3.2.

Box 3.2 Case story illustrating the displacement journey of a conflict-induced, internally displaced male who migrated from Nangarhar to Jalalabad

*We had a farm, livestock and a good life, but the Taliban and ISIS attacked our community, they began war, bombed our houses, killed our livestock, and destroyed everything we had, and we came here empty-handed. I found a rental house with the help of a friend in Kabul Camp. We all know the value of dignity, but I lost my dignity that day when my house was bombed. Our women and children walked for hours, and with great suffering, we finally came here. We are very poor, and our children are collecting metals and plastics from streets instead of going to school. I wish I could work and provide the facilities required for my children to attend school. The community leaders do not provide assistance to the eligible people. If organisations want to help, they should distribute assistance directly to the right people. I am an old man, and I cannot stand in a crowded line all day to receive a small bag of wheat, and I have no money to rent a car, so it will be better if assistance reached our own places. Life is very different and difficult here compared to the place we lived before, in my own house. Being unemployed, it is difficult to cover the rent and other expenses. We have to live in one bedroom with my 11 family members. We did not receive any assistance except one bag of wheat from an organisation and to achieve this, we had to wait for a long time standing in line all day. We were looking for assistance, but there was none, international organisations should help and build our houses. I am happy with my neighbours; they are all immigrants and very nice people too. We urge the government to bring peace and to help build our houses so we can go back to our own community. **A128***

3.3.1 Chaotic evacuation

Violent and extremist events led to sudden forcible and **chaotic evacuation** of displaced people from their homes and communities in many cases. IDPs described such events as terrifying, devastating, and traumatic, with many losing family members in the process of trying to escape.

It was night when the Taliban attacked, they seized the local police division, killed police officers, and took some hostages. They continued to fight, so we left the area abruptly...rockets and bullets were flying over our heads. **A253, a female IDP, Kunduz**

ISIS attacked our areas, they forcibly removed us from our villages and ruined and fired on our houses, and they killed my uncle with a bomb, so we came here. **A130, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

There was crisis, war, and bombings, it was devastating, we simply ran for our lives and moved out here. **A207, a male IDP, Mazar**

During this initial stage in their displacement journeys, IDPs were **stripped of their rights, freedom, and dignity**, and were physically and emotionally harmed, violated, and exploited by extremist groups.

Dignity is not considered by either side during the fight, both the government and the Taliban break into houses, shatter doors, or make holes through our walls which exposes our households to the outside. The sudden fighting among them makes us leave our homes in a fragile and unveiled state which is a sort of shame. To keep our dignity during the conflict, we stayed in our relative's houses for some days to protect our families in these fragile situations. **A245, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

Everyone knows that when someone leaves their home at night with children and women without their consent or any preparation, everyone's dignity and prestige is affected, there is no question about that. We were taken out of our homes and forced to leave, and had to walk to the city for two hours. **A259, a male IDP, Kunduz**

3.3.2 Plight

Many conflict-induced IDPs had to suffer long journeys, often on foot, in order to reach their destinations, and were forced to leave their livelihoods, relatives, and belongings behind. Most faced a **multitude of difficulties** along the way, including exhaustion, hunger, thirst, motor vehicle accidents, and abuse and interference from armed groups. Some IDPs also reported experiencing harrowing events on their journeys such as direct violence and the death of their children and spouses.

There was a horrifying situation on the way, we experienced fear, terror, insecurity, starvation, and witnessed unlawful deeds by the Taliban as they beat our children, men, and women. My daughter was beaten severely and she already has breathing problems. **A21, a female IDP, Herat**

We were harmed very much due to the wars that happened between the Taliban and the police. We lost our sheep, our wounded relatives, and everything we had, like food, clothes, and shoes. Along the way from Ghor to Herat, we spent two nights and had the most difficult problems like hunger and thirst, and I even lost one of my children, he was one year old. He passed away due to a very simple sickness (diarrhoea and vomiting), but there was no clinic on the way that we could take him to. **A109, a female IDP, Herat**

On the way, we faced such a terrible situation. Some men were asking for the girls who were with us and we had to hide our daughters, we did not know if we could save them. They stole our property and our money. There were many crashes. We have very severe and sad memories from those days. Since we arrived here, my husband has a mental problem, and he is very anxious. **A160, a female IDP, Kabul**

However, when asked, many IDPs stated that although they faced numerous hardships during migration, they did not feel that their dignity had been violated during this stage of their displacement journeys.

Every human has self-respect and honour. We migrants are human, and we still have dignity, but we suffered a great deal during our migration. **A117, a female IDP, Herat**

We had many problems and difficulties, but no issues related to the violation of our dignity. **A161, a female IDP, Kabul**

We were only worried because of conflict, and like other people, we faced security, food, vehicle, and financial problems, but there was no concern regarding our dignity. **A169, a female IDP, Kabul**

3.3.3 Response

On arriving at host communities or IDP camps, IDPs were in desperate need of **life-saving assistance** in the form of shelter, food, clothes, and water. While some received help from relatives or locals, others did not. The government and humanitarian response was often significantly delayed due to a combination of the abrupt nature of the displacement, the lack of access to certain areas, and the nature of the assessment process, which involved extensive screening to identify the needs of the IDPs prior to the provision of aid. This was a crucial stage at which IDPs experienced loss of dignity.

When we arrived here, we were very exhausted. Then our relatives came to visit us, ensuring that we could save our honour and dignity and it was all fine. I should say that we have not received any help from our government yet. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Early on when we arrived in Kabul, we had to put a tent up for ourselves near to the road. I remember that everyone was looking at us while passing our way. We felt very terrible and said to ourselves “why do we

have to live in this situation and why is there no way for us to be rid of these bad conditions?" **A154, a female IDP, Kabul**

I think our migration here has had a negative effect on our esteem and honour because when we came here there was neither a proper shelter nor the necessities of life for us. Organisations and governments will not help us to protect our honour and dignity. **A203, a male IDP, Mazar**

However, IDPs acknowledged that humanitarian aid organisations helped them to **protect their dignity** by providing them with life-saving assistance and provisions to help them meet their most basic needs. Many IDPs appreciated the assistance, even if it was not enough. This was particularly the case when organisations treated the IDPs with kindness and respect.

On the one hand, relief organisations have helped us maintain our dignity and reputation. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

We are satisfied with the contributions of the aid organisations. They have been very helpful and kind to us. They gave us money and food. Their staff treated us with compassion and respect. **A103, a female IDP, Herat**

They invited us through phone to the designated place and they gave us assistance in a very respectful way, they didn't take our pictures. **A132, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Some IDPs believed that humanitarian organisations were interested in **protecting and upholding IDPs dignity**, but nevertheless, IDPs remarked that the assistance provided was insufficient, inconsistent, and sporadic.

Aid organisations are interested in protecting our honour and dignity, that's why sometimes they do surveys and ask about our life situation. Still, we haven't received major aid from these organisations. One or two times we received rice, flour, and oil. **A01, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We are satisfied with the behaviour of the employees of the organisations, but we are not satisfied with the aid because it does not help much to solve our problems. They help one month, and then they don't get back to us for a few months. If they help, they give much less to large families. **A112, a male IDP, Herat**

Other IDPs felt that the **humanitarian response was not dignified** and that their dignity was damaged in the process of accepting aid.

We stood all day in the hot weather while they were giving the assistance, and it harms our dignity. **A131, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

When we went the place of assistance and saw the conditions, we decided that it is better not to have the assistance than to receive it, because the assistance was not in honour and respect. **A143, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

When they help IDPs they assemble people in a square and then distribute the aid in front of the host community. I think this is against our dignity.

A94, a female IDP, Kunduz

IDPs experienced a mixture of responses from their host communities. Many received **help and assistance from their host communities**. They reported living in harmony with the local residents and felt that they were respected by them.

I have a peaceful relationship with my neighbours. I am sure that my honour and dignity is protected. They do not disturb us. Reputation and dignity is very important for us in order to be safe. **A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

In the matter of dignity and honour, we have not encountered any problems. No one is bothering us here. Our girls wear their hijab, and no one disturbs them. Our camp is secured, and we live in complete security. We hope to live in complete security as long as we are alive. We are very pleased with the people of Herat. **A105, a female IDP, Herat**

At first, when we came to Herat, we had no life facilities such as land for living or food for eating. The people of Herat helped us, and we thank them. The Herat people behave very well towards us. **A107, a female IDP, Herat**

Conversely, some IDPs described **strained relationships with their host communities**, which impacted upon their dignity.

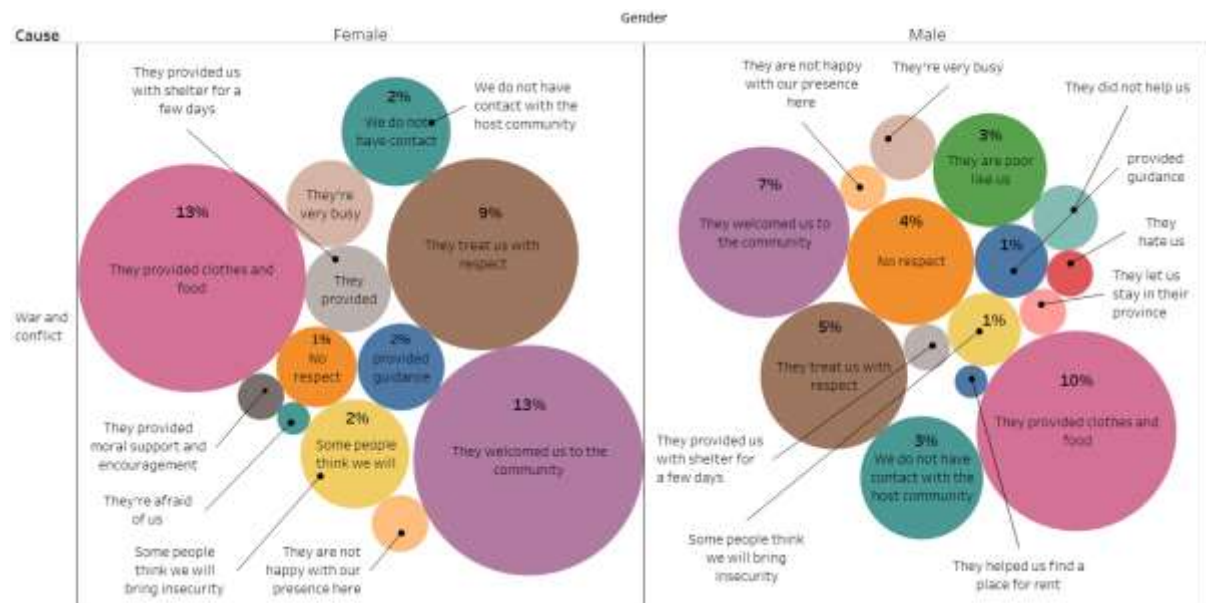
We had a good and dignified life in our place of origin, but here our males and females are unemployed, our neighbours treat us like migrants and we feel very disrespected here. Here we live in a tent. **A127, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

We have no respect here, they call us refugees and even do not give us clean water, but we have no option but to live here. **A186, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Some residents do not consider our dignity, and call us names. **A175, a male IDP, Kandahar**

The 527 IDPs who participated in the survey were asked why they did or did not feel welcome in their host communities (Figure 3.2). Those who were satisfied with their host communities felt this way partly because the local people provided IDPs with clothes and food and treated them kindly, whereas those who were not satisfied with their host communities felt this way because the locals did not respect them and thought that IDPs may bring insecurity to their area (Figure 3.2).

Figure 3.2 Reasons given by conflict-induced internally displaced people regarding why they did or did not feel welcome in their host communities



3.3.4 Return and re-settlement

Many IDPs displaced due to war, conflict, and violence stated that they would be **interested in returning** to their place of origin, but only if peace and security was brought to their homeland.

We hope peace will come so we can return to our places. **A122, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

If there is peace and safety, we are willing to return back to our origin homeland. But if not, we are willing to have an honoured and dignified life here. We are willing to spend our life in this place. **A07, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We want to return back as we will have better access to our daily needs. **A174, a male IDP, Kandahar**

IDPs reported that in order to return to their homelands, they would require **support from the government and aid organisations** to rebuild their homes that were destroyed in the war, construct schools and clinics, and provide them with employment opportunities to foster independence and sustainable livelihoods.

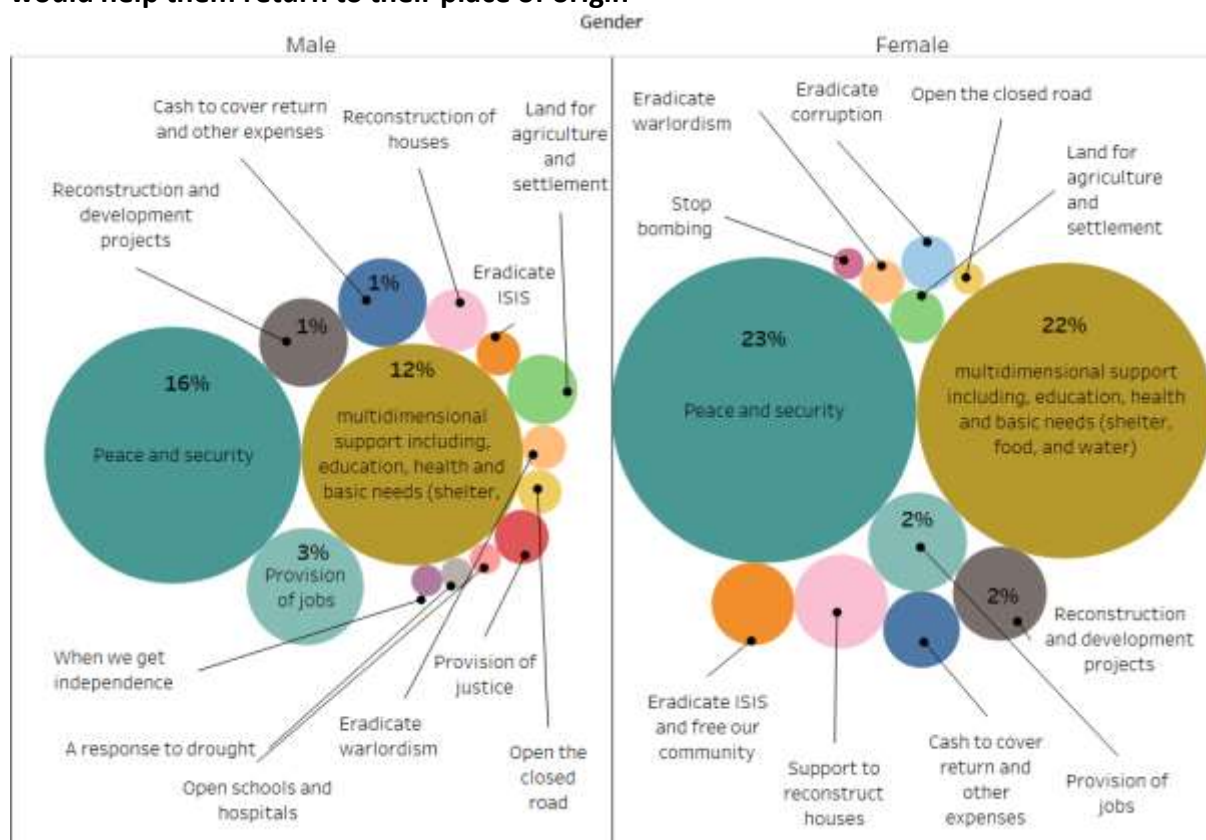
If my origin place is going to be secure, I'm interested in returning there. We need aid organisations and the government to provide us house facilities and to support us. **A15, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We are not familiar with city life, and it would be a great pleasure if peace comes to our place, and the government builds our homes, schools, and clinics, and then we can quickly fulfil our family's needs by cultivating our fields. **A140, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

We want to return back when our homeland becomes secure and we have job opportunities there, and the government renovates our homes there.
A206, a male IDP, Mazar

Clearly, for all IDPs peace and security is essential before they can return to their places of origin. However, IDPs who participated in the survey highlighted a range of factors that would facilitate their return, this included peace and security but other factors were also seen as essential such as reconstruction and development projects, provision of jobs and livelihood opportunities, and multidimensional support to help rebuild and improve their lives, for example support in accessing education and healthcare facilities and basic provisions such as food, shelter, and clean water (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3 The suggestions of conflict-induced internally displaced people regarding what would help them return to their place of origin



3.3.5 Long-term settlement and integration

Where immediate return to the place of origin was not possible due to ongoing war, conflict, and violence, IDPs had no choice but to settle into their camps or host communities for the long-term. In the majority of instances, this meant that IDPs were continually reliant on assistance from relatives, locals, the government, and aid organisations to provide the requirements for them to meet their most basic daily needs. Many reported that they lacked adequate shelter, and expressed sadness at the loss of their previous lives. Some IDPs declared that their dignity had been damaged due to their current living situation.

I have never asked for assistance in my life before but now I am compelled to and I need help from others which damages my dignity. **A131, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

The subject of honour and validity is so important to everyone, and no one wants to lose these two precious things. But we are lacking shelter and live in a tent. When we leave our tent, some people stare at us. It is very bad for us, but if we had a better shelter, we could keep our validity and honour much better. **A109, a female IDP, Herat**

It negatively impacts on your dignity when you displace from your own place to a strange place. We were very happy in our own house, and here we are repeatedly displaced from one house to another, and it negatively affects our mindset and dignity. **A120, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

However, many other IDPs also remarked that despite their harsh living conditions, their **dignity remained intact**.

One thing that I want to be clear on, is that the dignity of Afghan's is secure where they are living, the main problems that we are facing are war, insecurity, unemployment, and financial problems. **A197, a male IDP, Kunduz**

Since I left my origin area, I haven't felt that my dignity has been damaged. We felt that our honour and dignity was at risk in my homeland, and we came here to protect it. **A13, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Another subject that is so precious and important for us is dignity and honour. Even though we have lots of problems like hunger and lack of shelter, we have kept our validity and honour very well. **A108, a female IDP, Herat**

3.4 The journeys and experiences of disaster-induced internally displaced people

Unlike conflict-induced IDPs, those who were displaced mainly due to drought or other natural disasters were able to make informed decisions about when, how, and where to migrate, and the majority did not suffer from violence or strife during their migration. Nevertheless, disaster-induced IDPs suffered similar issues to conflict-induced IDPs on arrival at their intended destinations, including extreme poverty, lack of access to basic facilities and resources, and a delayed response by government and humanitarian workers. Unlike conflict-induced IDPs, many disaster-induced IDPs are not interested in returning to their homelands due to a severe lack of income-generating opportunities and life-sustaining conditions, therefore their goal is successful integration into their host communities. The journeys and experiences of IDPs who were displaced due to natural disasters are discussed in terms of the following stages: deciding to migrate; transition and travel; response; return and re-settlement; and long-term settlement, involving integration into the new community. For disaster-induced IDPs, loss of dignity was less prominent during the initial

stages of displacement and was most prominent during the response stage. Similarly to conflict-induced IDPs, some disaster-induced IDPs reported that they had upheld their dignity despite the challenges posed by displacement. A case story of a drought-induced female IDP who was displaced from Ghor to Herat is presented in Box 3.3.

Box 3.3. Case story illustrating the journey and experiences of a female internally displaced person, who migrated from Ghor to Herat due to drought

*We lost our livestock and agriculture because of drought and war. There were no employment opportunities and we had to flee the community. In terms of security in Herat, we have a much better life than in our province, but we are not satisfied with the aid being provided given the limits and lateness of the assistance. For three months, no help has been provided. We have no food to eat. Most nights, our children go to bed hungry with an empty stomach, crying all day long because of hunger. In the first three months of winter, we didn't get any help from the government or NGOs. We thank the community and our relatives for their support. We're very happy to see the agencies come here to help, but donations are not made on time, so we wait several months for help to arrive. We urge the government and institutions to pay more attention to all IDPs, we need help, and we always look forward to it. Many organisations came here and made promises to help, but they did not keep their promises. If institutions do not help, we will all be hungry. IDPs have the right to a safe, dignified and secure life. We want school for our children so that our kids and women can become literate in the future. We want to work, all women have special skills in tailoring, embroidery, and lace-making. If we have jobs here, we can spend some money to improve our lives. In Ghor, we were doing the same tasks and thanked God that we had a better life. Our children need food, clothing, and doctors. We do not expect life to be too good, but we want the organisations to help us a little bit more not to be hungry. This will help us to look after ourselves. We have no further livelihood in our place of origin and I don't want to go back. **A118***

3.4.1 Deciding to migrate

Unlike conflict-induced IDPs, IDPs whose principal causes of migration were drought or other natural disasters, often made **informed decisions** and preparations prior to displacement. This made their initial journeys far less traumatic than those of conflict-induced IDPs. Although the government and international humanitarian actors aim to respond to natural disasters within the first 72 hours, the onset of drought is difficult to identify, and some IDPs felt that they had no option but to become displaced in order to seek a better life.

Because of drought, I've lost all of my sheep and everything I had. There was no other choice except fleeing to Herat. **A68, a male IDP, Herat**

Drought has a devastating impact on IDPs livelihoods in rural areas, and leads to a lack of income-generating opportunities in the affected communities. IDPs carefully considered their options and made a conscious decision to migrate to urban centres and cities where they knew they were likely to receive humanitarian assistance.

People said that charities and government agencies were assisting IDPs in Herat. To this end, myself and many of our relatives left for Herat. **A102, a female IDP, Herat**

There was a drought in Bala Murghab for a year, and we had to sell our animals to feed ourselves. The following year there was another drought, and we had a lot of problems with our lives, so this year we borrowed money and came to Herat to be helped financially by institutions. **A82, a female IDP, Herat**

3.4.2 Transition and travel

Almost all IDPs who were displaced mainly due to drought and other natural disasters used safe and reliable transportation to reach their intended destinations. Unlike conflict-induced IDPs, IDPs who were displaced due to natural disasters were not exposed to violence or abuse during their migration. However, many were forced to **sell their assets and belongings** along the way in order to pay for their transportation and living costs, making them increasingly vulnerable.

While we had no problems on the way from Badghis to Herat, I sold my house rug for two thousand AFN to pay for our living costs here. My livestock, fifteen sheep and goats, had starved to death. **A70, a male IDP, Herat**

When we arrived in Herat, we sold some of our belongings to pay the car fare and to rent a house here. We endured a lot of problems. We had nothing to eat. **A110, a female IDP, Herat**

3.4.3 Response

IDPs who were displaced largely due to natural disasters had similar experiences to conflict-induced IDPs in terms of the humanitarian response and the response of their host communities. Like conflict-induced IDPs, many disaster-induced IDPs were grateful for any humanitarian assistance that was given and were happy with the behaviour of the aid

organisations, believing that they had their best interests at heart. However, again like with conflict-induced IDPs, a key theme was that the assistance, though helpful, was inadequate, and other IDPs were not convinced that those involved in the humanitarian response were interested in protecting IDPs dignity.

Institutional assistance is still insufficient for us to buy clothes and food, and it was just enough for us to survive. I have to say that we are very pleased with the aid. It has helped us a lot. Without their help, we would have died. Institutional assistance only helps us meet our basic needs. We cannot find a job. **A102, a female IDP, Herat**

We request that aid organisations pay more attention to migrants because most nights we have no bread to eat, our children wake up crying at night because of hunger and when they ask for help from a neighbour, they don't give us anything. We are happy with the behaviour of the institutions, but we are dissatisfied with the help that is being provided. The aid is not sufficient. **A110 a female IDP, Herat**

I think aid organisations and the government don't have any interest in protecting our honour and dignity. I don't have any experience with them here. I did not witness any help and attention. They have consulted with us a few times and provided a list but, they have not implemented anything useful for us. They only make a list of our challenges and leave. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

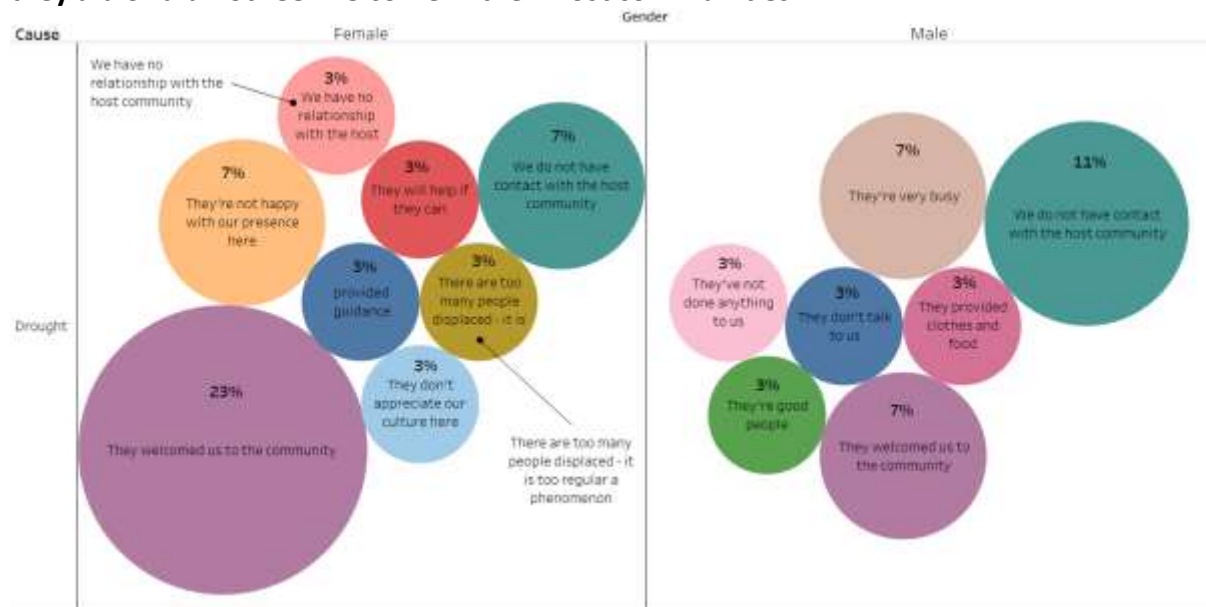
Like conflict-induced IDPs, those displaced due to natural disasters received a **mixed welcome** from their host communities. While some IDPs received help on arrival, others reported mistreatment and feeling lonely and out-of-place.

The people of Herat helped us a lot when we arrived and brought us some food and clothing. **A110, a female IDP, Herat**

There are diverse ethnic groups here, it makes us feel alone. None of our relatives are here. Our honour and dignity are harmed here. I have a garden and I'm cultivating but some unknown people came and burned all my garden. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

As shown in Figure 3.4, 23% of female and 7% of male disaster-induced IDPs surveyed stated that they had received a warm welcome from their host communities. However, 7% of female IDPs and 7% of male IDPs felt that their host communities were not happy with them being there, while yet others reported that they had no relationship or contact with their host communities.

Figure 3.4 Reasons given by disaster-induced internally displaced people regarding why they did or did not feel welcome in their host communities



3.4.4 Return and re-settlement

Unlike conflict-induced IDPs, the majority of those displaced due to natural disasters are **not interested in returning to their place of origin** as there are no income-generating opportunities there, and there is potential danger from further natural disasters.

Now we can't return to our homeland as natural disasters still exist there. Based on that, I'm not interested at all to return there. **A09, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I am not interested in returning because all our properties have been destroyed due to natural disasters and we escaped to save our lives. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

If we can get access to sanitary water, electricity and other services here, we don't want to return back to our origin area and we want to stay here for our whole life. In that area, our lives were under threat from natural disasters. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

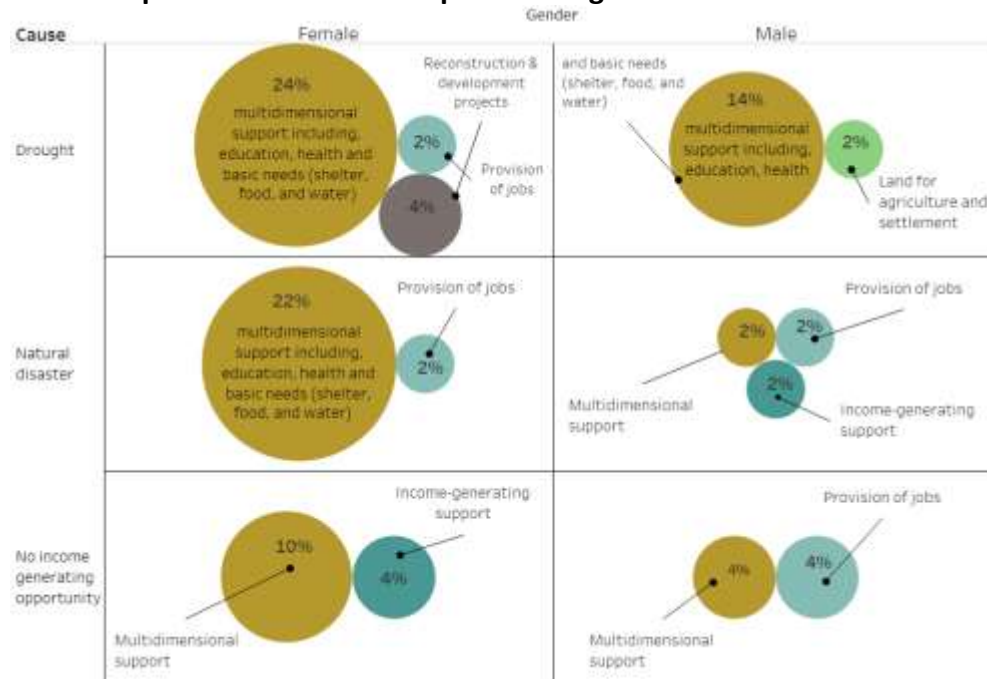
Similarly to conflict-induced IDPs, disaster-induced IDPs reported that in order to return to their homelands, they would require **support to build new homes and businesses, and better access to educational and healthcare facilities**.

I'm not interested at all to return to my homeland. We faced many problems there. If there was a suitable place to stay there, or we were given land to construct a house or shop near to the clinic, Bazar and school, then we can return there. If not, no. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I am interested to return to my homeland if possible. My house is located in a flood area. It can be easily ruined by flood. I would need a better house to live in. If I can't return there, I will stay here, continue my life, and try to be integrated in this society. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Reinforcing the suggestions of conflict-induced IDPs, disaster-induced IDPs who participated in the survey emphasised the importance of the provision of jobs, land, reconstruction, and multidimensional support in facilitating return to their place of origin. (Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 The suggestions of disaster-induced internally displaced people regarding what would help them return to their place of origin



3.4.5 Long-term settlement and integration

The goal for the majority of disaster-induced IDPs is to become settled and integrated into their host communities. Disaster-induced IDPs suffered similar problems to conflict-induced IDPs in that they had difficulty securing employment, and were therefore reliant on others and aid organisations to help them survive and get by. Similarly to conflict-induced IDPs, some disaster-induced IDPs reported that their dignity was intact, while others felt that it had been damaged as a result of displacement.

My honour and dignity has been protected in my origin living area and here as well. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I don't feel that my honour and dignity got damaged by moving here. This place has been safe since we came here. I think if my honour gets damaged, I can handle the situation. Honour and dignity are very important and valuable for us, and we should do our best to keep it. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

While moving here, we felt our honour and dignity would be damaged. Here is not my homeland and we don't have that much freedom comparing to my place of origin. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

3.5 Chapter summary

The current chapter has focused on describing the causes of displacement of the IDPs who took part in this study, and detailing the journeys and experiences of both conflict-induced and disaster-induced IDPs, from their initial forced migration or decisions to flee, to their arrival at their intended destinations and their eventual return or long-term settlement. The findings suggest that IDPs are often displaced for a multitude of reasons, with the main reason being the occurrence of war, conflict, and violence in their places of origin. It was clear that some IDPs experienced violations of their dignity at every stage in their journey, no matter the cause of their displacement, and that the response of the government and humanitarian aid organisations was at best insufficient, and at worst, undignified. However, there was evidence that a number of IDPs had managed to retain their dignity despite the hardships that they suffered. Chapter 4 will describe in further detail the locations and socioeconomic living conditions of the IDPs who participated in this study, and the impact that displacement had on their physical and psychological well-being.

3.6 Key findings

- The majority of IDPs were displaced for multiple reasons
- The main cause of displacement was conflict and war
- Some IDPs had been displaced multiple times
- Most conflict-induced IDPs experienced severe violence and traumatic events during migration
- Many conflict-induced IDPs are unable to return to their place of origin and they remain in displacement for many years
- Many IDPs suffered loss of dignity during some or all stages of their displacement journeys
- Conversely, many IDPs managed to preserve their dignity in spite of the violence and poverty that they had suffered
- The response of the government and humanitarian aid organisations was frequently described as delayed, sporadic, inconsistent, and inadequate
- Assistance was described as undignified and insufficient for solving IDPs longer-term problems
- Many conflict-induced IDPs are interested in returning to their place of origin if it becomes peaceful and secure
- IDPs need multidimensional and sustainable development support from government and humanitarian aid organisations in order to return home
- Most disaster-induced IDPs are not interested in returning home due to a lack of income-generating opportunities and life-sustaining conditions, therefore their goal is successful integration into their host communities

4 Locations and socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, and the impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing

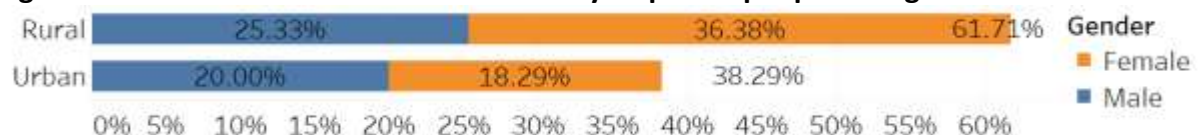
4.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes the geographic locations (urban vs. rural) and socio-economic conditions of the IDPs who participated in this study, and the impact of displacement on IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing. The findings presented in this chapter provide context on the everyday living conditions of displaced people in Afghanistan, and demonstrate that many IDPs live in abject poverty without access to basic services to help them meet their most fundamental human needs. The qualitative evidence suggests that IDPs have an extremely poor quality of life and are simply “doing what they can to survive”. In addition, it is evident that displacement has a profound negative effect on the physical and psychological wellbeing of IDPs. Some reported that their children had died due to a lack of access to basic services and provisions, while others reported poor mental health and other psychological problems such as drug addiction. Many requested psychosocial support for their children and worried for their futures. While the majority of IDPs stated that they feel safe from war, conflict, or environmental danger in their host communities in comparison to their places of origin, they explained that they have serious concerns regarding the lack of sustainable employment opportunities in displacement. Some IDPs continue to experience violence and abuse in their host communities, which further impacts on their physical and psychological wellbeing in displacement.

4.2 Location of internally displaced people

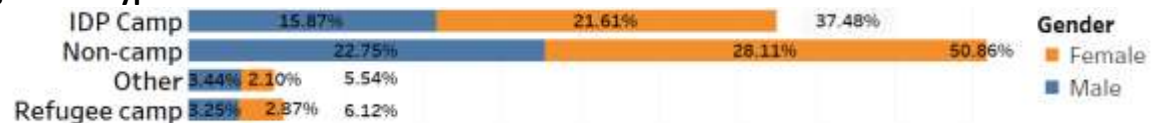
The majority (61%) of the IDPs who took part in the survey are living in rural or semi-rural areas of major regions including Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Kunduz and Mazar, while the remaining 38% are living in urban centres scattered across cities (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 Urban and rural divide of internally displaced people in Afghanistan



Around half of IDPs are living in a non-camp environment amongst their host communities, with their relatives, friends, and other IDPs, while the other half are living in IDP camps, refugee camps, or other settlements (Figure 4.2). Our qualitative research revealed that some IDPs living in camps in Kabul and Herat provinces have been displaced for up to 12 years.

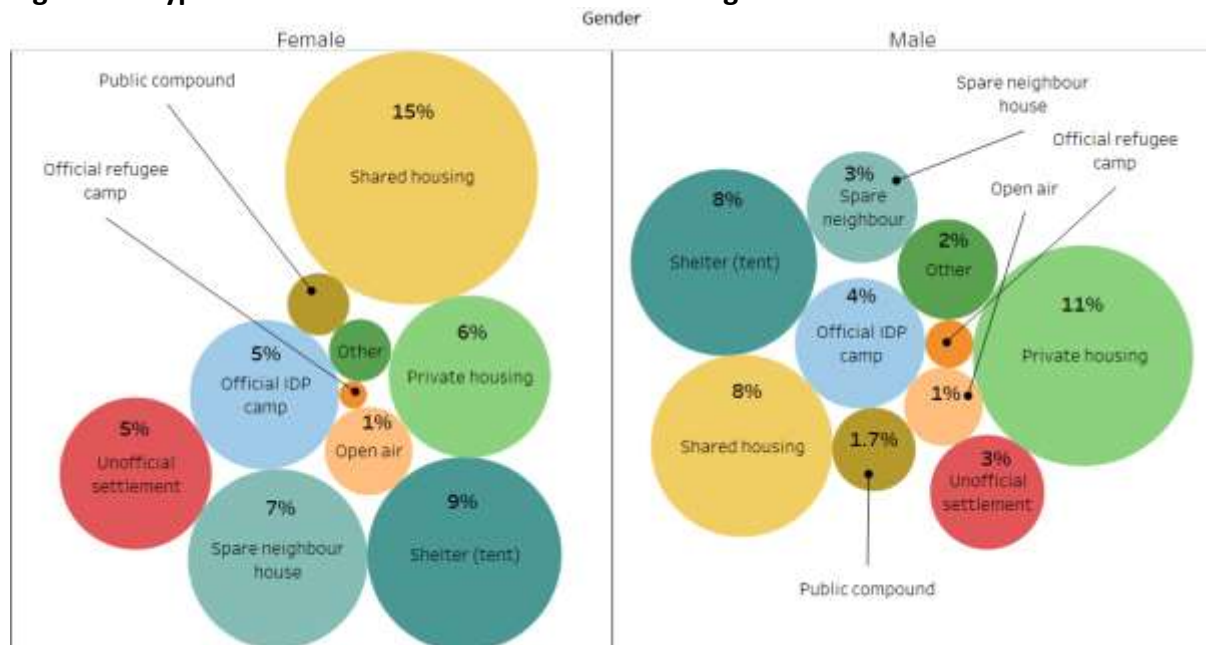
Figure 4.2 Type of settlement



4.2.1 Types of accommodation

Most families live in shared housing accommodation (Figure 4.3), followed by private housing, tents, or, in rural areas, their neighbours spare houses. The majority of those living in shared housing live with their extended families and friends.

Figure 4.3 Types of accommodation that IDPs are living in



4.3 Socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people

Qualitative interviews with IDPs revealed the extent of their poverty, and the dire socio-economic conditions in which they are living. Many reported that they are living hand-to-mouth and struggling to survive, as they have extremely limited access to basic services and provisions and income-generating opportunities. Many IDPs have a very low or non-existent daily income and rely largely on aid from humanitarian organisations, which, as described in Chapter 3, is infrequent and insufficient to meet their daily basic needs. A case story from a male IDP who is struggling to get by while displaced in Herat province is presented in Box 4.1. The challenging socio-economic situations that IDPs have found themselves in are described in further detail below.

Box 4.1 Case story illustrating the difficult socio-economic situation of a male IDP living in Herat province

*I'm struggling with life's difficulties now. My family and I are in a very bad situation. I swear that I don't even know how many debts I have, I have borrowed from many people to survive and to protect my family, and I couldn't sleep last night even for a minute. All night I thought that we don't have food, no flour to make bread, nothing to eat. And my children don't have enough clothes and shoes to wear. Here I am in a bad financial situation, I have no gas to cook food. My small children go to the mountains to collect some firewood, which is dangerous. It is not secure. When I'm not able to buy one kg of gas, take them to doctor for medication, or to provide them with their primary needs, it makes me worry about my family's future. Before migration, my situation was better. I was able to purchase mutton for my family, but now I cannot purchase one kg of chicken for them once a month. **A100***

4.3.1 Poverty and livelihoods

Many IDPs explained that they are living in **extreme poverty** and are doing whatever they can to get by, including begging and carrying out menial tasks or odd-jobs that come their way in order to earn a meagre income.

I have to go out to beg and get some money for my family. If I do not go out and do this, then my family cannot survive. **A144, a female IDP, Kabul**
Sometimes my children have to beg and find some money. I work outside and beg on the street or even in the mosque for money or other things for my family. **A148, a female IDP, Kabul**

I have to work hard and wash other people's clothes and houses to gain a small amount of money. It is not sufficient, but there is no other way. I need to support my family through this. If I do not work, then I cannot support my family and the situation will be even worse. **A150, a female IDP, Kabul**

IDPs find their situation very difficult to handle, with many reporting that their children have to sell rubbish collected from the streets in order to earn some money for their families. Quality of life is very poor in displacement due to acute poverty, and the general feeling among many IDPs is that they are simply just **fighting to survive**.

My life is not good as I feel lonely here. Most people are poor with no income, so the situation is very hard, and the conditions are difficult to bear. People just try to survive here. **A156, a female IDP, Kabul**
I have a twelve-year-old son, he collects plastic bottles every day, and I sell them to pay off my debt. **A102, a female IDP, Herat**

My children collect plastic things to sell and in this way they make a little money and we try to bear with it and just survive. The situation is really bad and we have nothing here. **A172, a female IDP, Kabul**

4.3.2 Access to basic services and provisions

IDPs revealed that they lack access to the most basic provisions for daily living, including clean water; food; adequate shelter; necessities for cooking such as gas, oil, and kitchen equipment/utensils; clothing and shoes; heating for warmth in winter; and electricity. In addition, they are often unable to access basic healthcare services and educational facilities and equipment, and employment opportunities are severely lacking. This is evidenced by the case story presented in Box 4.2 and the quotations below.

Our children and infants need so many things like food, clothes, and shoes, and while they are willing to study, they do not have books, pens, or notebooks. The biggest problems we have are lack of shelter, food, and clothes, and we become ill in winter due to the cold weather. **A109, a female IDP, Herat**

Box 4.2 Case story from a female IDP living in Kabul (A163), illustrating the lack of access to basic provisions and services

Since we came here, we have not had the facilities and requirements that we need. We have lived here for five years. My husband is a good man, he is not addicted and is healthy and good-tempered, but there is no work for him to do. I have three daughters and five sons. One of my sons has a blood problem, and blood is showering from his lips non-stop. I took him to the doctor, we need to pay 15,000 AFN for his healing, but we do not have much money. Sometimes we do not have food for our lunch or dinner. My children have to go outside to collect plastic trash to sell and gain some money for us. Also, they are harassed by others, and we cannot object to them. In the meantime, they cannot go to school, and they are illiterate, and they will have no future if they cannot read and write. My kids see other kids going to school and they tell me they want to go to school, and ask why they cannot go. I tell them that the situation is not good and they have to work to find something to help us survive.

We are battling with a lot of difficulties like lack of food, shortage of shelter, absence of medicines, lack of sanitary equipment, and absence of schools where our children can learn. Our children have no clothes to wear, and there is no one here to help us. **A50, a male IDP, Herat**

The main problems we are facing is a shortage of shelter, hunger, freezing weather in the winter season, and hot weather in the summer inside the tent. In the winter, our tent collapsed in the night on our heads, and we were under there until morning until we were rescued by some people. **A108, a female IDP, Herat**

IDPs explained that they and their families often go hungry as they lack the means to purchase **adequate food supplies**.

We need food for our children. Several times we have gone to sleep with empty stomachs and it is not easy for the children to bear. **A158, a female IDP, Kabul**

Our financial situation is very poor, we do not have enough food. **A121, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

Most nights we have no bread to eat, our children wake up at night crying because of hunger. **A110, a female IDP, Herat**

In addition, IDPs reported a number of difficulties with accessing adequate supplies of water, including **clean drinking water**. Some IDPs reported that on occasion, local people attempted to prevent them from accessing water supplies in their host communities.

There is no water piping for transferring water inside of our home, and it makes it difficult for us to use the water. **171, a female IDP, Kabul**

We have to pay for water, and it is so difficult for us to buy it. We are in a poor situation; we need many things, but cannot afford to buy them. **A166, a female IDP, Kabul**

Our most important need is water. When we go to take some drinking water we are treated like migrants, some people prevent us from taking water. This offends our respect and honour, which is very valuable for us and our families. **A210, a male IDP, Mazar**

Other than food and clean water, by far the most important basic need for the IDPs who were interviewed was **adequate shelter**. Many IDPs stated that they do not feel safe or protected without adequate shelter, particularly those living in tents or makeshift shelters. A large proportion of IDPs are living in houses with broken doors or windows or leaking ceilings, and IDPs expressed concerns that their accommodation would not protect them from the intense heat in the summer or the harsh winter weather conditions.

Firstly, the lack of shelter is crucial to us. Winter is coming soon and our places will be wet and our children will get sick easily. Also, in the summer

our children will suffer from the hot weather and a lack of shade. **A43, a female IDP, Herat**

The ceiling is leaking and we had to cover the windows with plastic bags, this is the only thing we can do but it does not work, as it does not prevent the cold from coming in. It is not good at all. **A158, a female IDP, Kabul**

IDPs living in borrowed or rented accommodation reported that they are repeatedly asked to move elsewhere, with many being **unable to afford the rent**.

Many of us are staying in someone else's house and we are not able to buy land or build houses for ourselves. We are often forced to leave our shelters for other communities. Every time, they ask us to give up the house and look for somewhere else to stay and continue our lives. **A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Here I am worried about paying the rent because the owner requested rent and I have nothing to pay him. **A203, a male IDP, Mazar**

Furthermore, IDPs reported that living in tents or rented accommodation had a negative impact on their **dignity**.

Our dignity is not safe, we live in other people's houses and it's always very likely that the homeowner will make us leave the house. The rent of the houses is unaffordable for us as my husband is jobless. **A124, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

Our dignity has been called into question, so we first started living in a tent and then rented a yard. My income is not enough to pay the rent and when the landlord comes looking for the rent, I am not able to pay and he insults us and uses bad words. He threatens me physically, and this has negatively affected our dignity. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

Other basic amenities of life that IDPs are in desperate need of include provisions and **utensils for cooking and eating, clothing and heating** to keep warm in the winter months, and **electricity**.

We do not even have elementary requirements like dishes and clothes. **A43, a female IDP, Herat**

We do not have equipment such as spoons, bowls, and utensils. **A102, a female IDP, Herat**

Winter season is approaching, and we have no stove to warm our homes, firewood, or clothes to tolerate the freezing weather. **A203, a male IDP, Mazar**

We even spend some nights in darkness because we do not have access to light. **A108, a female IDP, Herat**

One female IDP expressed frustration that she was unable to afford to buy **shoes** for her children to wear to school.

Some days I have to go and work to earn very little money by washing a huge number of people's clothes. I wish to find a job and earn more to deal with my family's problems. Yesterday my kids' teacher told them I should buy shoes for them. I went to the school and told their teacher about our situation. With this situation, it is not possible to buy shoes for them. My husband cannot work, and I can hardly provide for my family. I cannot think about buying shoes or other things for my kids. **A154, a female IDP, Kabul**

Due to their financial difficulties, numerous IDPs described how they are unable to afford **healthcare** or transport to the nearest healthcare facility if they or their family members become ill.

I need to cure my illnesses including high blood pressure and blood sugar, but cannot do anything as the daily earnings of the family cannot meet this expense. **A19, a female IDP, Herat**

Our children are sick, but we don't have enough money to take them to the hospital. **A239, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

There is no clinic here, my mother is sick and it's difficult for me to take her to the hospital for treatment because the transportation to reach the clinic is costly. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

In addition, some IDPs explained that they are **unable to practice their cultural and religious traditions and customs** due to poverty.

There are some traditional activities and customs that we cannot do now. Life difficulties create limitations for us in performing our traditions and customs. For example, we were visiting our relatives during two big Muslim ceremonies but here we don't know people and they are poor so they can't provide anything to serve their guests. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We can't practice our culture programs due to poverty. For example, we used to celebrate Nowruz in our homeland, but here we are unable to celebrate it. **A201, a male IDP, Mazar**

Our financial situation doesn't let us perform the local customs. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

The majority of IDPs placed huge emphasis on the importance of **education for their children**. Lack of access to schools, education, and educational equipment was viewed as a fundamental problem for those IDPs whose children are unable to attend school.

Children need to have access to schools and quality education. They need more facilities. There is no professional teacher here, there are not enough facilities in schools, and there are no classrooms and no chairs.

The quality of education is so bad that students finishing the 7th grade are not able to read and write or even count. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

The problem we have is the lack of schools. We want our children to study and be educated. There is no school here, there is no teacher, some of the migrants themselves teach the children, but we want the government to pay special attention to education. **A116, a male IDP, Herat**

Some IDPs reported that while they wanted their children to attend school, they relied on them to provide a small income for the family.

Our children do work and wash cars instead of going to school, as we have no other way to earn an income. **A135, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Of the 527 IDPs who participated in the survey, 51% were not satisfied with the education provided to their children, while only 18% said that they were completely or mostly satisfied. Around two-thirds of IDPs surveyed reported that their children attended school; 63% said that their female children attended school, while 69% said that their male children attended school. The main barriers to receiving an education for male internally displaced children include lack of schools in the area and poverty/limited finances (Figure 4.4), while female internally displaced children also face additional challenges/barriers to attending school such as cultural barriers, lack of permission from family members to attend school, armed groups or community leaders preventing girls from attending school, lack of female teachers, and the potential for harassment on the journey to school (Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.4 Male and female internally displaced people report the barriers to receiving an adequate education for male internally displaced children in Afghanistan

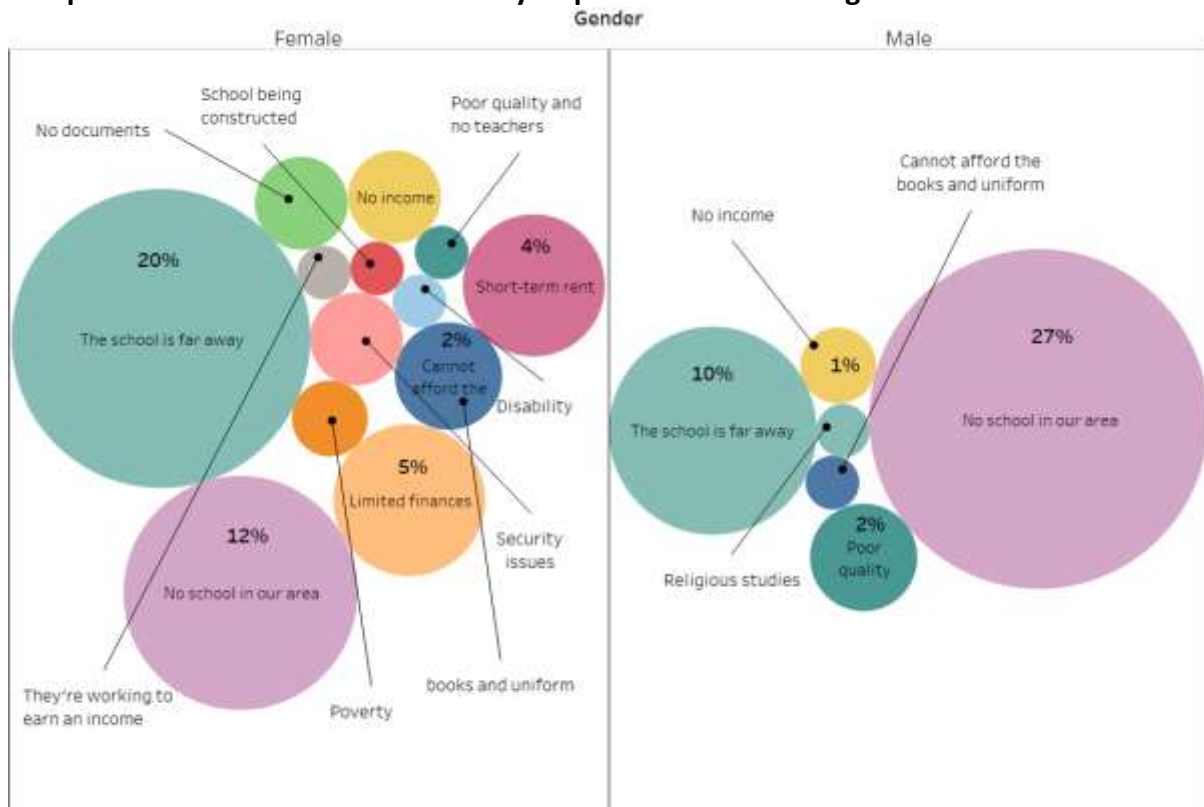
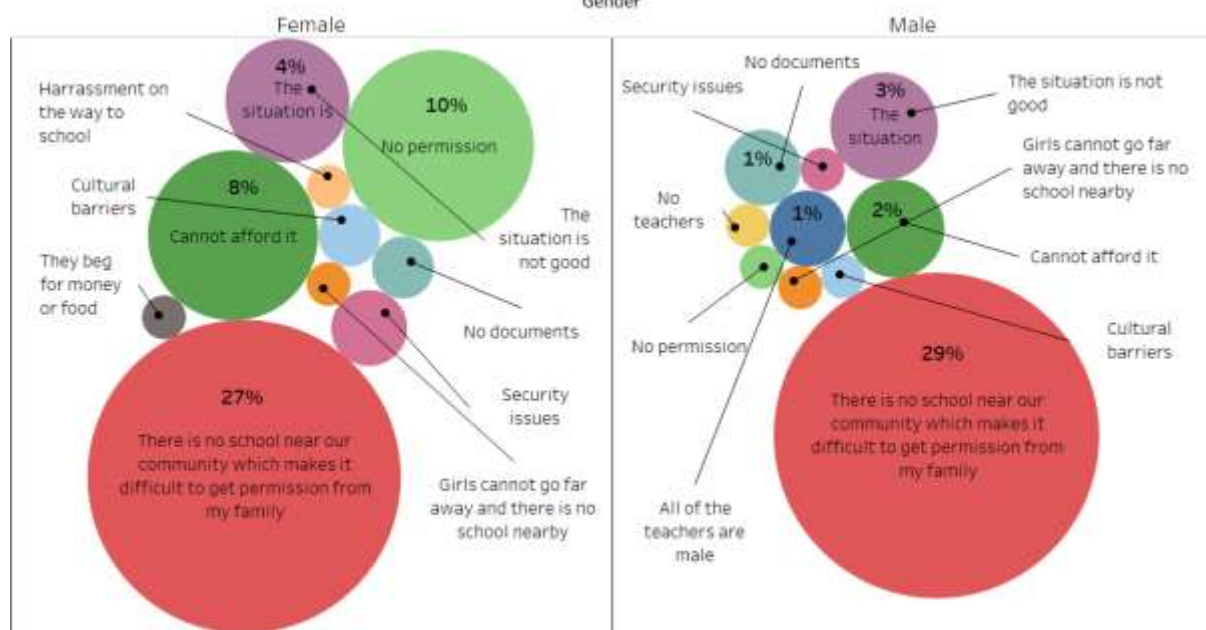


Figure 4.5 Male and female internally displaced people report the barriers to receiving an adequate education for female internally displaced children in Afghanistan



IDPs pointed out that clinics, schools, and other educational facilities such as training centres are often simply **too far away** for them to access.

Training centres and schools are located far away and they are difficult to reach. We have the same problem with medical clinics, these are our main and urgent needs. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

There is a lack of access to medicine and general medical facilities, and training centres. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

There is a lack of clinics, medicines, doctors, and vehicles. When someone gets sick, we have a lot of problems getting to the city. Sometimes, we get lost in the middle of the road. **A116, a male IDP, Herat**

In addition, some IDPs stated that they would like access to a **mosque** in order to be able to pray and practice their religion.

We request a shelter, or house, and a mosque, these are very urgent. **A110, a female IDP, Herat**

Our children need a mosque, school, food, and clothing. **A106, a female IDP, Herat**

A major concern for IDPs is the **scarcity of income-generating opportunities** and the **dearth of long-term employment prospects**. IDPs revealed that there are limited income-generating opportunities for the local people as it is, and that as displaced people, they have an even worse chance of securing work or employment in their host communities.

When we were in our home town, our life was good and we had jobs, but since being displaced, we lost everything and now there are no jobs. We

have nothing in our life. We need jobs and it is so difficult for us to bear.
A161, a female IDP, Kabul

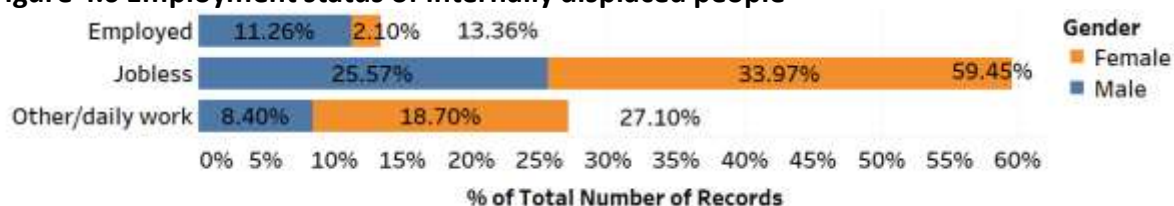
Our basic needs are work opportunities to support our families, if we are jobless then how we can support our families? **A206, a male IDP, Mazar**
 We were pleased with our village life because we had access to our daily needs there, while here we are jobless and we stretch our hands in front of people to help us. **A226, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

There are no jobs for us. The local people are jobless, and as new-comers, we have no place in the market. **A33, a male IDP, Herat**

4.3.3 Jobs in displacement

Almost 60% of IDPs who participated in the survey were unemployed, while 13% were employed and the remaining 27% were engaged in casual daily work (Figure 4.6). Only 28% of those surveyed reported that their families were able to make a living by working in the local economy. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews with IDPs revealed that their job profiles have largely changed as a result of their displacement, as their agricultural skills and experience are mostly irrelevant in urban areas.

Figure 4.6 Employment status of internally displaced people



While IDPs largely relied on farming for generating income in their places of origin, in displacement, men mostly rely on casual daily labour in the construction sector, or work as street vendors.

I was just a simple farmer and working as a shepherd, while here I am just a daily paid labourer. **A02, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I was a farmer. Most often I was working on someone else's land and we distributed the cultivation 50–50. I am working as a daily paid labourer now, mostly doing masonry. It is too difficult, but I have to do it in order to survive. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

At first, my husband was making clay for construction work, but now he is a street seller, as there is no other work for him to do. He has to work to make a little money to buy the basic things for the family. **A164, a female IDP, Kabul**

IDPs explained that often the only work available for men is **daily paid labour**, and if they could not acquire this work then they were unable to meet their basic needs and were

forced to resort to borrowing money in order to get by. In addition, older men are at a disadvantage as they are not often chosen to undertake the work.

Since we have migrated here, the situation is that if I find the chance to work as a daily paid labourer we have something to eat, otherwise there would be nothing to eat. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Every day I look forward to having the chance to work as a daily paid labourer, otherwise we are just borrowing money to provide food for my family. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

My husband is 55 years old and unable to work. He goes to the area where daily paid labourers are gathering, but most of the time he returns home with nothing. People prefer to choose young men to work for them instead of older men. **A103, a female IDP, Herat**

Women in displacement typically run the family home and look after their children, and also perform **domestic duties** or **tailoring** for other families for a small income.

I work in people's homes washing their dishes and clothes and cleaning their houses to earn some money for my family. Our situation is really bad and difficult to bear. **A158, a female IDP, Kabul**

I look after my kids and also work in other people's houses to wash their clothes and dishes and clean their houses. **A164, a female IDP, Kabul**

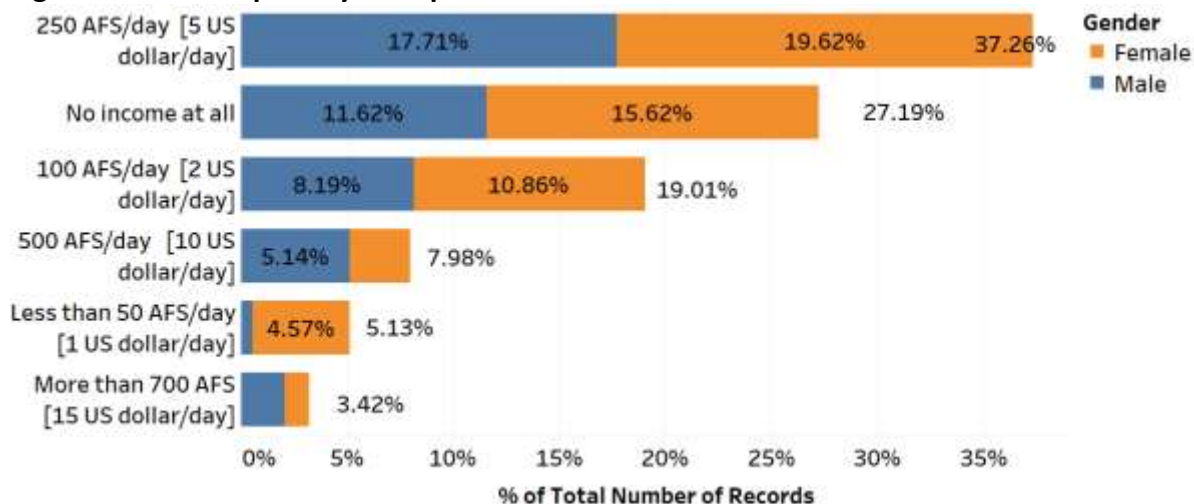
I do tailoring to make a little money to supply necessities for my family, it is not sufficient, but it is better than being jobless and doing nothing. **A167, a female IDP, Kabul**

The 527 IDPs who participated in the survey reported *numerous* barriers to gaining employment (Figure 4.7). Some of the main barriers included corruption, injustice, and nepotism; a lack of job opportunities; and illiteracy and a lack of relevant skills. Women also cited lack of permission to go out as a major barrier to gaining employment, as well as cultural barriers, stigma, and the fear of abuse, while the additional issue for men was fear of the Taliban and ISIS.

4.3.4 Incomes

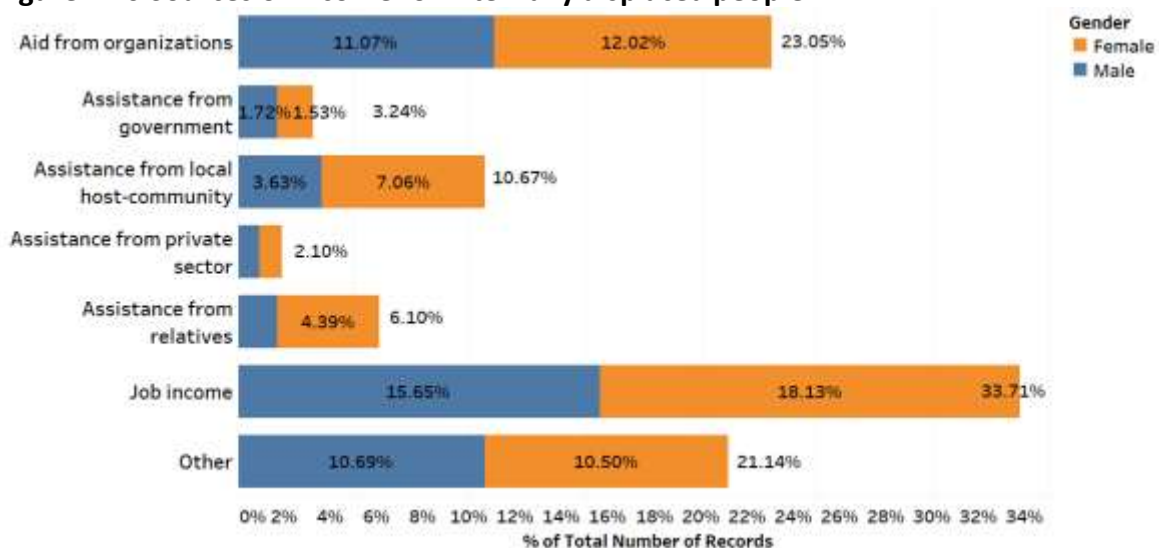
The majority of IDPs who completed the survey (37%) indicated that they earned the equivalent of around just 5 US dollars per day, while over one quarter (27%) reported that they received no income at all (Figure 4.9). A further 19% reported earning the equivalent of just 2 US dollars per day, while a very small percentage (3%) indicated that they made an income equal to 15 US dollars per day.

Figure 4.9 Income per day in displacement



Employment constitutes the main source of income for around a third (33%) of IDPs, however, financial aid from humanitarian organisations is the primary source of income for nearly a quarter (23%) of IDPs (Figure 4.10). A small percentage rely largely on financial assistance from the government (3%) or the private sector (2%), while some IDPs receive most of their income via financial assistance from their relatives (6%) or their host communities (10%). In reality, IDPs must rely on multiple sources of income in order to try and make ends meet.

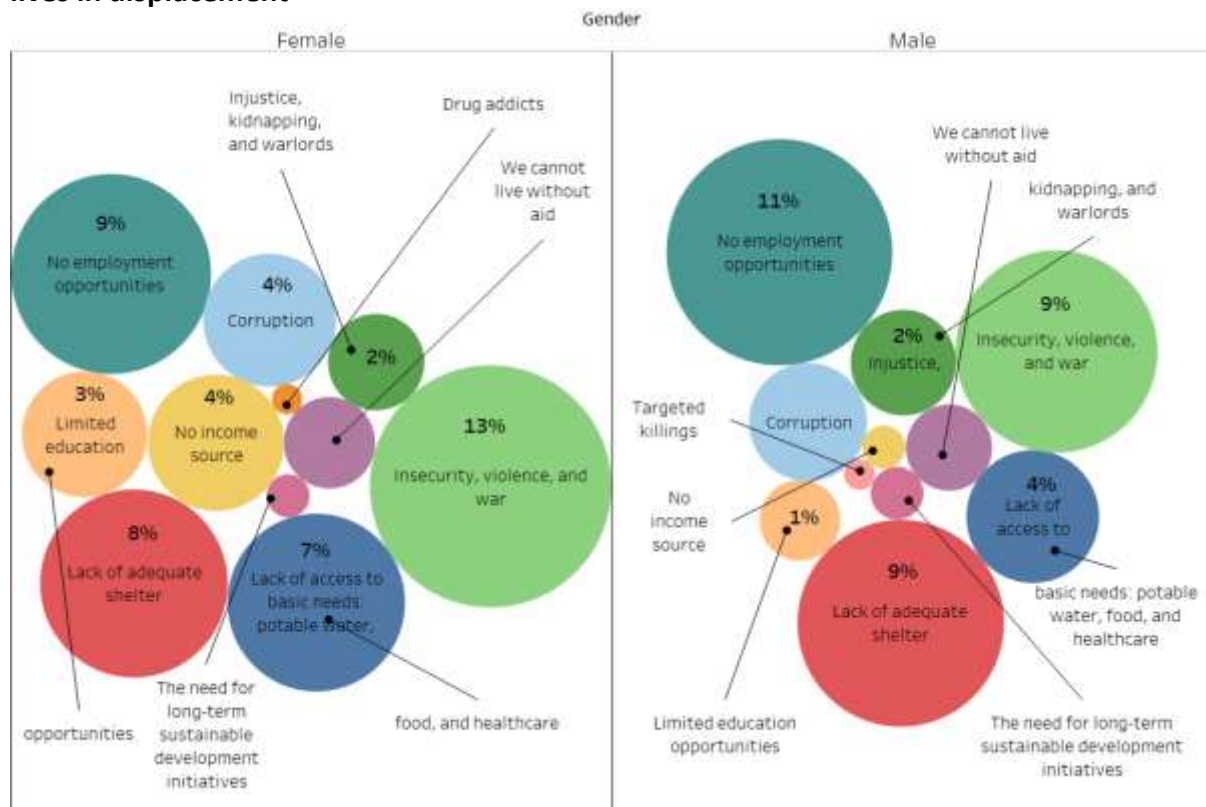
Figure 4.10 Sources of income for internally displaced people



4.3.5 Main barriers to improving life in displacement

The IDPs who took part in the survey listed a range of barriers that they face when trying to improve their lives in displacement (Figure 4.11). Many of these barriers echoed those discussed in the qualitative interviews, such as limited access to their basic needs, education, and employment opportunities, and a lack of appropriate shelter and income. Other barriers included the ongoing security situation, a dependency on emergency aid, and the lack of long-term sustainable development initiatives.

Figure 4.11 The barriers that internally displaced people face when trying to improve their lives in displacement



4.4 The impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing

It was clear from the qualitative interviews with IDPs that displacement has a severe impact on their physical and psychological wellbeing. Some IDPs reported that their children had died or fallen ill due to a lack of access to basic amenities and services such as heating and healthcare, and poor sanitary conditions. Many IDPs reported poor mental health as a consequence of their earlier experiences of conflict, war, and extreme violence and as a result of losing close family members. Some IDPs described how their children were traumatised from the war and needed psychosocial support, while others revealed that some internally displaced men resort to using drugs as a way of coping with their mental anguish. The majority of IDPs described feeling secure in their host communities and IDP camps, and violence was reported to be rare. However, cultural norms gave rise to violence or contempt towards certain groups such as widows, as it is perceived as shameful for women to be seen outside of the home without a male family member and in some situations this could not be avoided. In addition, some IDPs had migrated to areas such as Kunduz where the security situation had become increasingly volatile. Experiences of

violence and hostility in the host communities and IDP camps further impact upon IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing.

IDPs were less concerned about the impact of displacement on themselves, and more concerned about its impact on their children. The IDPs interviewed were extremely concerned about their children's health, chances of survival, psychological wellbeing, and economic futures, and longed for a better life and prospects for them. Many were desperate for their children to get a good education so that they could go on to have better lives than they had.

Our children should have access to schools and quality education. We suffer illiteracy and couldn't improve our situation. Our children should be educated and armed with knowledge. This would help them improve their life. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

In the case of children, they should have access to schools, health centres, clinics, and drinking water. They should be supported in all aspects of life. **A09, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

My children's need is to have access to school and education. They also need to be morally supported. They deserve a better life. **A15 a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Here, our children go to school and it makes us happy that our children can get an education. There is nothing else which can make us happy. **A130, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

4.4.1 Physical impact of displacement

Many IDPs explained that they have suffered from countless **health-related problems** as a result of poverty in displacement.

In our home town, we were healthy, but since we came here, my wife got sick and I had to borrow money from my friends to take her to the clinic. I hope none of my children gets sick as I have no money and my daily earnings cannot cover it. All the people here have the same problems and they are jobless. Our children are in a bad situation and their health is not good. **A24, a male IDP, Herat**

Some IDPs reported that their children are suffering from **malnutrition** and have contracted **illnesses and diseases** from unsanitary drinking water.

Our infants are malnourished and do not have enough milk to drink. **A67, a male IDP, Herat**

Due to a lack of access to sanitary drinking water, our children are getting sicknesses like diarrhoea. We want to ask the government to prioritize our access to sanitary water. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Some IDPs even described how their **children had died** due a lack of food, a lack of warm clothes and heating in the winter, and a lack of access to healthcare and medication.

We didn't have enough food to eat, we were in a very bad situation, and we lost a baby because of hunger. **A85, a female IDP, Herat**

We need money, my child died due to a lack of money for a heater. **A162, a female IDP, Kabul**

Last year, most families and neighbours lost their children because they were sick, and there was no doctor or medication to treat sick children. **A111, a male IDP, Herat**

4.4.2 Psychological impact of displacement

Conflict, war, and violence had a serious psychological impact on many of the IDPs interviewed for this study. Many reported suffering “nervous breakdowns” and feeling distressed after losing loved ones in violent circumstances. For many IDPs, their psychological difficulties have impacted on their ability to find work and to try and provide for their families.

The war has affected both our lives and our minds. The Taliban were very violent in dealing with people, blinding them, shooting them, breaking their bones, or kidnapping and killing them. These were the worst acts of violence that have put us under mental stress. **A51, a female IDP, Herat**

The violence has bothered me, because we lost our family members in the war and due to that we have become psychosocial patients. **A178, a male IDP, Kandahar**

My husband is a mental patient and cannot work and we have to hold the burden of life on our shoulders. **A155, a female IDP, Kabul**

Some IDPs reported feeling **stressed and anxious** because they are unable to provide for their families’ most basic needs and they feel that their situation is hopeless.

Once I had a flock of sheep, camels, and horses, but nowadays I'm not even able to provide the primary needs for my family or shoes for my children, so it is mental anguish that I suffer now. **A101, a male IDP, Herat**

IDPs reported that some men turn to **drugs** as a coping mechanism to deal with unemployment and poverty, and end up becoming addicted.

Unfortunately, some men have become addicted to drugs because they are jobless. When they cannot find a suitable job or work for themselves, they get many serious problems like anxiety, depression, and other more serious mental problems. **A153, a female IDP, Kabul**

They have no job, so they turn towards using drugs as their minds are overloaded with problems, especially with unemployment. My husband is smoking grass. **A163, a female IDP, Kabul**

I have a young son, I am afraid for his future and I do not let him go out as there are many addicted people outside. Many men are addicted, and

women cannot do anything to help or get rid of the situation. We have these problems because of war and being jobless. In several cases, I took some of the addicts to the hospital for recovery, but they said 'If we stay here, then who supports our families and who looks after them?' So they returned to their situation but could not recover because their minds are so busy with these matters and issues that threaten their families and society. **A160, a female IDP, Kabul**

Many IDPs reported that their **children had been traumatised** by the war, conflict, and violence that occurred in their places of origin prior to displacement.

Our children are in mental trauma, they are even scared in their dreams. **A185, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Our children are ill, and most of them are in mental trauma. They suddenly awake in the night, screaming and crying. **A186, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Our children have psychological needs because there was firing, injury, and death and they suffer lots of problems due to this. **A183, a male IDP, Kandahar**

As a result, IDPs stated that their children were in desperate need of **psychosocial support** in order to improve their psychological wellbeing and quality of life.

As our children have suffered war, they are distressed, therefore they need psychosocial support to lead a better and more comfortable life. **A178, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Our children are scared of the war and they really need psychosocial support. **A198, a male IDP, Kunduz**

Our children are suffering from the war and are disturbed, therefore they desperately need psychosocial support. **A196, a female IDP, Kunduz**

While this was not reported in any other interviews, one female IDP mentioned that she had become so frustrated with her situation and it had become so unbearable that she would be willing to carry out a **suicide attack** on the government.

I've been living in a very difficult situation that forced me to finish with my life. I would be happy to do a suicide attack on the government and the president as he promised many times to give us a plot of land but he didn't. **A172, a female IDP, Kabul**

4.4.3 Experiences of violence in the host community

Although IDPs face many difficulties in their daily lives, most indicated that they felt **safe and secure** in displacement in comparison to in their places of origin.

There are some problems here as well, such as lack of water and food resources and so on, but at least it is more secure. **A16, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We consume a small amount of food in complete safety. No one is threatening us. We prefer hunger over insecurity. **A106, a female IDP, Herat**

The government and aid organisations should provide us with a clinic, drinking water, road, shelter, and many other urgent things that we need. We had more freedom, good water resources, and more respect in our homeland. On the other hand, there is no physical or environmental danger here. Compared to my origin area, this place is safer. **A08, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

However, although safety and security was viewed as a positive aspect of displacement, many IDPs continued to worry about **the lack of sustainable job opportunities** and therefore their ability to support themselves and their families in their camps or host communities.

This place is fully secured compared to our homes. We don't worry about war here, but we do worry about work opportunities. **A177, a male IDP, Kandahar**

We haven't faced any violence, but we are jobless here and we cannot afford our home rent and daily life needs. **A179, a male IDP, Kandahar**
Here it is safe and peaceful, but our males and females are jobless, we don't have any work. We want work, clinics, and schools for our children. **A193, a female IDP, Kandahar**

In addition, some IDPs commented that they did not feel safe and that their **dignity had been harmed** due to the conditions in which they were living.

There is no security problem, but we do not feel comfortable here as we have no private boundary, and we feel that we do not have a home or even a safe place to live, especially for our young children. **A163, a female IDP, Kabul**

We are afraid of our dignity being violated as we are living in an open space and it might be dangerous for our women and children. **A29, a male IDP, Herat**

Some IDPs had migrated to areas that subsequently became insecure, such as Kunduz. Therefore, these IDPs were concerned for their safety and security and were **fearful of war and armed groups**, which further impacted on their psychological wellbeing.

We got displaced here, and then Kunduz collapsed into the hands of armed groups. Therefore, most of the time we are scared. **A194, a female IDP, Kunduz**

When we migrated to Kunduz, it was secure, away from war, but now Kunduz is also a battleground for armed groups, and we are facing problems. **A197, a male IDP, Kunduz**

We are disturbed because we left our homeland and became homeless here. We are afraid of armed groups as they can attack on Kunduz anytime and will rob our properties. **A196, a female IDP, Kunduz**

While experiences of violence in displacement were reported to be rare, certain groups such as **widows are more vulnerable to violence** and mistreatment due to cultural norms in Afghanistan that dictate that a woman should not leave the home without a male family member.

I am a widow and a caretaker, I am sick and had a nervous breakdown. I was beaten up by my neighbours just because I wanted to collect water. They insulted and humiliated me and told me to go away, because I am an unattended woman. What can I do with my children and where can I go?
A84, a female IDP, Herat

4.5 Chapter summary

The current chapter has described the geographic locations and socio-economic conditions of IDPs in Afghanistan, and the impact of displacement on IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing. The findings suggest that IDPs are living in extreme poverty in displacement and struggling to meet their most basic daily needs, and that displacement has a severe impact on IDPs physical and psychological health and wellbeing. Chapter 5 seeks to understand what the concept of dignity means to IDPs and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and to describe the impact of humanitarian assistance on dignity in displacement.

4.6 Key findings

- IDPs struggle to meet their most basic daily needs
- IDPs are in dire need of adequate shelter and sustainable housing for protection of their lives as well as their dignity
- IDPs struggle to access basic services such as healthcare and education due to both poverty and a lack of facilities
- Female displaced children face additional cultural barriers to accessing education, for example a lack of permission from family members to attend school, or armed groups or community leaders preventing girls from attending school
- Income-generating opportunities are scarce and sustainable employment opportunities are almost non-existent
- While IDPs are largely safe from conflict or war in displacement, they are concerned about the lack of job opportunities as without these they are living in extreme poverty and are unable to provide for their families
- IDPs are willing to undertake almost any type of work if the opportunities are provided for them
- Displacement, violence, and poverty has a profound impact on IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing, which in turn impacts on IDPs livelihoods as some are unable to work at all due to their ill health
- Certain groups such as widows are more vulnerable to violence in displacement due to cultural norms and practices
- IDPs principal concerns are food and clean water; shelter; education and psychosocial support for their children; and employment opportunities

5 Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and the impact of humanitarian assistance on dignity in displacement

5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter illustrates how dignity is conceptualised among the IDPs and humanitarian actors who participated in this study, and describes the impact that humanitarian assistance has had on the dignity of IDPs in Afghanistan. Dignity was conceptualised and understood by IDPs in multiple different ways. For some IDPs, dignity was conceptualised in terms of access to basic necessities such as food, clothes, and shelter. While some IDPs linked dignity to prosperity and wealth, others reported that poverty was not necessarily a threat to their dignity. To many IDPs, dignity meant mutual respect and compassion, peace, safety and security, and, importantly, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. Others discussed dignity in terms of protection of their lives, homes and families; protection from sexual abuse and harassment; freedom; and human rights. For many IDPs, the concept of dignity was linked to their religious beliefs and practices, and a large majority of IDPs conceptualised dignity in terms of access to high quality education for their children. While humanitarian actors and senior government staff also ascribed multiple different meanings to the concept of dignity in displacement, respect and human rights were the main themes discussed in the qualitative interviews, and actors and staff gave less emphasis than IDPs to the roles of education, independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency in restoring dignity amongst IDPs.

While some IDPs were satisfied with the humanitarian assistance they received and felt that their dignity had been upheld during the assistance process, many others felt that while the aid workers' behaviour was appropriate, the assistance provided was woefully insufficient and unsatisfactory. Many IDPs explained that the aid given was not consistent with their needs and would not enable them to become self-sufficient. Still others felt that the humanitarian response was positively undignified. They reported that humanitarian actors often did not consider their culture, religion, or values when providing assistance, and described instances of abuse and mistreatment by humanitarian staff, and corruption in the distribution of aid. Although many IDPs reported that their dignity was harmed during assistance, most were reluctant to complain or to report instances of mistreatment.

5.2 Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people

Qualitative interviews with IDPs revealed that dignity was understood to have **multiple different meanings**. Individual perceptions of dignity varied, and many IDPs ascribed multiple meanings to the concept of dignity, as evidenced by the case story presented in Box 5.1. This IDP spoke about dignity in terms of mutual respect and understanding, the religious practice of purdah for women, access to basic facilities, and protection from harassment. It was clear that the concept of dignity was extremely important to IDPs, with many describing it as **fundamental to a person's life and identity**.

I think the core or main property of any person is his honour and dignity. If anyone loses his/her dignity and honour, they will have nothing any more. It is very important. *A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan*

Human beings have two basic needs on the earth, first those things which are essential to live, and the second thing is human dignity. Without one or both, life is difficult. **A180, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Honour and dignity are very important to us, without that, life will not have any meaning. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Dignity is the most fundamental and basic thing for every human being. **A206, a male IDP, Mazar**

Box 5.1 Case story from a male IDP in Herat province, illustrating the multiple meanings he ascribed to the concept of dignity

*Honour and dignity mean that others understand us, and that we respect each other. We should forgive others and not be angry with them. Dignity for women means that no one disturbs them or looks at them. Before we came here, we had shelter in our hometown and basic facilities, women and men were not involved in each other's business. But now due to the lack of toilets, we have seen many cases of harassment which damages our dignity; lack of facilities is a lack of freedom. **A101***

5.2.1 Basic needs

For some IDPs, the concept of dignity was related to **access to basic and life-saving provisions** such as food, water, clothes, and medicine.

Dignity is having something to eat, water to use for washing, and something to wear. **A72, a male IDP, Herat**

Honour and dignity for me mean good facilities, having something to eat for my children, access to doctors and medicine, and some clothes to wear. I'm a widow and I have around 100,000 AFN debt, I'm not able to pay these debts. If I go and ask someone for financial help I feel that my honour and dignity will be harmed. **A73, a female IDP, Herat**

My kids didn't have clothes and shoes, we don't have bread to eat, and these are all issues that negatively affect our dignity. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

IDPs explained that the **lack of a shelter and home** in which to live was a significant threat to their dignity. This reinforces the finding reported in Chapter 4 that, other than food and water, an adequate shelter was by far the most important basic need for IDPs.

In my opinion, dignity is to have shelter, and the most important thing is a home, which we don't have at the moment. **A251, a male IDP, Kunduz**

We need shelter to preserve our dignity. It is so important and we are worried about it. **A29, a male IDP, Herat**

5.2.2 Prosperity and wealth

For some IDPs, dignity was linked to **prosperity and wealth**, with several feeling that a dignified life was not possible while they were living in poverty with limited access to long-term work or education opportunities.

I think that dignity is about money, if you have enough money you are honourable, otherwise you are not. **A206, a male IDP, Mazar**

The son of a wealthy person and the son of a poor person are not equal as the son of a rich person has dignity. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

I see a dignified future if there is work for our males, schools and clinics for our children, and an end to our poverty. **A188, a female IDP, Kandahar**

However, it was clear that other IDPs felt the opposite; they maintained that their **dignity was unaffected by poverty, wealth, or social status**.

Poverty does not mean loss of dignity, and we thank God that we have dignity. **A113, a male IDP, Herat**

All humans have honour and dignity, and poverty does not damage human dignity and disrespect. There is no harm to our dignity and honour. **A116, a male IDP, Herat**

5.2.3 Self-reliance and self-sufficiency

Many IDPs conceptualised dignity in terms of **self-reliance and self-sufficiency**, with some feeling that dignity in displacement can only be recovered through becoming self-sufficient.

Unless you return back to your home or you become self-sufficient you can't regain your dignity. **A200, a male IDP, Mazar**

When a person becomes self-sufficient, he can regain his dignity. **A209, a male IDP, Mazar**

IDPs talked about wanting to be independent and self-reliant rather than **having to ask for help or depend on others** for emergency assistance.

We lived a very dignified life in our homeland, therefore we don't want to go for assistance in which the helper shoots our video and shares that with the media. We don't want people to talk behind us about why we are begging someone for something. Dignity means that we shouldn't beg someone for something. **A140, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Honour and respect, in my opinion, is not having to borrow something from others and ask for their help. **A84, a female IDP, Herat**

In my opinion, dignity and respect mean to live independently, living without any pressure and without any loans. **A182, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Many IDPs explained that dignity means for them to be able to **live and work undisturbed in their own homes and villages**, without relying on others for support and without the threat of insecurity.

A life in which you live in your own house, males and females do jobs and your children go to schools and madrasas is a life full of dignity. **A187, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Dignity means to live in your own home, be busy with your work, not be harmed by anyone or face any insecurity, and to not need anyone's support. This migration has made us needy. **A179, a male IDP, Kandahar**

I think people who live in their own home or village have dignity. **A174, a male IDP, Kandahar**

In addition, IDPs linked dignity to access to sustainable **work, employment, and business opportunities** that would enable them to provide for themselves and their families in the long-term.

We want to have our own business in which we can take care of our responsibilities and not be in need. **A212, a female IDP, Paktia**

Providing a working environment can restore a person's lost dignity. In my opinion, honour and dignity mean being financially self-sufficient. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

5.2.4 Protection of life, home, and family

Some IDPs conceptualised dignity in terms of **protection of their lives, homes, and families**, and protection from violence and harassment.

I try to come home in the early evening as I'm worried about my family's safety. It is possible that some unknown people will enter my house and harm our family. We cannot do anything to deal with them. This would harm our dignity. I am doing my best to protect it. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Honour and dignity mean my house is being protected. It means no one can enter my house by force. It means my family members are not being harassed. **A13, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Dignity means protection of our life, our family members. **A207, a male IDP, Mazar**

The **sexual abuse and harassment** of women was viewed as a major threat to dignity for both women and men.

Dignity for me simply means not being raped and to not even be at risk of it. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

A female who doesn't face sexual harassment, we call that dignity and esteem. **A195, a female IDP, Kunduz**

Dignity means that women and children can live with dignity, and no one is facing sexual abuse. **A196, a female IDP, Kunduz**

5.2.5 Peace, safety, and security

For many IDPs, dignity was understood in terms of **peace, safety and security**, and the complete eradication of war, conflict, and violence.

For me, dignity means peace and serenity. If you are calm and safe, your honour and dignity are preserved. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Honour and dignity are very important and valuable for us, and it means peace and security for me. **A14, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Honour and dignity mean no violence and no war. **A52, a male IDP, Herat**

Many IDPs felt that it was not possible to live a dignified life without peace in their country, and stated that they longed for a stable government, and for **peace in their places of origin** so that they could return and continue their lives there.

Our dignity would be better protected if we were in our homeland. If it was safe, we could return. To me, dignity means a peaceful life and being safe. **A09, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

If peace comes to our place and we return to it, then that will be a dignified life for us. Without peace there is no dignity. **A120, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

We should have a stable government providing us security. Peace is the main necessity for a dignified life. **A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

5.2.6 Freedom and rights

IDPs discussed dignity in terms of their **freedom and their fundamental human rights**, with some expressing the view that as IDPs, they should have the same rights as the local residents in their host communities.

Dignity for me means satisfying your own rights and recognising the rights of others. **A206, a male IDP, Mazar**

The government and organisations should build schools and madrasas for our children, our children have the same rights as other's children have. **A187, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Some residents do not consider our dignity. We also belong to this country, we have equal rights to benefit from our country. **A175, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Some IDPs emphasised the importance of **women's and children's freedom and rights**, with some declaring that they wish to leave Afghanistan altogether in order to ensure equal rights for men and women.

Female's dignity means to give them all their legal rights and to not let anyone suppress their rights. **A178, a male IDP, Kandahar**

In my opinion, dignity and honour are freedom; our children and wives don't have enough freedom. **A98, a male IDP, Herat**

We will go to other countries where there are equal rights for males and females. **A195, a female IDP, Kunduz**

5.2.7 Mutual respect and compassion

For many IDPs, dignity was conceived as **mutual respect and compassion**. IDPs spoke about their behaviour with other people, including both the host community and the humanitarian actors, and the importance of treating others how they would like to be treated.

We respect others, and behave well towards them. They do the same and this is how we succeed in protecting our dignity and honour. **A01, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We should respect other people's values, and they should also respect ours. **A14, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

In my opinion, dignity means we do not fight and we treat people with respect and kindness. **A51, a male IDP, Herat**

IDPs stated that respect and compassion should be extended to **all members of a community**, including elders and children.

If we respect others, they will respect us too, and elders should be kind to children and children should respect elders, and we should all respect each other. **A132, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Dignity means to respect someone and treat them like a family member, to respect elders and have compassion for their children. **A177, a male IDP, Kandahar**

5.2.8 Religion and following Islamic values

IDPs discussed dignity in terms of **religion and following Islamic rules, regulations and values**.

We should observe the rights of our neighbours as a committed Muslim and observe the ultimate emphasis of Islam on our neighbours' rights and honour, and the dignity of others. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I think dignity means to surrender oneself to Allah's orders. Not to hurt or tease anyone but to respect them so you can be treated the same in return. **A176, a male IDP, Kandahar**

In my opinion, dignity means that our women and men protect themselves from bad deeds and abide by Islamic regulations. **A68, a male IDP, Herat**

In addition, dignity encompassed **religious practices such as purdah for women**. This involves the covering of women's bodies from the view of men who are not their relatives, and gender segregation, which is often achieved by women being in their homes where they cannot be seen, and being accompanied by male family members when they go out.

To me, as a woman, dignity means to cover my head, wear a hijab, and not permit others to see my hair and body. **A34, a female IDP, Herat**

First of all, we need shelter. I feel bad when other men see us in this situation, we want to protect our honour and dignity. **A76, a female IDP, Herat**

Dignity means not showing our faces to someone who is not our family or relatives. **A80, a female IDP, Herat**

Related to this, some men conceptualised dignity in terms of **protecting and providing for the female members of their family**.

Dignity means the protection of women by a male partner or family member. **A195, a male IDP, Kunduz**

Female's dignity means that they should be inside their homes and males should provide their needs. **A179, a male IDP, Kandahar**

5.2.9 Education

A large majority of IDPs spoke of dignity in terms of access to schools and education for their children. As discussed in Chapter 4, education was often highlighted as a key priority in the qualitative interviews with IDPs. IDPs felt strongly that their children could go on to lead dignified lives if they received a good quality education.

I wish and I hope for a better life for my children through having access to quality education and schools. They would have a dignified life. **A01, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

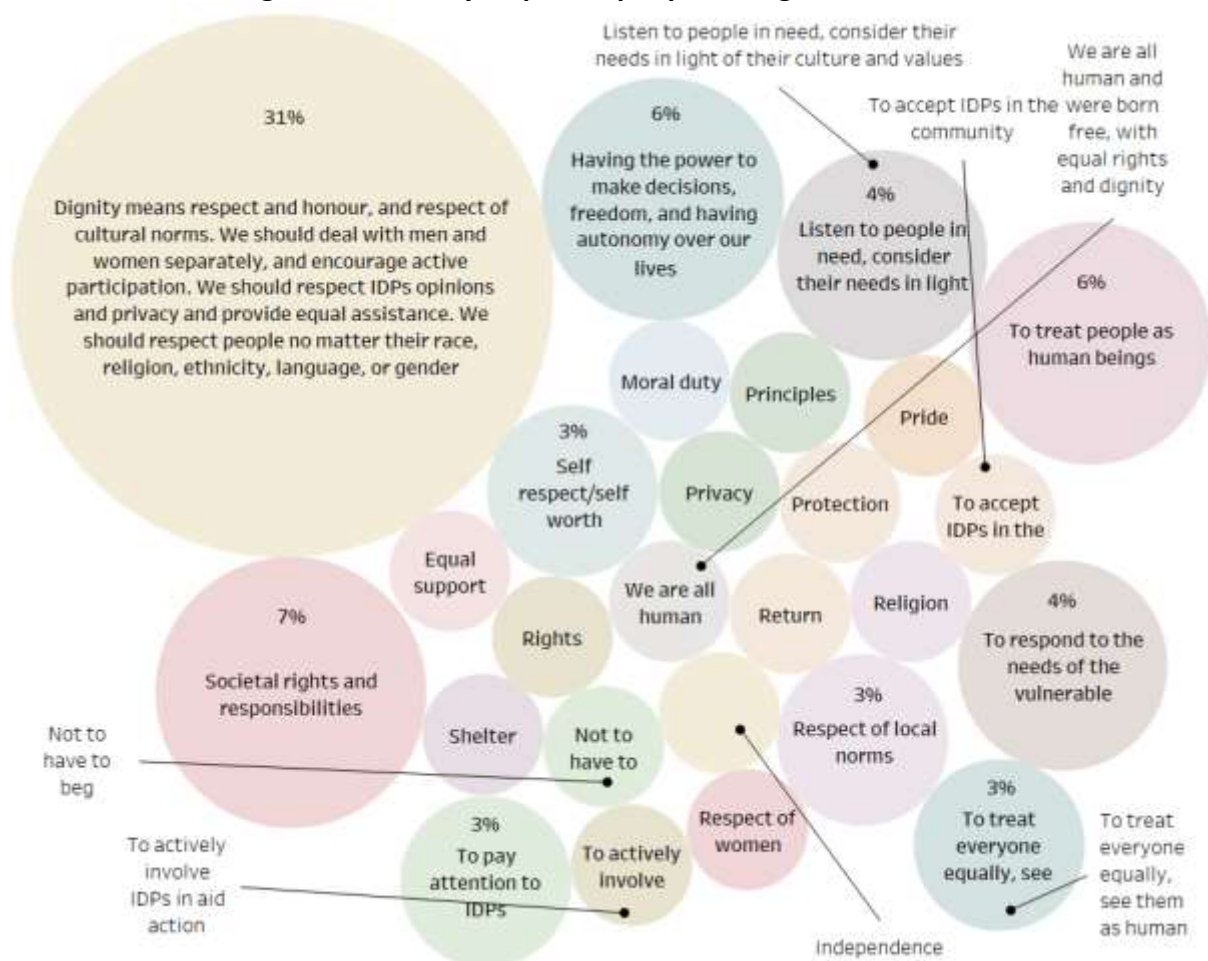
My children need to have access to schools and good facilities to continue their life with honour and dignity. **A08, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

When my children can go to school and continue their education, we will feel blessed. I think they will have a life with honour and dignity. **A16, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

5.3 Conceptualisations of dignity among humanitarian aid workers

Humanitarian actors and senior government staff working with IDPs in Afghanistan also conceptualised dignity in displacement in multiple different ways. The two main conceptualisations of dignity discussed by aid actors and senior staff in the qualitative interviews were respect and human rights. Respect was largely discussed in the context of IDPs culture, religion, and values. In addition, the idea of dignity as respect for cultural and religious norms was mentioned by more than 31% of the 96 humanitarian actors and staff who took part in the quantitative and qualitative survey (Figure 5.1). Staff survey respondents also conceived of dignity in terms of equal rights; freedom, autonomy, and independence; and privacy, protection, and shelter. They asserted that in order to protect the dignity of IDPs, humanitarian and government organisations must respond to the needs of the vulnerable, treat IDPs humanely, provide equal support to all, pay attention and listen to IDPs needs, and actively involve IDPs in the aid process (Figure 5.1). In contrast to IDPs, humanitarian actors and senior staff did not tend to explicitly conceptualise dignity in displacement in terms of access to basic needs (other than shelter), peace, safety, and security, or access to education, and there was much less emphasis given to the themes of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, and independence.

Figure 5.1 The meanings of dignity in displacement according to humanitarian actors and senior staff working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan



5.3.1 Respect of IDPs culture, religion, and values

Many of the humanitarian actors and staff working with IDPs in Afghanistan discussed dignity in displacement in terms of respect, and in particular, **respect of IDPs culture, religion, and values**.

Dignity has various definitions but in my opinion, it means to respect someone, to not interfere in someone's work, and to not abuse or harm someone. **AS 299, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

Dignity means to respect culture during distribution and training, to not expose IDPs in the media without their permission, and to consider gender issues. For instance, males and females shouldn't be brought together in the same committee, at training, or in meetings as it is against their culture. **AS 284, female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

Dignity means to respect someone's religion, culture, language, personality, and character. If we misbehave with IDPs, it means that we have harmed their dignity. **AS 285, male humanitarian worker, Herat**

5.3.2 Human rights

Like IDPs, and perhaps unsurprisingly, humanitarian actors and senior government staff linked the concept of dignity to a person's fundamental **human rights**, and stated that in order for IDPs to maintain their dignity, they should be informed and knowledgeable about their rights.

Dignity means to respect someone through all their humanitarian rights. **AS 279, female humanitarian worker, Herat**

If we consider human rights principles during our assistance, then it is possible to consider people's dignity. **AS 286, male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

Organisations should inform IDPs of their rights so that their dignity and honour can be maintained and they can enjoy their basic rights like every other citizen. Most institutions respond to the needs of the IDPs, not to their rights. The strategy our office has taken will inform IDPs of their rights, in order to advocate for them. **AS 330, male senior government staff**

5.4 The impact of humanitarian assistance on the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan

Survey questions and qualitative interviews explored IDPs experiences of receiving assistance from humanitarian and government organisations, including their satisfaction with the assistance provided, and whether or not they felt that their dignity was protected during the assistance process. Altogether, 41% of IDPs who participated in the survey felt that their dignity was not at all or not very protected when they were receiving aid. Reasons why IDPs felt that their dignity was not protected included: chaotic situations and poor treatment by staff; no attention to women's dignity; crowded distribution centres;

distribution to men and women simultaneously; the use of bad language by staff; disrespect of IDPs by staff; corruption in the distribution of aid; sexual harassment and mistreatment of IDPs by staff; long queues in the heat; lack of privacy; and the aid given is limited and not according to their needs. Reasons why IDPs felt that their dignity was protected during assistance included: a compassionate response by the aid community; timely assistance; receipt of adequate assistance and support; staff paid proper attention to IDPs and their needs; IDPs were informed about the aid available; and the distribution was well organised.

Figure 5.2 highlights that 33% of IDPs felt completely or mostly ignored by humanitarian actors and staff, while almost 40% indicated that they were not given very much privacy when discussing their support needs with humanitarian workers. In addition, over half of IDPs (57%) reported that they were not at all or not very informed about the aid that was available to them, and only 53% stated that humanitarian staff were caring and compassionate when providing aid. Reasons why IDPs felt ignored included disorderly and improper management of aid distribution; poor identification of vulnerable people; lack of information about available assistance; lack of proper attention and follow-up; and being excluded from the registration or survey process, among others (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2 The perceptions of internally displaced people regarding their treatment by humanitarian actors and staff during the provision of assistance

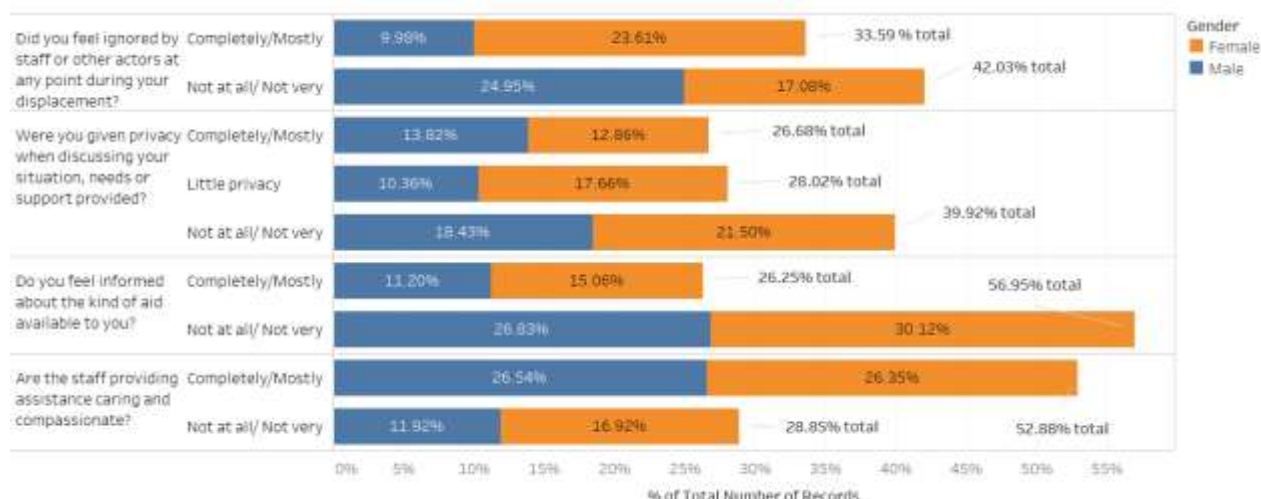
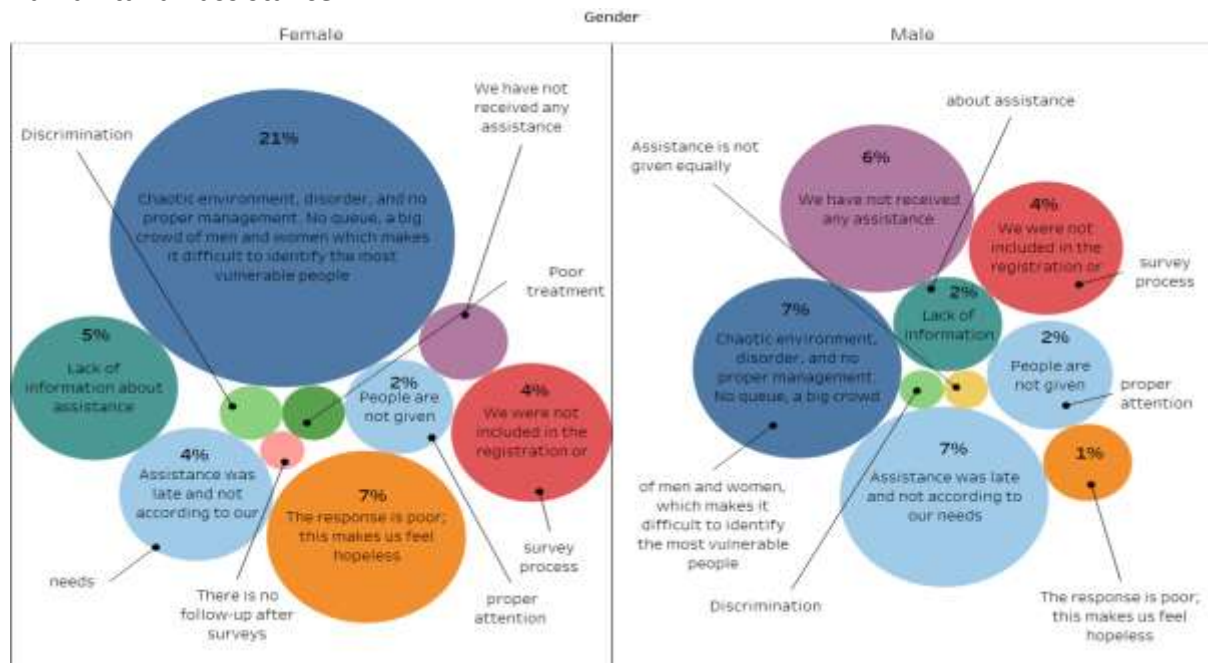
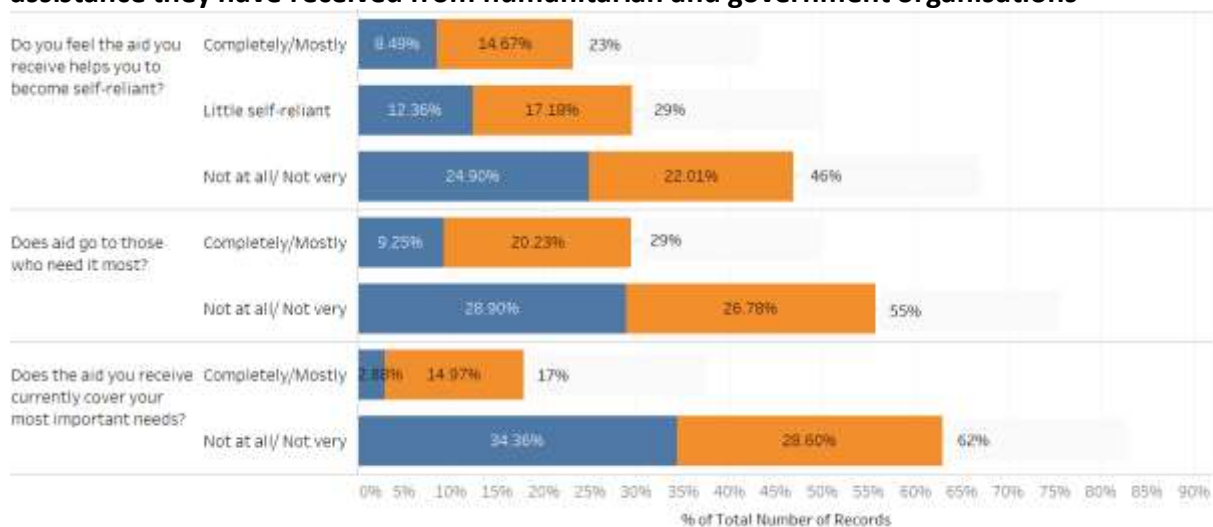


Figure 5.3 Reasons why internally displaced people felt ignored during receipt of humanitarian assistance



In addition, 61% of all respondents indicated that they were not at all or not very satisfied with the aid and humanitarian assistance that they receive. Figure 5.4 illustrates that 62% of IDPs feel that the aid they receive does not cover their most important needs, with 55% believing that the aid does not go to those who need it the most. Perhaps most importantly, 46% of IDPs surveyed felt that the aid that they receive does not help them to become self-reliant. This last point is not surprising when one takes into account that aid workers placed much less emphasis on the need for IDPs to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, and independent in order to preserve their dignity (see section 5.3 above).

Figure 5.4 The perceptions of internally displaced people regarding the adequacy of the assistance they have received from humanitarian and government organisations



Gender
 Male ■
 Female ■

The qualitative interviews with IDPs revealed that some people were **satisfied with the assistance that they received**, and that their dignity had not been harmed during the process of receiving assistance.

On the issue of dignity and honour, I should say that thank God, it is not offended. Our representatives check us daily and notice our problems. We are fully satisfied with the contributions of the organisations. They have been very helpful to us. They built toilets here, a water well for access to water, and a bathroom. Their staff treated us very well and honestly.

A104, a female IDP, Herat

Fortunately, our dignity and reputation have not been harmed by aid organisations and their staff. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

Our representative tries to support and help us at every stage of our life here. Very fortunately, we have no problems regarding our dignity, there is no violation of dignity in our community. **A163, a female IDP, Kabul**

Similarly, some IDPs reported that humanitarian staff always **considered the dignity** of IDPs during the provision of assistance, and treated them well.

They consider our dignity, and treat us in a good way. For example, they assembled us for assistance and asked us about our problems and challenges, and then distributed the aid. **A227, a male IDP, Nangarhar**

Our representative accompanied us each time that we wanted to get the aid, and supported us very well. We did not see any harsh behaviour from anyone at the time of receiving our share. **A162, a female IDP, Kabul**

Everything is fair and impartial. Our representative is a nice person and she is following up on our affairs here so patiently. When the aid arrives here, our representative coordinates with the source people to distribute the aid and when it is our turn, we receive our share. **A147, a female IDP, Kabul**

However, as touched on in Chapter 3, while many IDPs felt that their dignity was protected during the provision of assistance, they also reported that the **assistance provided was completely insufficient**, and was not in accordance with their needs and priorities.

We are happy with the behaviour of the people in the institutions, but we are not satisfied with their help because they do not help much. Most of the time we have no food to eat, our children spend the night hungry.

A114, a male IDP, Herat

I think organisations are interested to protect people's honour and dignity. Aid organisations' services are not enough here, they should increase their support. Sometimes they collect our data, notice our needs, and consult with us, but the aid is not according to our needs. **A12, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

I cannot trust either the government or humanitarian organisations because when one of my family members was injured and we faced violence, none of them asked us about our needs or helped us. We are satisfied with the organisations' help, but the aid is insufficient, and they have never asked us about our needs, they only wrote down our names and brought us irrelevant things which do not complete our life needs.

A203, a male IDP, Mazar

Some IDPs reported that they had only ever received **very limited aid** with which they had to make do, or **provisions or materials that were useless** to them.

No one helped us and we have not received any assistance yet except a bag of wheat which had insects in it. I don't know the name of the organisation which gave us one bag of wheat. We were looking for assistance, but no one did it. **A128, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

We went three days, and they finally just gave us some small ovens for the house and three blankets, which is useless in such hot weather in Jalalabad, and we have enough small ovens already. This kind of assistance is useless for us. **A134, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

They give Ginseng energy and cake as assistance to some people here and then say we did assistance, who would call it assistance? We don't want such kind of assistance. **A135, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

IDPs remarked that the aid that organisations provide is mostly a **short-term solution**, and cannot help them to become independent or self-reliant.

The aid was limited and cannot lead us to a bright future. We haven't received any sustainable support which could solve our problems. They are not providing a critical service, it is all temporary aid. **A205, a male IDP, Mazar**

Many IDPs reported that government and humanitarian organisations conduct numerous **needs assessment surveys or interviews with IDPs**, however this work is often **not followed-up or acted upon**, which means that the situations of extreme poverty that IDPs have found themselves in can never improve. This is indicated by the quotes below and the case story presented in Box 5.2. This IDP noted that he and others were given money by an aid organisation but that it was insufficient for their needs and he has had to borrow money. He also noted that it was impossible to find work in order to improve his circumstances.

Organisation's employees came here once or twice and surveyed us, but then they left and we didn't hear back from them. It has been six months and we have never had any help from any aid organisations. **A108, a female IDP, Herat**

Aid organisations and the government don't pay attention to us, which has resulted in our situation becoming worse and worse. They start data

collection in this area but don't follow up the work. **A08, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Government and NGOs have consulted with us on many issues, but actually, none of their plans have been implemented. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

IDPs commented that when they did receive assistance, it was often **late and sporadic**, and sometimes delayed by months or even years.

It took 6–7 months to receive help and the result was only a tent, and our dignity was damaged because we lived in tents. **A129, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

If our dignity is damaged, the government and aid organisations should help us handle the situation. It has been more than one year and they haven't provided us with anything. **A14, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

It is almost one year that we have been forced to migrate due to natural disasters and war, but still we have not received any aid and we are looking to be aided. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Box 5.2 Case story from a male IDP in Herat province, illustrating his many problems in displacement and the helplessness of his situation

*The situation is very difficult and the NGOs gave 4,000 to 5,000 AFN to last six months. There are about 1,200 families and on a daily basis they need to spend at least 200 AFN [4 to 5 USD]. I used to work in a police station but now I would like to do anything like construction work, grocery, or sales to earn some income, but there is no work. We have to live on 4,000 AFN and it is nothing for covering the family expenses. Since we came here, my wife got sick and I had to borrow money from my friends to take her to the clinic. I hope none of my children gets sick as I have no money, even 1,000 AFN and my daily earnings cannot cover it. All the people here have the same problems and they are all jobless. Our children are experiencing a bad situation and their health is not good. We have many problems and we have been interviewed by several NGOs or organisations regarding our problems during this time, but there has been no change in the situation. **A24***

Many IDPs reported that **not everybody who is entitled to humanitarian aid receives it**, which harms their dignity.

IDPs who do not receive the aid get disappointed. They feel deprived and their dignity is hurt. **A251, a male IDP, Kunduz**

I think aid organisations are interested in protecting our honour and dignity, but I have no experience with them because they did not help us yet. **A09, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Some IDPs stated that the **distribution of the aid is unfair and corrupt**, as it is mainly given to the families and friends of the distributors, or the more powerful people in the community.

In some cases, the distributor is from other ethnic groups and we ask him to give us our share from the aid and he says "no, these are for my ethnic group, and you cannot take them". **A164, a female IDP, Kabul**

No one asks about poor people, and all the assistance goes to the homes of tribe elders and powerful people. **A135, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

The aid that is distributed by NGOs is not enough for us, because it's distribution is not properly organised. They distribute aid according to their connections and links. **A197, a male IDP, Kunduz**

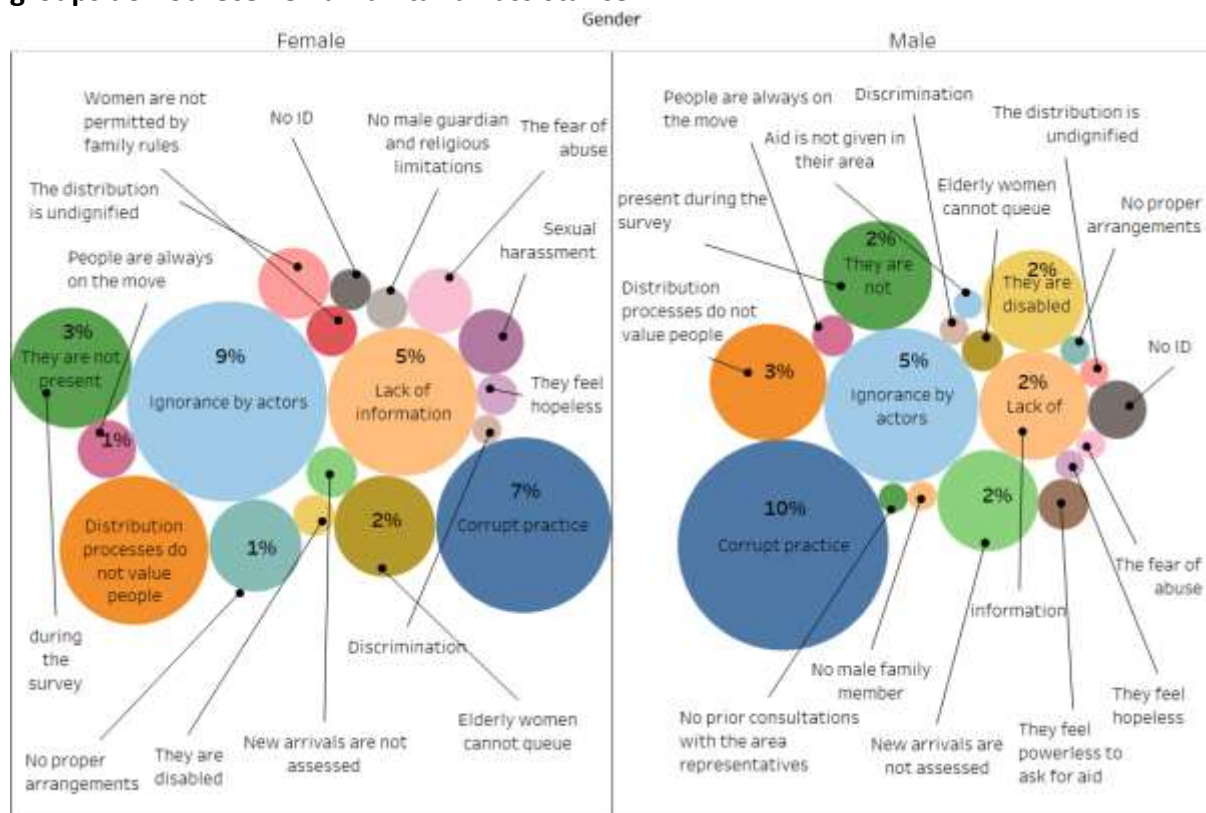
IDPs reported that **certain vulnerable groups often missed out on humanitarian aid**, such as people with disabilities, widows, very poor people, and new arrivals who had yet to register for aid.

Widows, orphans, and the disabled did not receive help because they have no power and no one asked about their rights. **A129, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

There are many disabled people who are in urgent need, but there is no supporting service for them. There is some financial aid and materials, but they are not delivered to all, and many people miss the aid, without any hope of having a better situation. **A160, a female IDP, Kabul**

When the IDPs who participated in the survey were asked why they thought that vulnerable people missed out on assistance, they cited a number of possible reasons, including corrupt and undignified distribution processes; ignorance on behalf of the humanitarian aid workers; lack of information; and cultural and religious reasons, among others (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Reasons given by internally displaced people regarding why some vulnerable groups do not receive humanitarian assistance



Many IDPs reported that **humanitarian assistance was often not provided in a dignified manner**, and therefore they felt that their **dignity was not protected** while they were receiving aid. This is illustrated in the quotes below and the case story presented in Box 5.3.

We have a complaint about the [xxx aid organisation]. It has bad employees and people. They behave badly with migrants. They abuse women, children, and the elderly and use very bad words. Sometimes, they even raise their hands to our women to hit them, and it harms the dignity of migrants. **A71, a male IDP, Herat**

Some staff or soldiers misbehave during the distribution of aid, by pushing women, touching them, shouting at them, and so on. This all harms the honour and dignity of migrants, especially women. **A101, a male IDP, Herat**

Standing in line for assistance for up to five days, and not being treated well by the people who give assistance; these are factors which affect the dignity of the people. **A141, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Box 5.3 A male internally displaced person in Badakhshan describes the chaotic aid distribution process and its impact on his dignity

*I don't think aid organisations are interested in protecting our honour and dignity. It is a fact that I want to point out. When they want to distribute some packages of food, or any equipment, they don't have a proper list and don't know who deserves it, they cover ten people or families, but what are the other people supposed to do? Of course, they come and use their power, start fighting and try to take some food as well. This way of providing support is not helpful, it is breaking the unity of society. The aid is not enough for the people that are living here. They should have a proper list and enough aid to cover all who deserve it. **A13***

Some IDPs mentioned that some women were subjected to **sexual abuse and harassment** when receiving aid, or had been asked for sexual favours in return for assistance.

We heard that some organisations forced women into sexual abuse. In the same way, I think assembling men and women in one place to receive aid is against our dignity. **A198, a male IDP, Kunduz**

After the assessment or once the assistance has been provided, they are phoning again and having irresponsible talk, meaning asking for sexual favours in exchange for rewards. **A08, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

In light of the respect of IDPs culture, religion, and values expressed by the humanitarian actors and staff above, it is surprising that many IDPs reported that their **culture, religion, and values are often not respected** when humanitarian organisations distribute aid or provide assistance. During the initial needs assessment, humanitarian organisations talk to both the men and women of the household, which challenges cultural norms. Displaced women highlighted that it is not appropriate for them to be amongst a big crowd of men at the distribution centre.

When I went to receive aid, due to a huge number of migrants that also came to receive aid, it was too crowded; my dignity was insulted because of the crowd, my burka to cover my full body was trampled and removed from my head. **A79, a female IDP, Herat**

Some people do not receive any aid because of the distribution process. They assemble people in a square and then distribute aid amongst them. Some women who don't have men in their homes do not come to seek their aid, considering their dignity. **A194, a female IDP, Kabul**

Importantly, some IDPs stated that **if their dignity is not protected during the provision of aid, then they will reject it.**

If organisations do not consider our dignity we do not accept their aid.

A179, a male IDP, Kandahar

We have left our places to safeguard our dignity, we do not accept the help that causes us to be humiliated. **A128, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Nothing is better than honour, and we don't accept the kind of assistance which harms our dignity. **A132, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Although many IDPs felt that their dignity was damaged during the assistance process, 65% of the IDPs who participated in the survey did not complain when they felt that their dignity was not protected. Only 36% said that they would report any mistreatment in the future, while 17% would tolerate the humiliation, 14% would refuse aid, 6% would stop interacting with the organisation, and 23% would do nothing about it. Only 4% of IDPs had complained via a call centre, one of the formal complaint mechanisms that are currently in place, while only 7% of IDPs would feel comfortable complaining to agency volunteers, and only 13% would feel comfortable complaining to a dedicated information centre/information hub.

5.5 Chapter summary

The current chapter has explained how dignity in displacement is conceptualised by both IDPs and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and has described the impact of humanitarian assistance on IDPs dignity in displacement. The findings indicate that while dignity is conceptualised by both IDPs and humanitarian actors in multiple different ways, humanitarian actors understood dignity in displacement mainly in terms of respect and human rights. In contrast to IDPs, humanitarian actors gave less consideration to the importance of education, independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency in upholding and restoring the dignity of IDPs. In addition, humanitarian assistance was frequently described as inadequate and insufficient, and unaligned with IDPs needs and priorities. Many IDPs felt that their dignity had been damaged during the assistance process, due to chaotic procedures, mistreatment and abuse by staff, corruption in the distribution of aid, and a lack of consideration of IDPs culture, religion, and values. Chapter 6 reports on humanitarian actors' experiences of working with IDPs in Afghanistan, describing the challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance.

5.6 Key findings

- IDPs conceptualised dignity in multiple different ways, specifically in terms of: access to their basic needs (such as food, water, and shelter); prosperity and wealth; self-reliance and self-sufficiency; protection of their lives, homes, and families; peace, safety and security; freedom and rights; mutual respect and compassion; religion and Islamic values; and education
- In contrast, humanitarian actors and senior government staff mainly conceptualised dignity in terms of respect and human rights
- Humanitarian actors gave less emphasis to the roles of education, independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency in protecting and restoring IDPs dignity
- The majority of IDPs were not satisfied with the humanitarian assistance provided, often describing the aid received as inadequate, insufficient, and inconsistent with their real needs
- Not all IDPs who are entitled to receive aid do so, and some vulnerable groups such as disabled people, widows, and the very poor and needy miss out on aid
- Many IDPs felt that their dignity was not protected when they were receiving aid, mainly due to chaotic procedures, lack of concern for their culture, religion and values, abuse and mistreatment by staff, and corruption in the distribution of aid
- IDPs who felt that their dignity had been harmed were reluctant to complain or to report abuse using a formal complaints mechanism

6 Humanitarian actors' experiences of working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan: Challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance

6.1 Chapter overview

This chapter describes humanitarian actors' experiences of working with IDPs in Afghanistan, focusing on the challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance. The findings demonstrate that humanitarian and government staff currently face multiple challenges when providing aid and assistance to IDPs in Afghanistan. In addition, there are disparities between the perceptions of humanitarian actors and IDPs with regards to:

1. IDPs most important needs and requirements;
2. the extent to which dignity is considered in the provision of humanitarian aid;
3. the extent to which IDPs views and needs are considered and incorporated in the planning, design, and implementation of aid programmes; and
4. the treatment of IDPs during the provision of assistance.

In contrast, humanitarian actors and IDPs agreed that the aid provided by humanitarian organisations does not help to solve IDPs long-term problems or help them to become self-reliant. Humanitarian actors and senior staff emphasised the need for improved assessment and distribution processes in order to reach all those in need, and the need for durable solutions to encourage and facilitate self-reliance among IDPs.

6.2 Challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian staff described a range of challenges involved in providing assistance to IDPs in Afghanistan. These included: working with limited resources; corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination with the community, the government or development organisations; disruption and interference by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders; correct identification of IDPs and those in need; cultural and language differences; and insecurity and the politicisation of aid. Most humanitarian actors who took part in the qualitative interviews referred to multiple different challenges, as illustrated in the quote and the case story below (Box 6.1).

The basic problems that organisations face during assistance are poor surveys before the distribution, distinguishing IDPs from the host community, interference from stakeholders, and lack of coordination with the migration department. **AS 297, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

Box 6.1 Case story by a humanitarian actor illustrating the multiple challenges associated with providing humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people in Afghanistan

*At the start of the project we do a survey to identify the needy people, so we face problems from the warlords and community elders as they want to address their own people. The second main problem is the security concerns. Then, during the distribution period, the limited amount of aid and the large number of IDPs make the process messy. These problems were apparent early on but now these problems are almost solved, the community members know how to distribute the aid and to whom the aid should be distributed. For better results, we need better coordination with the government and the local people. **AS 313, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar***

6.2.1 Working with limited resources

One of the main challenges for humanitarian actors providing assistance to IDPs is having to work with **limited budgets and funding, and a limited amount of supplies**. Humanitarian staff reported that the sheer number of IDPs and returnees made it difficult to ensure that everyone received aid. This goes some way to explaining why IDPs assert that the aid they receive is completely insufficient for them to even meet their most basic needs, as reported in both Chapter 3 and Chapter 5.

It is very difficult to respond to all of the needs of IDPs, returnees, or refugees because this requires integrated and multi-sector interventions that need huge funds and we know how much the funds have been shrunk. So most of the time, the humanitarian needs provided by the aid agencies are driven by the amount of funding they have. **AS 09, a male staff survey respondent, Badghis**

This province has got a large number of IDPs so some IDPs may have been left behind due to the limited budget. **AS 288, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

We have challenges in our community, especially a limited amount of aid and a large number of IDPs and returnees. **AS 284, a female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

Staff pointed out that the government is not stable enough to provide much help, while the aid provided by humanitarian organisations is **not enough** to cover all of the IDPs. IDPs don't receive what they need because there are too many of them, and the number increases day by day. The government doesn't have anything to help them. Our government is very poor, and can't reach out to every one of them. International and local NGOs have been helping

them and providing them with health services, educational facilities, shelter, clothes and other things, but these aren't enough, and can't help them overcome the problems they have. **AS 301, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

People are too poor to cope and the government is too weak to respond, the aid provided by the international community is great, but it is not enough. **AS 19, a male staff survey respondent, Badakhshan**

Winter kits for IDPs do address their important needs, however, available budgets are woefully insufficient to meet needs, leading to a contentious and difficult process of targeting/prioritisation. **AS 88, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

Humanitarian staff explained that funding shortages mean there is a **limited focus on durable solutions for IDPs**, yet they also recognised that long-term solutions such as job opportunities are essential for promoting and encouraging self-reliance among IDPs.

There is a very limited programme on long-term solutions, due to funding shortages and lack of attention of donors to permanent solutions. **AS 50, a female staff survey respondent, Kabul**

The expectations of IDPs are over the budgeted cost, while the help we give them is less than what they expect, causing them to suffer. We need to build business centres for them, so they can support their families by themselves. **AS 297, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

In addition, staff pointed out that organisations **do not have enough resources to continue running projects** that are implemented in the community, such as the project described below on women's and children's rights, and that organisations often fail to follow-up on community programmes such as these.

There is a project about women's and children's rights in Jalalabad, Behsod, and Kama districts. We establish community meetings in schools, mosques, and villages to raise awareness about women's and children's rights. The main problem is that this project only runs for a limited amount of time. They do not hand the project over to the government or other departments, and there is a lack of follow-up too. **AS 304, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.2.2 Corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination

Humanitarian staff reported that often, aid does not go to those who are most in need, due to **corruption** on behalf of the actors or community members, or **poor management** when distributing the aid. Of note, corruption, favouritism, and poor management in the distribution of aid was also reported by IDPs in Chapter 5.

I witnessed that some organisations do not distribute all the aid in order to keep it for themselves, while only some of the aid is received by IDPs. **AS 285, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

Sometimes people do not deserve aid but they receive it because they have contacts in these humanitarian organisations. **AS 316, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

The aid does not reach the IDPs who really deserve it, because of poor management. **AS 283, a female humanitarian worker, Herat**

Staff also reported a **lack of coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations.**

In 40 years of working in development I never once had anything to do with a humanitarian organisation other than evaluating them. **AS 14, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

If people don't receive their aid on time, or in a proper way, this will harm their dignity. This occurs because of poor management from the migration department, and their lack of coordination with NGOs. For example, if the migration department shares the list of IDPs and returnees with relevant organisations, this may solve our problems. **AS 284, a female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.2.3 Disruption by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders

Many humanitarian actors reported that the distribution of aid was often **disrupted** by IDPs, in particular local community elders, as well as warlords and other stakeholders.

Some of the local elders create challenges for us, which affects the assistance process for IDPs. **AS 296, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

We want to donate directly to the people who really deserve it, but sometimes we face a lot of problems in the form of stakeholders because they want to keep everything for themselves. **AS 312, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

We face challenges with stakeholders and agents. They introduce their own people and disorganise the distribution process, therefore sometimes due to a lack of transparency we close the project or shift it to other provinces. **AS 297, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

6.2.4 Identifying IDPs and those in need

Some staff members reported that they faced challenges in correctly **identifying IDPs and distinguishing them from members of the host community**, while others believed that the host community were equally deserving of humanitarian assistance and therefore tried to give priority to those who were most vulnerable.

We face challenges in specifying and separating IDPs from the host community. **AS 293, a male humanitarian worker, Kunduz**

Sometimes local people include themselves in the list of IDPs and receive aid from organisations. Thus the aid doesn't reach the people who really deserve it. **AS 311, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

If we do not distribute aid to the host community, who also deserve it, then we are discriminating against them. In such cases, orphans, disabled people, widows, and large families are a priority. **AS 314, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.2.5 Cultural and language differences

Some aid workers reported that they face challenges relating to **cultural and language differences**, particularly with regards to some IDPs attitudes toward education for girls and women. Others explained that they do not face challenges associated with IDPs culture as they always take IDPs culture and values into account while giving assistance; however this is largely at odds with what IDPs themselves reported in Chapter 5.

The basic challenges during our assistance are language and culture. The local people are ignorant about education, they are against education for females. **AS 288, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

We face cultural problems and this happens because of ignorance of IDPs about education. **AS 285, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

We do not face challenges regarding culture and language because we always consider IDPs culture and language during assistance. **AS 284, a female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.2.6 Insecurity and the politicisation of aid

One of the major challenges faced by humanitarian actors when providing aid to IDPs in Afghanistan is coping with the **volatile security situation**.

We had some incidents where we lost some of our assistance. Some people with guns came and just took the assistance meant for IDPs, and we can't go there again. **AS 317, a male senior staff member, Kabul**

Insecurity means that **many vulnerable IDPs are missing out on life-saving humanitarian assistance**.

The most common challenge is insecurity. Due to the lack of security, organisations cannot cover all of the people in need properly. **AS 287, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

The challenge that we usually face is insecurity. Insecurity is a reason for poor distribution as we are unable to carry out a proper survey. **AS 289, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

The aid agencies try their best to target the most affected areas but sometimes they fail to do so, common reasons are insecurity, interference

from warlords and internal parties, and no rule of law. **AS 20, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

Some humanitarian actors commented that insecurity has **prevented government and humanitarian organisations from being able to foster durable solutions** for IDPs.

Many people have been displaced more than once, and many of them have been displaced for a few years, insecurity has not allowed the government and aid workers to develop longer-term solutions. **A79, a female staff survey respondent, Kabul**

The volatile security situation has made it particularly difficult for humanitarian organisations to **provide assistance in hard-to-reach communities**, as illustrated in the case story presented in Box 6.2 and the quotes below.

IDPs who can move out of hard-to-reach areas and get to safer locations or provincial capitals, they receive an immediate response. But those who are getting stuck in the hard-to-reach areas, they don't receive any kind of support. **AS 04, a male staff survey respondent, Kandahar**

The international aid organisations are mostly restricted by security to key areas and regions. Aid organisations need to work through national NGOs to provide aid to people in need in the remotest places. **AS 42, a male staff survey respondent, Takhar**

Finally, some staff members discussed **the politicisation of aid** and its impact on the provision of humanitarian assistance.

Politicisation of aid makes it difficult to reach the real people in need. **AS 79, a female staff survey respondent, Kabul**

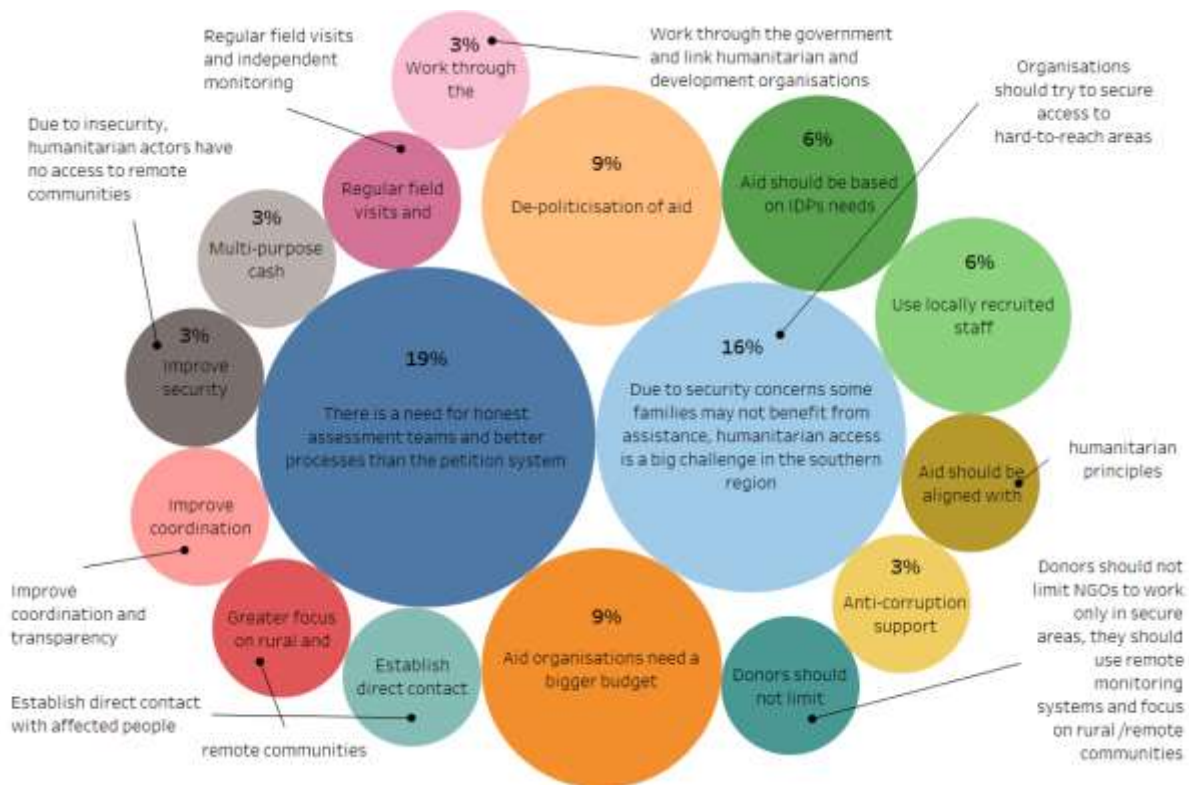
Box 6.2 A humanitarian actor describes how the volatile security situation in Afghanistan has prevented humanitarian organisations from providing assistance in remote areas

This has been a war-devastated country for 34 years, there are a lot of remote areas that are not accessible due to security reasons, such as Ghorak, Resh, Khakriz, Manishin, Kot, and many other Helmand local areas. These areas are disregarded from assistance, no improvements have been made in the last 16 years, not in education, not in livelihood, not in medicine. No one has thought about these areas, no donors have focused on these areas. I can say that many areas in our country still need donor's consideration and these areas include such homes where 9 women have lost their husbands, there are children who are only 5 or 7 years old in these homes. Most of the donors are considering the cities. Donors need to consider these remote areas too; their situation is extremely bad and needs to be given the same attention. We are not expecting the local government or the armed opposing forces to create hurdles or barriers to the provision of humanitarian assistance in those remote areas. AS 292, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar

6.2.7 Potential solutions: reaching those in need

Humanitarian and government staff who participated in the staff survey offered several suggestions for overcoming the challenges associated with the provision of aid and reaching those IDPs who are most vulnerable. These included de-politicisation of aid, bigger budgets, improved assessment processes, improved security and better access to hard-to-reach areas, and improved coordination and transparency, among others (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 Solutions offered by humanitarian and government staff to overcome the challenges associated with the provision of assistance and reach IDPs who are most in need



These suggestions were echoed in the qualitative interviews with humanitarian actors, who purported that the government should 1) **supervise the distribution of aid** to increase transparency, and 2) **work together with relevant organisations** to support humanitarian relief efforts. Staff also proposed that **funding should be increased**, and that **IDPs needs should be assessed properly**, with the aid being delivered directly to them.

I suggest that the government distributes aid according to IDPs needs and gives priority to the neediest provinces. The aid and projects must be continuous and not only for a short time. I request humanitarian organisations to increase their aid and support according to the number of IDPs and returnees. **AS 284, a female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

I suggest that the interference from warlords and stakeholders must be stopped and that budgets are increased due to the large number of IDPs. I suggest that the government supervises all of the organisation through their relevant sectors, to keep the process of distribution more transparent. **AS 293, a male humanitarian worker, Kunduz**

I suggest that the government coordinates with every department and supports the local NGOs in Afghanistan. **AS 302, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

A proper survey is required and the aid ought to be distributed to those who really deserve it. Also, the aid should be directly delivered to IDPs and returnees. **AS 305, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.3 Gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance

It was evident that there were several disparities between the perceptions of humanitarian actors and IDPs regarding the provision of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian staff largely believed that humanitarian assistance covers IDPs most important needs; that staff consider IDPs dignity when they provide assistance or distribute aid; that staff consider IDPs views and needs when planning and implementing aid programmes; and that IDPs are treated respectfully during the provision of assistance. In contrast, as described in Chapter 5, IDPs largely believed that humanitarian aid does not meet their most important needs; that their dignity is not protected when they go to receive assistance; that their views and needs are not considered; and that they are mistreated or treated disrespectfully during the provision of assistance. However, humanitarian staff and IDPs both tended to agree that the aid provided does not focus on durable or sustainable solutions for IDPs.

6.3.1 Internally displaced people's most important needs and requirements

When asked what they thought **IDPs most important needs and requirements** were, the majority of humanitarian staff listed concerns that were in agreement with what IDPs themselves reported in Chapter 4; i.e. food; clean water; shelter; access to basic services such as healthcare and education; and employment opportunities. Staff also mentioned insufficient aid, assistance, and support from humanitarian and government organisations, and lack of planning for the future as major concerns for IDPs.

The basic problems that IDPs suffer are lack of shelter, food, education, water, hygiene, work, and hospitals. **AS 287, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

A major concern for IDPs is education, education should be provided to them, small kids can't travel to far away schools, and thus I believe schools need to be established close to IDPs' areas to provide education. On the other hand, jobs need to be created in these war-affected areas. International organisations need to focus on projects which can create new jobs, so elders of families can provide food. **AS 292, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

Their basic concerns are limited aid, lack of future planning, and lack of support from the government to renovate their homes. **AS 280, a female humanitarian worker, Herat**

The basic concerns for them are lack of shelter and lack of enough assistance from organisations. **AS 289, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

However, 85% of humanitarian and government staff who took part in the survey believed that the aid and humanitarian assistance provided either completely or mostly covered IDPs most important needs (Figure 6.2). In contrast, in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4, Figure 5.3), only 17% of IDPs responded that the aid they receive completely or mostly covers their most important needs. This disparity between IDPs and humanitarian staff is highlighted in Figure 6.3.

Figure 6.2 Humanitarian and government staff members’ responses to the question “does the aid and humanitarian assistance provided cover internally displaced people’s most important needs?”

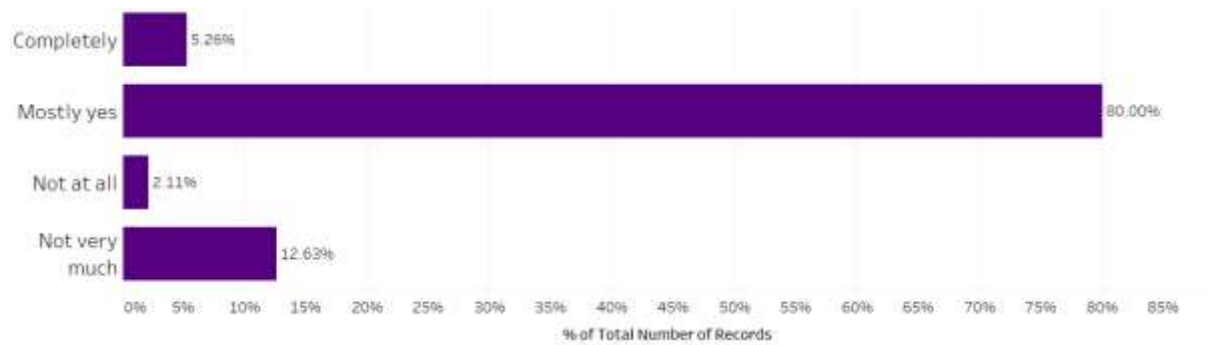
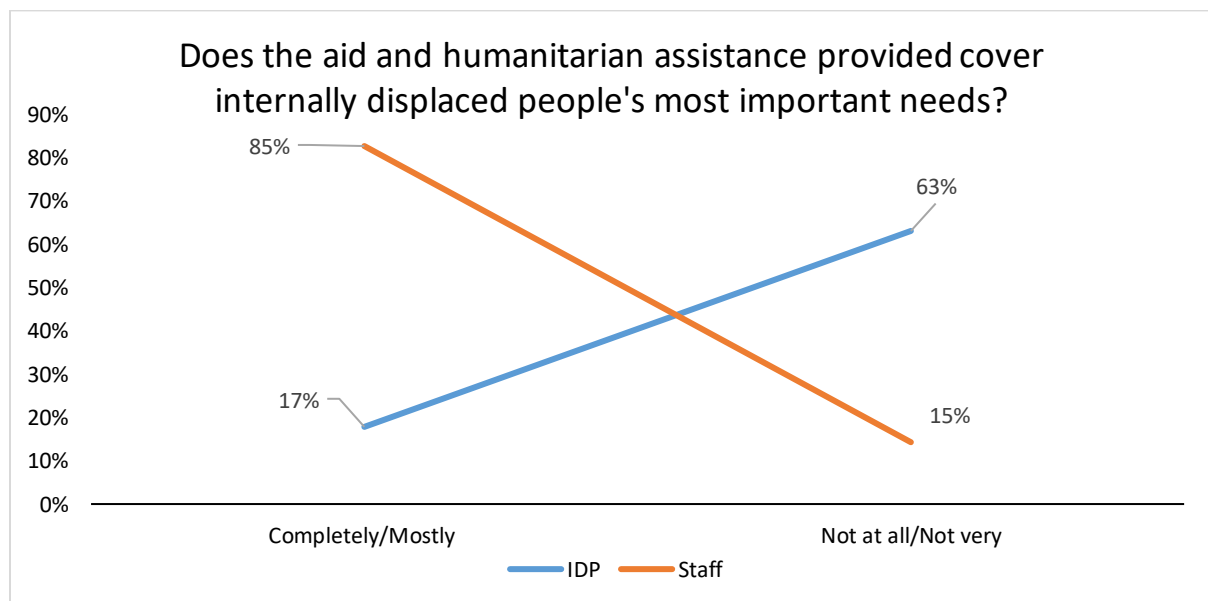


Figure 6.3 The disparity between the perceptions of staff and internally displaced people regarding whether humanitarian assistance covers internally displaced people’s most important needs



These findings suggest that while most humanitarian staff are aware of IDPs most important needs, it is difficult to meet all of those needs within the current scope of available humanitarian support. Some humanitarian actors who took part in the qualitative interviews admitted that IDPs’ needs are not being met by the assistance given, with one or two indicating that cash assistance goes some way to resolving this issue.

No, the aid is not meeting their needs due to a lack of transparency and poor management. **AS 312, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

Interventions are pre-defined and don't meet or match the needs of the people. **AS 34, a male staff survey respondent, Kandahar**

Some emergency assistance does not address the needs of IDPs but, for more than a year now, aid agencies have provided cash to IDPs and they can decide what they need and what to buy or provide for their family. **AS 330, a male senior staff member, Kabul**

However, some staff members insisted that their assistance was **always based on a needs assessment** and that their organisation always followed through with their plans.

In our organisation, before we distribute aid, we do an assessment which is based on the needs of the people. For example, if we have a plan to arrange toilets for students, first we do the survey and then we go ahead with the plan. **AS 314, a male humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

6.3.2 Consideration of dignity in the provision of humanitarian aid

Altogether, 87% of humanitarian and government staff who took part in the survey were confident that their organisation considered the dignity of IDPs when planning, designing, and implementing humanitarian aid programmes (Figure 6.4). Staff reported that they considered IDPs dignity by consulting with the community; by undertaking a needs assessment; and through feedback, evaluation, and monitoring. In contrast, 41% of IDPs responded that their dignity was not protected during the distribution of aid, as reported in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4). This disparity between IDPs and humanitarian staff is highlighted in Figure 6.5.

Figure 6.4 Humanitarian and government staff members' responses to the question "does your organisation consider the dignity of IDPs when planning, designing, and implementing aid programmes?"

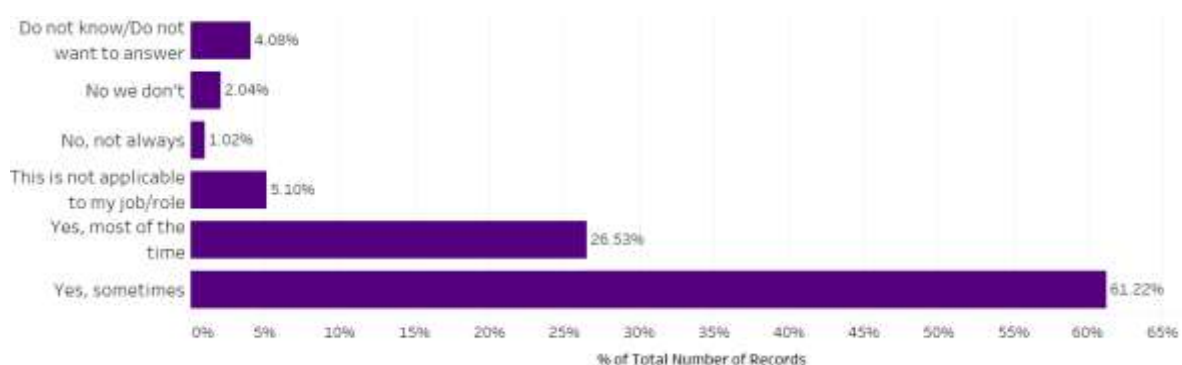
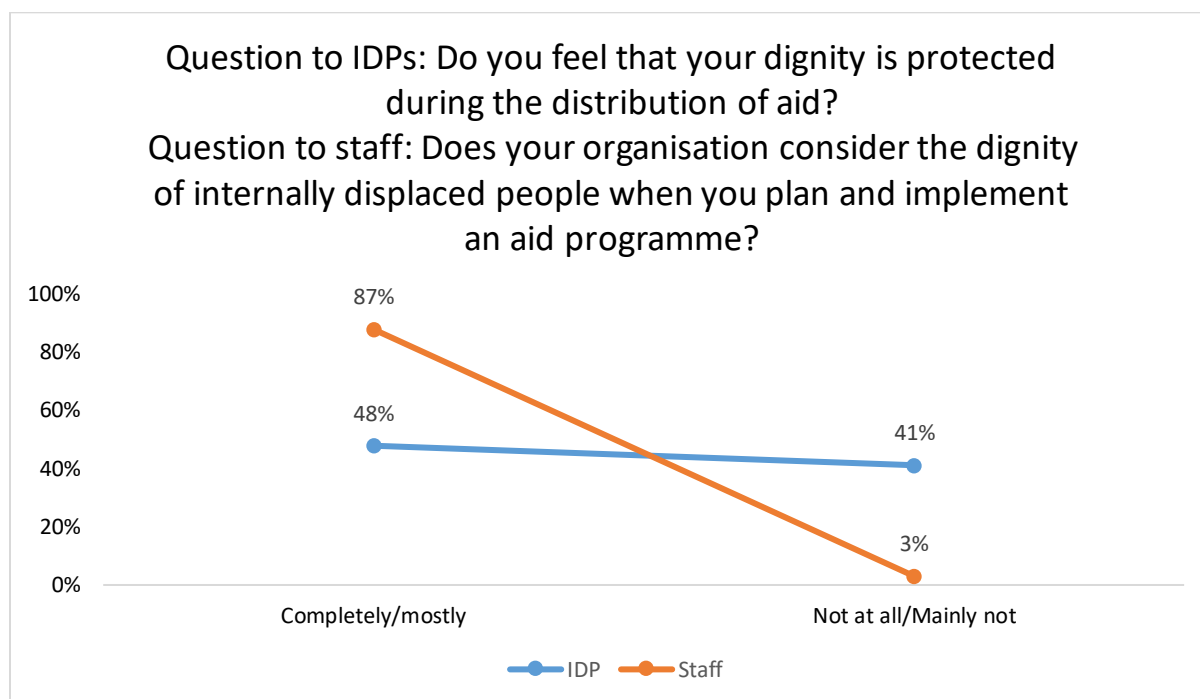


Figure 6.5 The disparity between the perceptions of staff and internally displaced people regarding the extent to which dignity is considered in the provision of humanitarian assistance



As described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.3), humanitarian and government staff tended to conceptualise dignity in displacement in terms of respect of IDPs culture, religion, and values, and their human rights. Humanitarian staff stated that they make arrangements at the distribution centre that are **consistent with IDPs cultural and religious values**, such as separate queues and distribution times for men and women. However, many IDPs complained that their cultural and religious values were not respected during the distribution of aid, suggesting that distribution arrangements and processes are somewhat inconsistent.

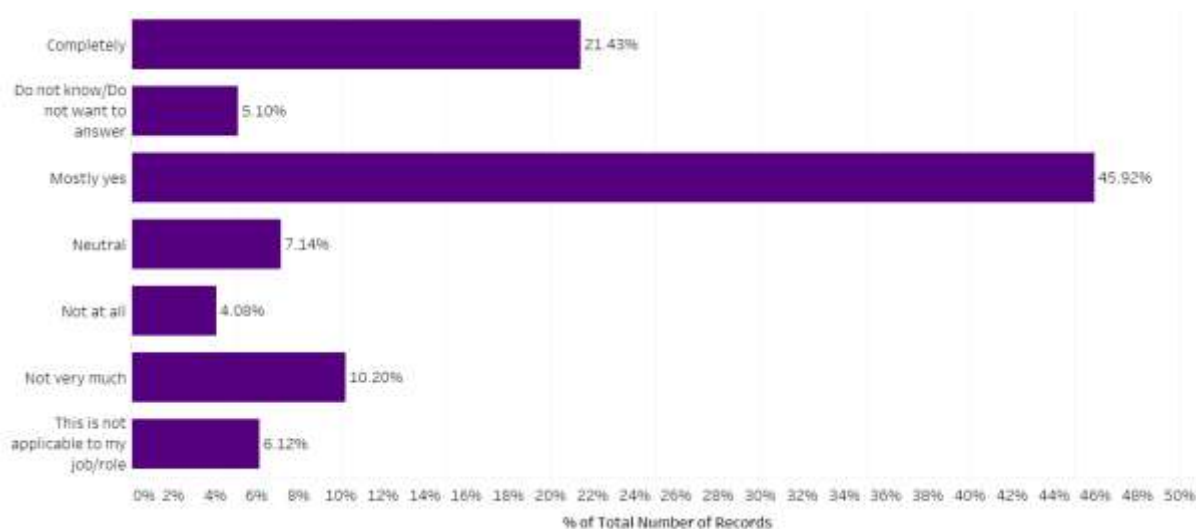
One of the principles of our organisation is to treat migrants with dignity. Their honour and dignity should be protected; that's why our project has a protection part, to protect their dignity and respect their rights. Helping migrants to improve their quality of life and preserve their dignity is the main focus. When distributing aid, we make a separate line and time for women and men so they are more comfortable when receiving the aid, and so everyone can all attend without a problem. **AS 47, a female humanitarian worker, Herat**

6.3.3 Incorporation of internally displaced people's views and needs into humanitarian aid programmes

In terms of the extent to which IDPs views and needs are considered and incorporated in the planning, design, and implementation of aid programmes, 67% of humanitarian staff believed that the opinions of IDPs are completely or mostly taken into account (Figure 6.6). They reported that this was achieved in a number of different ways, for example by conducting needs assessments; carrying out door-to-door/field visits to people

in need; post-distribution monitoring; aligning funding proposals with IDPs needs; and obtaining regular feedback.

Figure 6.6. Humanitarian actors and staff members’ responses to the question: “does your organisation take IDPs’ opinions into account during the design and implementation of aid programmes?”



However, many IDPs who took part in the qualitative interviews stated that **nobody had come to consult with them about their views and needs.**

The government or aid agencies have never consulted us about their assistance. They do not address the needs of the people and their assistance is not in accordance with our needs. We expect organisations to communicate directly with us and address our problems personally. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

As described in both Chapter 3 and Chapter 5, when IDPs were consulted, most of the time the humanitarian organisations’ **plans or projects were never implemented or followed through.**

A while ago they came to consult with us about the construction of a road and a mosque. They asked about our situation, about the value of a concrete road if they were to make one, but then they never came to construct it. **A06, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

IDPs reported that it **pleases them to be consulted** on their views, opinions, and needs, and emphasised that it is **very helpful when useful plans are put into action.**

Aid organisations tend to protect our honour and dignity. They care about it and help us any time we refer to it. Both the government and NGOs have consulted with us on some issues regarding migration. We are happy in this regard because it increases the unity of the people who live here. **A15, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

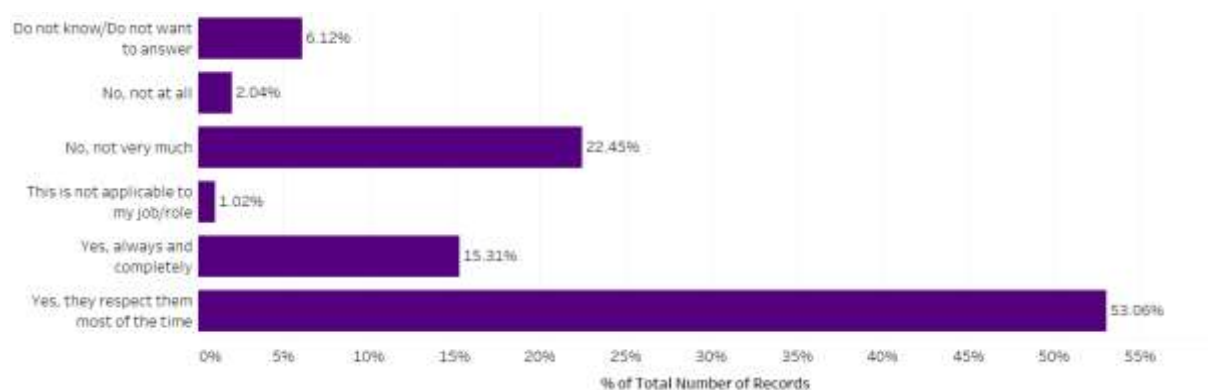
Only once, the UNHCR organisation consulted with us about a project relevant to drinking water. The project was to purify the seawater and make it drinkable. It will start to be implemented soon. They started working on this project. It will be very helpful for all of us. **A16, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Humanitarian actors listed a number of reasons why IDPs opinions are not always taken into account, including limited funds; lack of time if an emergency response is required; inflexibility of programmes; and conflicting donor agendas and priorities.

6.3.4 The treatment of internally displaced people during the provision of humanitarian aid

Concerning the treatment of IDPs during the assistance process, 68% of humanitarian actors indicated that IDPs in Afghanistan are treated with respect by government and aid organisations either all or most of the time, while around one quarter (24%) believed that humanitarian staff do not treat IDPs with much respect or do not respect them at all. In contrast, as described in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4, Figure 5.2), only 53% of IDPs reported that humanitarian staff were caring and compassionate while 33% felt completely or mostly ignored when receiving assistance. In addition, some IDPs who took part in the qualitative interviews described being physically and sexually mistreated during the distribution of assistance, and many claimed that their cultural and religious values were not respected.

Figure 6.7 Humanitarian actors and staff members’ responses to the question: “do you think humanitarian staff in Afghanistan treat the internally displaced people with respect?”

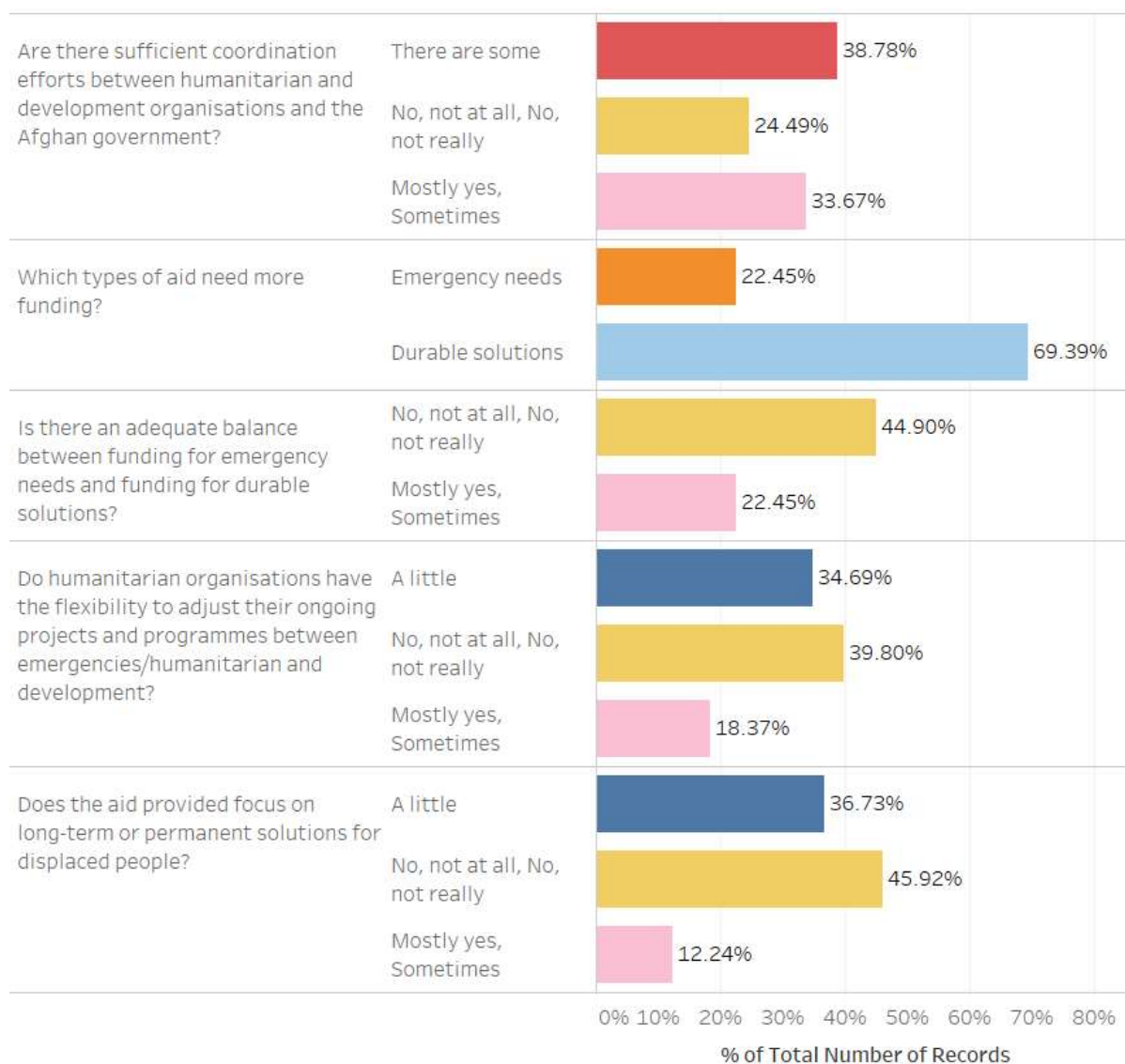


Humanitarian actors suggested that staff should undergo **training in the practice and meaning of dignity** in order to improve the manner in which IDPs are treated. Others mentioned the importance of obtaining feedback; following organisational codes of conduct and core humanitarian principles; and considering IDPs as right holders rather than receivers of aid. However, only 60% of humanitarian staff said that they would feel comfortable reporting instances of mistreatment against IPDs by other staff members.

6.3.5 Durable solutions and the facilitation of self-reliance among internally displaced people

Humanitarian actors agreed with IDPs that there is limited attention given to durable solutions for IDPs in Afghanistan. As reported in Chapter 5 (Section 5.4, Figure 5.3), 46% of IDPs felt that the aid they receive does not assist them in becoming self-reliant; similarly, 46% of humanitarian staff felt that the aid provided does not focus on long-term or permanent solutions for IDPs (Figure 6.8). Only 33% of staff who participated in the survey were confident that there are sufficient coordination efforts between humanitarian, development and government organisations, while almost 70% reported that more funding is needed for durable solutions compared to emergency relief. Similarly, 45% of staff stated that there is an inadequate balance between funding for emergency aid and funding for sustainable development programmes, and 40% reported that programmes and projects are often inflexible and heavily biased towards emergency assistance (Figure 6.8).

Figure 6.8 Humanitarian actors and staff members’ perceptions regarding coordination between organisations, funding, flexibility of programmes, and durable solutions



These perceptions were also echoed in the qualitative interviews with senior staff, as illustrated by the quote below and the case story presented in Box 6.3.

We are faced with difficulties because we have land to distribute but not enough budget to establish a town where we have all the facilities of life.

AS 331, a male senior staff member

Box 6.3 A male senior staff member highlights the need for sustainable solutions for internally displaced people in Afghanistan

*In addition to providing urgent and emergency assistance to IDPs and returnees, there are programmes for sustainable solutions, to integrate IDPs with the community. For example, skills development, economic integration, and other programmes to help IDPs of different ages to integrate with society. In addition to all these activities, we also worked with the Ministry of Refugees and Returnees in the area of policing to provide useful and sustainable solutions, most notably on the creation of a national IDP policy at the beginning of the year 2014, which was approved by the Cabinet, but it wasn't implemented as we expected. Government offices, donors, and agencies should consider balancing emergency relief and sustainable solutions to integrate IDPs in society. There is a need for sustainable solutions in the field of IDP integration, as there is a lack of budget, lack of good coordination, and a lack of donors in this area, as most donors provide funding for IDPs emergency needs, not for their integration with society. There is no problem with the amount of land, the land is available now but there is still a need for international donors in the field of construction and shelter. **AS 330***

6.4 Chapter summary

The current chapter has reported on humanitarian actors' experiences of working with IDPs in Afghanistan, describing the challenges involved in delivering aid to IDPs, and the perceptual disparities between humanitarian actors and IDPs with regards to the provision of humanitarian assistance. The findings indicate that while there are many challenges and

gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance, humanitarian actors and IDPs largely agree that there is a dire need for sustainable solutions for IDPs in Afghanistan. Chapter 7 focuses on durable solutions for IDPs, and the actions that humanitarian and government organisations can take to protect and uphold the dignity of IDPs in displacement.

6.5 Key findings

- Humanitarian staff experience various challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance, including:
 - ❖ working with limited budgets;
 - ❖ corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations;
 - ❖ disruption by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders;
 - ❖ identifying IDPs and those most in need;
 - ❖ cultural and language differences; and
 - ❖ insecurity and the politicisation of aid.

- Staff called for more funding, improved assessment and distribution processes, improved coordination between organisations, and support from the government in supervising the distribution of aid, to help them to reach all of those in need.

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- Humanitarian actors felt that:
 - ❖ the aid met IDPs most important needs;
 - ❖ that IDPs dignity was considered during the provision of assistance;
 - ❖ that IDPs views and needs were accounted for in the planning and implementation of aid programmes; and
 - ❖ that IDPs were treated with respect during the distribution process.

However these views were directly opposed to those of IDPs as discussed in Chapter 5 (especially Section 5.4).

- Humanitarian actors and IDPs largely agree that the assistance provided does not focus on long-term and permanent solutions for IDPs and that IDPs are in urgent need of durable solutions to become self-reliant and improve their circumstances and quality of life.

7 Dignity in humanitarian action: The call for increased support, durable solutions, and sustainable development to improve the lives and preserve the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan

7.1 Chapter overview

This chapter firstly illustrates the role of the government and humanitarian organisations in protecting the dignity of IDPs in Afghanistan, providing seven recommendations for actions that government and humanitarian staff can take to uphold IDPs dignity in displacement. These seven recommendations are to: (1) ensure that aid is provided to those who need it; (2) distribute aid fairly, systematically, and transparently; (3) inform IDPs about the aid available and how to access it; (4) ensure aid is based on IDPs real needs; (5) improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations; (6) always consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid; and (7) always show respect and compassion to IDPs when providing assistance. In addition, this chapter highlights the urgent call for increased support and assistance for IDPs throughout Afghanistan, in terms of both emergency aid and sustainable development support. It is particularly clear that thus far, there has been limited attention paid to durable and sustainable solutions for IDPs in Afghanistan. We outline ten areas in which sustainable development support is immediately required: (1) the provision of land and shelter; (2) the construction of clinics, schools, and training centres; (3) the construction of roads, power stations, and factories; (4) the restoration of houses, roads, and land; (5) support for agricultural activities; (6) the provision of improved education for children; (7) the creation of job opportunities; (8) the provision of cash and capital for business investments; (9) the provision of skills development training; and (10) the bringing-about of peace and security.

7.2 The role of the government and humanitarian aid organisations in protecting the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan

The majority of humanitarian and government staff who took part in the study agreed that it is important to **protect and uphold the dignity of IDPs in humanitarian action**. As illustrated in Chapter 6 (section 6.3.2), most actors who took part in the survey were confident that their organisation considered the dignity of IDPs in their responses to the displacement crisis. This finding was echoed in the qualitative interviews with humanitarian and government staff.

Our office and all the international offices in this area, especially in recent years, have been paying more attention to the issue of dignity, even donors. The best solution would be to work on IDPs rights as well as their needs. *AS 330, a male senior staff member, Kabul*

However, some actors expressed the view that the concept of dignity in humanitarian action is **too difficult to measure or assess**, and explained that many donors are not overtly interested in protecting the dignity of IDPs. Others reported that IDPs physical health and well-being is generally given precedent over their mental and psychological health and well-being.

Dignity, improving it or maintaining it, is not something we can objectively measure, and not something donors are explicitly interested in. In some

cases intangible positive things like community cohesion are measured, but dignity has never explicitly come up in my experience. **AS 88, a male staff survey respondent**

Dignity is hard to assess. It is not only influenced by aid, but by a lot of other concerns. Consider the context of Afghanistan; there is conflict as well as major cultural issues with regard to women. **AS 99, a male staff survey respondent**

I don't think dignity is given as much importance as things like protection of beneficiaries. Generally more attention is paid to physical health and well-being than to mental and psychological well-being of people. It is also assumed that if beneficiaries feel mistreated or unhappy with any aspect of the aid provision, they would speak out by calling the hotline or it would come out during the surveys that we do. But if the issue is subtle I doubt it would come out when it is not asked about directly and specifically. **AS 12, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

As described in Chapter 5 (section 5.2), IDPs conceptualised dignity both in terms of access to essential, life-saving provisions and services and in terms of self-reliance, self-sufficiency and independence. They are in need of both increased emergency assistance as well as sustainable development support to minimise their future dependency on aid and facilitate their self-reliance. Staff reported that their role includes **both emergency relief and sustainable development support**, with some staff members specifically referring to the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Our mandate is to support the government and address hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, and basically support the country to reach the sustainable development goals under the 2030 agenda. **AS 317, a male senior staff member, Kabul**

Some actors claimed to be working towards **permanent solutions**, yet described the provision of largely short-term **emergency assistance** rather than sustainable development activities.

We work on the basis of needs and work for permanent change. The obvious example of this is that we supported some people in Nangarhar who were displaced due to internal war for a month and provided tents, cash, and food for a hundred families. **AS 284, a female humanitarian worker, Nangarhar**

Many IDPs who took part in the survey were **optimistic about the role of humanitarian and development programmes** in preserving their dignity and improving their lives (Figure 7.1). IDPs who took part in the survey and qualitative interviews reported that they would be more optimistic about the future if they had adequate shelter; access to essential facilities; peace, security, and stability; business, training, and job opportunities; and education for their children, although many also reported that they had lost hope and had nothing to be optimistic about (Figure 7.1).

I suggest that the government should give us land and shelter, provide us with work facilities, build schools for our children, give us poultry farms, and provide tailoring courses for women. These things can improve our lives. **A123, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

Essential facilities should be reachable, schools for education, clinics for health services, sources of drinking water, and proper shelter. In such a situation we could anticipate an honoured and dignified life and future for our children. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

IDPs declared that **aid organisations and the government are responsible for protecting IDPs dignity** and providing them with help and support when their dignity is damaged.

Honour and dignity is the happiness of a family and its respect. It should be protected. If it is damaged, the government and aid organisations are responsible to help and support us. **A01, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We expect aid organisations to preserve and care for our honour and dignity, and by helping us they could do this. **A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

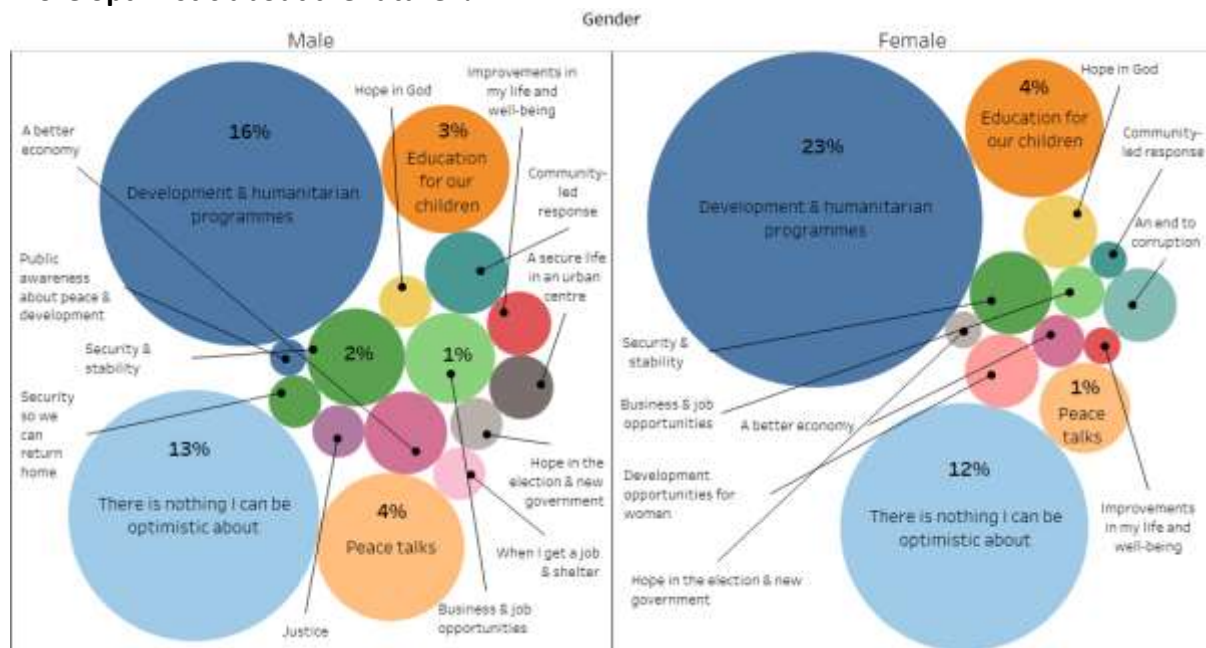
The government and aid organisations are responsible for our honour and dignity. **A11, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

IDPs did not care whether the assistance they received came from the **government or humanitarian organisations** as long as they received it.

We need assistance such as food, schools, shelter, and clean drinking water, whether these are provided by the government or foreign organisations. **A193, a female IDP, Kandahar**

We want support and assistance either from the government or NGOs. They should build schools for our children, and find work for both our males and females. **A186, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Figure 7.1 Internally displaced people’s responses to the question “what would make you more optimistic about the future”?



Many IDPs reported that **they do not trust the government to protect their dignity**, as it is currently too unstable and not committed to providing help and support to IDPs.

I don't think that the government can do anything for us, because it is not stable enough. It is involved in bloodshed and war, it is in an emergency status. Every day we are losing a big number of our young troops in war. The government should firstly provide security and fight corruption. After that it can help us preserve our honour and dignity. **A03, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Our government is unstable and is not able to support all of the migrants. **A198, a male IDP, Kunduz**

There is no committed government to pay attention to us or to try and protect our honour and dignity. **A10, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

IDPs called on the government to **secure peace and stability** within the country and to provide them with more support. They also called for additional assistance from aid organisations in order to help them meet their daily needs.

There is no trust in the government to secure our dignity, it is really crucial to secure peace and stability. **A202, a male IDP, Mazar**

The government did not help us, and in terms of human rights, they didn't pay any attention. There is no toilet here, forty families or twenty families have only one toilet, and there is no bathroom. Give us shelter and help. This situation is unacceptable to us and our families, our children have no food, no clothes, no shoes, no access to schools and clinics. This current Afghan government is very cruel and does not care about poor people. There are many problems in this camp. **A61, a male IDP, Herat**

The government cannot help to preserve our dignity because it is busy with much controversy and does not have enough time to do so. On the other hand, relief organisations don't help affected people enough. **A199, a male IDP, Mazar**

In-keeping with the findings reported in Chapter 6, IDPs and humanitarian actors recommended a number of actions that the government and humanitarian organisations can take to protect and uphold IDPs dignity in displacement. These recommendations were as follows: provide aid to those who really need and deserve it; distribute aid fairly, systematically and transparently; inform IDPs about the aid that is available to them; ensure that aid is based on IDPs needs; improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations/programmes; consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when providing aid; and show respect and kindness to IDPs when providing aid.

7.2.1 Recommendation 1: Provide aid to those who deserve it

Given that many IDPs and vulnerable groups reported missing out on humanitarian aid, IDPs suggested that actors strive to ensure that **aid is targeted at and provided to those who are most in need of it**. However as noted in Chapter 6, it can be difficult for humanitarian actors to distinguish IDPs from members of the host community and to deny people aid, as the local residents are often also living in poverty and deserve to be helped.

I suggest aid organisations distribute the aid to the people who really deserve it. **A175, a male IDP, Kandahar**

They should target people who really deserve and need the aid. **A173, a male IDP, Kandahar**

7.2.2 Recommendation 2: Fair, systematic, and transparent distribution of aid

Similarly, interviews with IDPs and staff pointed to corruption in the distribution of aid, which makes it difficult for actors to respond to the needs of displaced people. Therefore, staff and IDPs recommended that organisations endeavour to **eradicate corruption and distribute aid as fairly, systematically, and transparently as possible**.

We need to stamp out corruption brutally and quickly. **A14, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

We expect humanitarian organisations and the government to aid us transparently but right now it's not transparent. **A195, a male IDP, Kunduz**

I suggest that aid organisations support all the people equally and do not distribute aid through their connections or links. **A194, a female IDP, Kunduz**

IDPs suggested that humanitarian actors **distribute the aid directly and prevent village elders and other stakeholders from interfering** in the process. Some suggested that assistance should be provided directly to IDPs in their own homes, rather than at crowded and chaotic distribution centres.

I suggest that international organisations provide help by themselves and do not allow others to interfere, this would be the only way to satisfy everyone's rights. **A139, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

I suggest the organisations do a survey first to identify the eligible people and then provide assistance themselves. Assistance shouldn't be provided by the tribe elders because the tribe elders are corrupt. **A132, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Organisations should do the survey and assistance themselves and not allow others to interfere, because people who deserve assistance are not getting it. The assistance should be distributed individually to homes. **A143, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

7.2.3 Recommendation 3: Inform IDPs about available aid and how to get it

IDPs highlighted that it is important that they are **made aware of the aid and assistance that is available** to them and are kept informed about how they can receive it.

The organisations which provide assistance should raise public awareness about their assistance and point us towards our rights and involvement for example by giving seminars. **A132, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

Public awareness is very important, but is not done yet. **A143, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

7.2.4 Recommendation 4: Ensure aid is based on IDPs needs

The IDPs who were interviewed often emphasised that the aid they receive from humanitarian organisations is useless to them (e.g. house ovens, blankets, biscuits, cake) and inconsistent with their most pressing needs. Although many humanitarian actors reported that they carry out a needs assessment survey prior to distributing aid, the evidence suggests that such assessment processes are either not implemented across the board, are haphazard and dysfunctional, and/or that IDPs needs do not fit within the current scope of available humanitarian support. Nevertheless, IDPs suggested that **aid organisations consult with each and every one of them about their needs** and urged organisations to help them according to their wishes.

Organisations should do a survey and ask every house about their needs. **A135, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

International NGOs should register all the IDPs, and do a needs-assessment survey and support them according to their needs. **A177, a male IDP, Kandahar**

7.2.5 Recommendation 5: Improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations/programmes

Humanitarian actors highlighted the need for **improved communication and coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations** in

order to minimise duplication of efforts and design adaptable programmes that are more likely to meet IDPs long-term needs.

Provision of humanitarian assistance through properly coordinated systems would better protect the dignity of displaced people. **A64, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

Programmes come with a set agenda and priorities and don't have much flexibility. We need more flexible programmes, better coordination, and to listen to the community to identify their real needs. **A46, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

7.2.6 Recommendation 6: Consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid

Although humanitarian and government staff reported that they conceptualise dignity in humanitarian action in terms of respect for IDPs cultural and religious values, many IDPs felt that humanitarian actors disregarded these values when distributing aid. IDPs implored aid organisations to consider their dignity, culture, and religion when developing programmes and providing assistance.

We request international organisations to support us through our basic needs, and provide us this assistance considering our dignity, religion and culture. **A183, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Organisations should consider our dignity, culture, and religion during assistance. **A176, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Whenever aid organisations bring something for distribution they are not taking care of our culture, distribution takes place at the same site for males and females which is not fair, in this situation we can't keep our self-esteem and dignity. Aid organisations should be careful of people's dignity and self-esteem. **A195, a male IDP, Kunduz**

7.2.7 Recommendation 7: Show respect and kindness to IDPs when distributing aid

Similarly, several IDPs complained of poor treatment by some actors and requested that all aid workers **treat IDPs with respect and compassion.**

Aid workers should behave with us the same as they would behave with each other. **A188, a female IDP, Kandahar**

Organisations should not treat us like refugees, we are also humans and Muslims as they are. **A189, a female IDP, Kandahar**

A dignified life is possible if assistance is given to us in our homes with respect. Assistance given in the city is not dignified and we have lots of problems getting it. **A124, a female IDP, Jalalabad**

7.3 The call for increased support for internally displaced people in Afghanistan

Both IDPs and humanitarian actors have called for **increased assistance for IDPs in Afghanistan**, in terms of both **emergency aid and sustainable development support**. Some IDPs highlighted the need for **increased provision of basic and essential life-preserving supplies** such as sanitary water, food, clothes, and emergency shelter.

What we are expecting from the government and aid organisations, is for them to provide us with tents and drinking water. These are the priority, we have not received any aid from anyone yet. *A05, a male IDP, Badakhshan*

Aid organisations should try to protect people's honour and dignity by providing them aid. If people don't have enough food, enough clothes, or a good place to stay in, then their honour and dignity is not protected. We try to live with honour and dignity. *A12, a male IDP, Badakhshan*

We want the government to help us to meet our requirements, especially our basic needs to survive. In particular our children are in urgent need of clothes and food. *A156, a female IDP, Kabul*

However, the majority of IDPs and humanitarian actors emphasised that **IDPs urgently require both increased humanitarian assistance and increased sustainable development support**. This is evidenced by the quotes in Table 7.1 and the case story presented in Box 7.1. In this case story, a female humanitarian actor working in Nangarhar describes the shortage of food and nutrition for IDPs in emergency situations and the need to support both men and women in the long term by creating income-generating opportunities. Durable solutions and sustainable development are discussed in further detail in the following section.

Box 7.1 A female humanitarian actor highlights the need for increased emergency aid and income-generating opportunities for internally displaced people in Afghanistan

The people of Afghanistan are facing a lot of hardship and the support that is available to them is far less than they need. The difficulties we face most are the food and nutrition for IDPs in emergency situations. Therefore, I suggest continuous aid for IDPs with jobs or businesses. I request all organisations to provide winter kits, water, shelter, electricity, and education. Similarly, another basic problem for people is the lack of clean water and often people go for miles for clean water. Therefore, we request the government to provide clean water for these IDPs and returnees. Likewise, some IDPs have different skills but do not have job opportunities, which sometimes causes psychological problems. Work opportunities should also be created for women so that they can meet their own needs and not be looked after by anyone else. AS 284

Table 7.1 Internally displaced people request increased emergency aid and sustainable development support from the government and humanitarian aid organisations

ID, gender, and location	Quote
A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan	<i>By providing sanitary water, shelter, roads, and schools, the government could provide us with the facilities for a safe life; this is what we expect from the government</i>
A117, a female IDP, Herat	<i>We ask the government and institutions to provide us houses, clinics, and mosques, and food for our children. If conditions continue like this, we will all be starving</i>
A162, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>We need to have job opportunities and we urgently need food supplies. We have to buy one big bag of flour with 1500 Afghani, and it is not sufficient for one month. We buy one medium sized bottle of oil which lasts 20 days at most</i>
A163, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>We need shelter, school, and food supplies as there is no food for most families. Most families have no food to feed their children and they spend their days without food</i>
A171, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>We need essentials, like food supplies, shelter, schools, mosques, and job opportunities. These are urgently needed by the people who are living in the camps</i>

A201, a male IDP, Mazar	<i>If the government supports us through shelter, cash payments, food, education, security, jobs, and healthcare then they can secure our dignity</i>
A04, a male IDP, Badakhshan	<i>Organisations could assist us by providing tents, shelters, sanitary water, and education opportunities. As we have no option but staying here until the end of the war</i>
A175, a male IDP, Kandahar	<i>These international NGOs can support us in terms of cash payments and food and can support us with our daily life needs like education, health clinics, and job opportunities</i>
A176, a male IDP, Kandahar	<i>Organisations can support us with our daily needs, like shelter, clean water, education, health clinics, and job opportunities</i>
A192, a female IDP, Kandahar	<i>Organisations should build a school and clinic, dig a well, and provide jobs for both males and females. They should provide us with food, a house or shelter and every essential thing, we do not even have proper bathrooms</i>
A180, a male IDP, Kandahar	<i>Organisations can support us with shelter, tents, education, healthcare, clean water, and our daily basic needs so that we can live a better life</i>
A182, a male IDP, Kandahar	<i>We need help with shelter, food, and job opportunities which will enable us to better ourselves but right now the most important is shelter. We expect NGOs to help us with job opportunities, education, healthcare, and to give us cash as a loan for work</i>

7.4 Durable solutions and sustainable development

As described in Chapter 6 (section 6.3.5), humanitarian actors and IDPs agreed that there is limited attention given to durable and sustainable solutions for IDPs in Afghanistan. When asked for examples of durable solutions that have been developed by their organisations, 16% of staff who took part in the survey stated that their programmes and services do not focus on long-term solutions or development projects (Figure 7.2). Others described a variety of development projects including agricultural, professional, and vocational training programmes, education provision in remote communities, livelihood support, skills training, agricultural and infrastructure development, and cash assistance. Staff who took part in the qualitative interviews also described some activities relating to sustainable development, including the provision of **education and psychosocial support for children**.

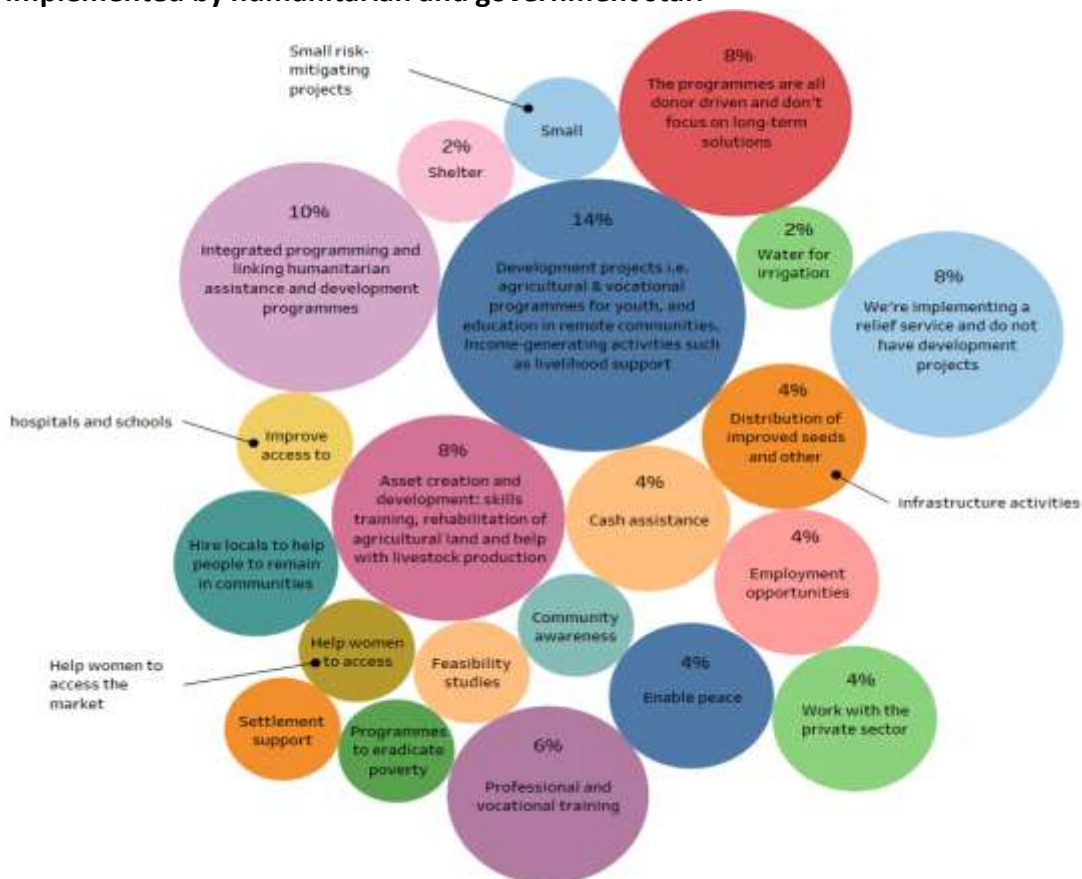
Our organisation supports IDPs, returnees and host communities in safety supervision, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), agriculture and psychosocial centres for children. Besides this we financially support those oppressed people who have lost their properties in war and whose family members have been martyred. Our organisation provides work and business opportunities for IDPs and returnees, so they can support their families. We also have a project in Nangarhar where our female doctor was counselling IDPs and women returnees. **AS 286, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

Our organisation supports IDPs through education. We have community-based classes for IDPs where children receive basic education. **AS 288, a male humanitarian worker, Herat**

Most organisations work in health particularly in psychosocial areas. Our organisation also supports IDPs with psychosocial problems. For example, we establish Child Friendly Space (CFS) centres for those children who have suffered from war and are mentally disturbed. **AS 281, a female humanitarian worker, Herat**

We assist IDPs through different types of education like community-based education, the Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and Child Friendly Spaces (CFS). In community-based education we register students from age 6 to 9, and the CFS centres are specified for those children who have suffered from war and are mentally disturbed. We support these students through various kits like books, notebooks, and winter kits. We implement this project in coordination with the Ministry of Education (MoE) according to their curriculum and methodology. We have hired about 364 teachers for this project and each is compensated 100 USD monthly. The children who have suffered from war and who have been mentally disturbed are provided CFS centres where we counsel them and find out their concerns. **AS 278, a female humanitarian worker, Herat**

Figure 7.2 Examples of durable solutions for internally displaced people developed and implemented by humanitarian and government staff



However, despite these activities, it is clear that much more needs to be done to develop durable and sustainable solutions for the many problems and challenges experienced by IDPs in Afghanistan. IDPs have called for development support in the following areas:

- the provision of land and sustainable shelter;
- construction of clinics, schools, capacity building centres, roads, factories, and power stations;
- restoration of their houses, roads, and land;
- agricultural assistance;
- the provision of employment and business opportunities;
- skills development and training;
- education for their children; and
- peacebuilding.

This is evidenced by the quotes below and the case story presented in Box 7.2, in which a male IDP highlights the urgent need for clinics, factories, job opportunities, and education.

Box 7.2 A male internally displaced person emphasises the need for durable solutions, specifically employment opportunities, children’s education, clinics, and factories

*Provide job facilities for our youths, we are all jobless, even our graduated youths do labouring. We don’t want organisations to give us biscuits, instead we want international organisations to give us appropriate assistance. We have children in this camp who have holes in their hearts but no one asks about them. We lost our brothers and sons and children in the war. I have eight orphans in the home, how can I raise them without someone’s help? We want our children to go to schools instead of doing labouring. Our children should be facilitated with schools because they are the future of our country, otherwise it will be bad for the improvement of the country. The improvement of a country is based on education so schools and clinics should be built and job opportunities should be provided for our youths as well. If factories are built this can solve all our problems. **A135 Jalalabad***

7.4.1 Solution 1: Provision of land and shelter

As described in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, an adequate shelter is one of the most important basic requirements for IDPs, and many IDPs reported that the lack of a sufficient shelter and permanent place to live was a significant threat to their dignity. Both staff and IDPs called for **a dedicated and safe place for IDPs to live and the development of long-term sustainable and affordable housing** to replace temporary accommodation such as tents.

I would say IDPs mostly move as they do not have shelter, and the services provided to them by NGOs are temporary. The long-term solution would be to finance a permanent place for IDPs and provide sustainable assistance in the form of good shelter. **AS 77, a male staff survey respondent, Kabul**

We need help and support from the government. If we do not have facilities, how will our situation get better? We need shelter and a safe place to live for the rest of our lives. **A159, a female IDP, Kabul**

Aid organisations helped us with tents, but the tents were lost in the summer because of the heat. We ask the government to build us a house because it is very difficult to live in a tent. **A115, a male IDP, Herat**

If they want to protect our honour and dignity, I ask the government and all humanitarian organisations to hear our voice and help us to be able to pay our rent or provide shelter for us. **A203, a male IDP, Mazar**

7.4.2 Solution 2: Construction of clinics, schools, and capacity building centres

IDPs suggested that aid programmes focus on **building clinics, schools, and capacity building centres** so that they can have better access to healthcare and training opportunities and their children can receive a proper education.

We want institutions and governments to pay more attention to migrants, and to build a clinic for us. When our children get sick, there is no medicine or doctor to treat them. **A119, a female IDP, Herat**

By building schools and better education facilities, organisations can protect our dignity. **A16, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

We submitted our suggestion to build a school for our children in this camp, but it was not accepted, and as a result, we do not have any schools or educational buildings here yet. **A157, a female IDP, Kabul**

We request international NGOs to provide us with capacity building centres so that we can learn more skills. **A183, a male IDP, Kandahar**

7.4.3 Solution 3: Construction of roads, power stations, and factories

Other IDPs suggested that aid organisations focus on developing infrastructure in other areas, for example by **constructing new roads, power stations to generate electricity, and factories to facilitate the creation of jobs** for IDPs.

We request the government to establish factories, where people can work and provide for their families. Similarly, the aid that NGOs are distributing is not the best way to solve the problems of Afghanistan, I suggest they invest the money on basic programmes like power stations, roads and factories. **A197, a male IDP, Kunduz**

Government and international organisations must develop factories, where we can work and support our families. **A204, a male IDP, Mazar**

7.4.4 Solution 4: Restoration of houses, roads, and land

IDPs asked for help from the government and humanitarian organisations to rebuild and repair the houses and roads that were destroyed in the war, and to restore damaged land which they depended on for their livelihoods.

Our original places and homes are now destroyed, they should rebuild them, or they should donate cash so we can build our homes, we do not want house ovens. **A131, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

The government and international organisations should build our houses and canals so we can irrigate our land, and build retaining walls, we want nothing but them. **A128, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

We do not want wheat and house ovens; instead, we want to build our houses, roads, and dams because our lands don't have water. Our houses, farming land, and roads are ruined and there is war in our areas so these are major problems. We suggest cash assistance and want our houses and roads to be rebuilt. **A130, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

7.4.5 Solution 5: Agricultural assistance

IDPs proposed that the government and humanitarian organisations provide them with more durable solutions to their financial problems, such as **farming opportunities and assistance with livestock production**.

We want the kind of assistance which can meet our problems permanently like cows and poultry farms. **A135, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

We call on the government to provide women opportunities in the field of agriculture. **A117, a female IDP, Herat**

NGOs should assist us in terms of cows, sheep, and hens. **A184, a male IDP, Kandahar**

If the NGOs develop greenhouses for us, it may be a good way for us to earn money and support our families. **A201, a male IDP, Mazar**

7.4.6 Solution 6: Education

In addition to building schools, IDPs suggested that the government and aid organisations supply their children with **text books and other educational materials**, and provide **salaries for teachers** so that they can continue to teach whilst earning a living of their own.

Our children are willing to get an education, but they can't because they don't have access to books, notebooks, or stationery. **108, a female IDP, Herat**

We want to set up a school for our children so that children and women can study and become literate in the future. There were schools and teachers here in the early days. Our children were studying, but after a while, because the teachers were not paid for their teaching, they stopped. It was very useful for us, and we were ready to learn something.

A118, a female IDP, Herat

Institutions created literacy classes for our women and youth to make them literate. It was helpful and free. We also ask institutions to pay the salary for these teachers. Right now, they teach voluntarily, but they also have living expenses and need to provide for their families. **A115, a male IDP, Herat**

7.4.7 Solution 7: Job opportunities

The overwhelming majority of the IDPs who took part in the study and who are able to work urged the government and humanitarian organisations to provide them with employment opportunities so that they can become self-sufficient and minimise their dependency on emergency aid. This is evidenced by the quotes displayed in Table 7.2.

Table 7.2 Internally displaced people implore the government and aid organisations to provide them with employment opportunities

ID, gender, and location	Quote
A111, a male IDP, Herat	<i>If the government gives us job opportunities, or gives us some money, we will be able to have small businesses and shops to be self-sufficient</i>
A112, a male IDP, Herat	<i>We call on the government to provide us with jobs so that we can afford our family expenses</i>
A115, a male IDP, Herat	<i>We request the government and the institutions to provide us with jobs because we can all work. We want to stand on our own two feet and be self-sufficient</i>
A116, a male IDP, Herat	<i>We call on the government and the institutions to provide us with job opportunities and let us live comfortably with our families</i>
A177, a male IDP, Kandahar	<i>We request the government to provide job opportunities to all IDPs, so they can support their families. Then they will not feel as though they are a burden to the community or government</i>
A201, a male IDP, Mazar	<i>We want to become self-sufficient. Therefore, we request the government to provide us with work opportunities so we can support our families, otherwise we will live in the same poverty</i>
A164, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>We need to have some basic requirements for our lives here; security and jobs are crucial for us. We want to work and support our families and not rely on aid from others</i>
A207, a male IDP, Mazar	<i>The government should develop sustainable jobs and factories. That's all we require</i>

A169, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>We need jobs; we can do any work, we just need the facilities to start work. Most of us are jobless, and this makes our financial and social situation worse</i>
A12, a male IDP, Badakhshan	<i>I need to have land, a farm, or a small shop in order to be financially stable and independent and provide food for my family. We don't want to only rely on aid from the government and NGOs</i>
A106, a female IDP, Herat	<i>Men here suffer a lack of job opportunities. They are looking for a job but cannot find a job. They wish that the institutions would provide them with job opportunities</i>
A114, a male IDP, Herat	<i>We want organisations to provide men and women with the opportunity to work to get rid of this situation. We want to rely on ourselves, and provide our own expenses</i>
A161, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>The problem is that there is no possibility for us to start or to do any work. We need support to get us involved in the job market</i>
A45, a female IDP, Herat	<i>Giving us a job is the best way to support us, as if the people can work, they can earn and eventually they can support their families and in this way the community can be built and developed</i>
A151, a female IDP, Kabul	<i>If a job is provided for us, we can do many things, and we do not expect to only receive aid from NGOs, we want to stand by ourselves</i>
A203, a male IDP, Mazar	<i>I want to rely on myself and my ability to support my family, right now two of my children are facing malnutrition, and I am not able to feed them properly</i>

7.4.8 Solution 8: Cash-based aid and capital for business opportunities

IDPs requested that the government and humanitarian organisations provide them with **cash-based aid** so that they can meet their own needs with autonomy and dignity.

We need cash transfers to properly meet our own needs. **A202, a male IDP, Mazar**

Our children need access to education. They need some mental support as well. If we could have more facilities and in particular money, we would be able to invest in their education. **A13, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

Cash assistance would be better than giving us house ovens. **A142, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

IDPs also asked for **financial capital or loans** to enable them to start small business ventures which would help them to become self-sufficient.

We want the government and aid organisations to make money available to us so that we can work here and make a living. To get started, we need capital, space, and equipment. **A113, a male IDP, Herat**

We call on the government and the institutions to provide us with capital to work in the villages here through farming or ranching. How long can we

wait for others to help us? When aid arrives late, most of the children starve to death. We want to have some financial support to start a small business and shop. **A114, a male IDP, Herat**

I would be pleased if the organisations give us cash assistance so we could quickly start a micro-business and run our lives very smoothly. **A140, a male IDP, Jalalabad**

These organisations should support us with loans so that we can develop our own businesses and support our families, then we can be self-sufficient. **A205, a male IDP, Mazar**

7.4.9 Solution 9: Skills development/training

IDPs also emphasised the importance of **skills development and training courses** to improve their future prospects and chances of securing long-term employment.

In the past there was a tailoring course, but we were not trained well. Now we want to be trained and professional at something, but we need the facilities and opportunities. **A148, a female IDP, Kabul**

We request organisations to provide us with learning workshops for a better future. **A196, a female IDP, Kunduz**

We request the government and aid agencies to help us become self-sufficient; in making that happen, they can teach us tailoring and shopkeeping, so that we will be able to address our own needs. **A48, a male IDP, Herat**

7.4.10 Solution 10: Peacebuilding

Finally, IDPs urged the government to **work towards peace and negotiate an end to the conflict in Afghanistan**.

I request the government to bring us peace to rescue us from these adversities and miseries, I am worried about my future and my children's future as well. I think about peace in our country every single day. **A203, a male IDP, Mazar**

My children need to have better security in this area to grow up with honour and dignity. They deserve a better life in the future. **A15, a male IDP, Badakhshan**

The government should work towards peace and make sure we are secured. **A184, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Humanitarian staff proposed that if peace and security are achieved, IDPs may be able to **regain their dignity** and return to their places of origin, successfully re-settle in new places, or integrate into their host communities.

This is a political issue, why IDPs are really made IDPs. These political issues need to be solved politically, the local conflict needs to be solved,

and the war needs to be ended. Thus, it needs a political solution and as an Afghan I see the solution in a political way. IDPS are all the result of war and unless war is ended, IDPs will continue. Everybody was happy in their hometown and if war is ended, humanitarian assistance can be provided in an effective way and jobs will be created. **AS 292, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

I think peace is the best way to consider the dignity of IDPs. **AS 296, a male humanitarian worker, Kandahar**

7.5 Return and re-settlement

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Framework for Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons (2010) specifies that durable solutions for IDPs can be achieved through (1) return to the place of origin (2) settlement elsewhere or (3) integration into the host community. As described in Chapter 3, many conflict-induced IDPs are interested in returning to their places of origin if peace and security can be established there, while the majority of disaster-induced IDPs are interested in successful integration into their host communities as they have limited livelihood opportunities in their homeland. Of those IDPs who participated in the survey, over 70% reported that they were interested in returning home (Figure 7.3). However, they highlighted a number of barriers that prevented them from doing so, including war, violence, and insecurity; fear of insurgent groups and that their children would join one of the insurgent groups; a lack of land, shelter, schools, hospitals and jobs; and drought (Figure 7.4).

Figure 7.3 Internally displaced people’s responses to the question “Do you want to return to your place of origin?”

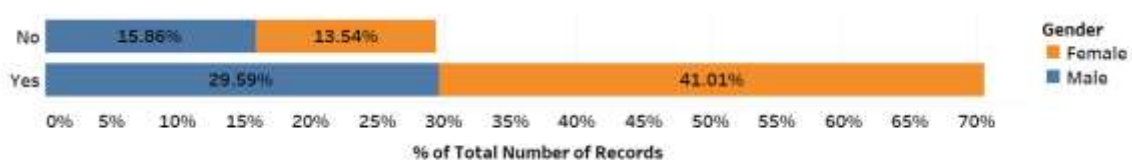
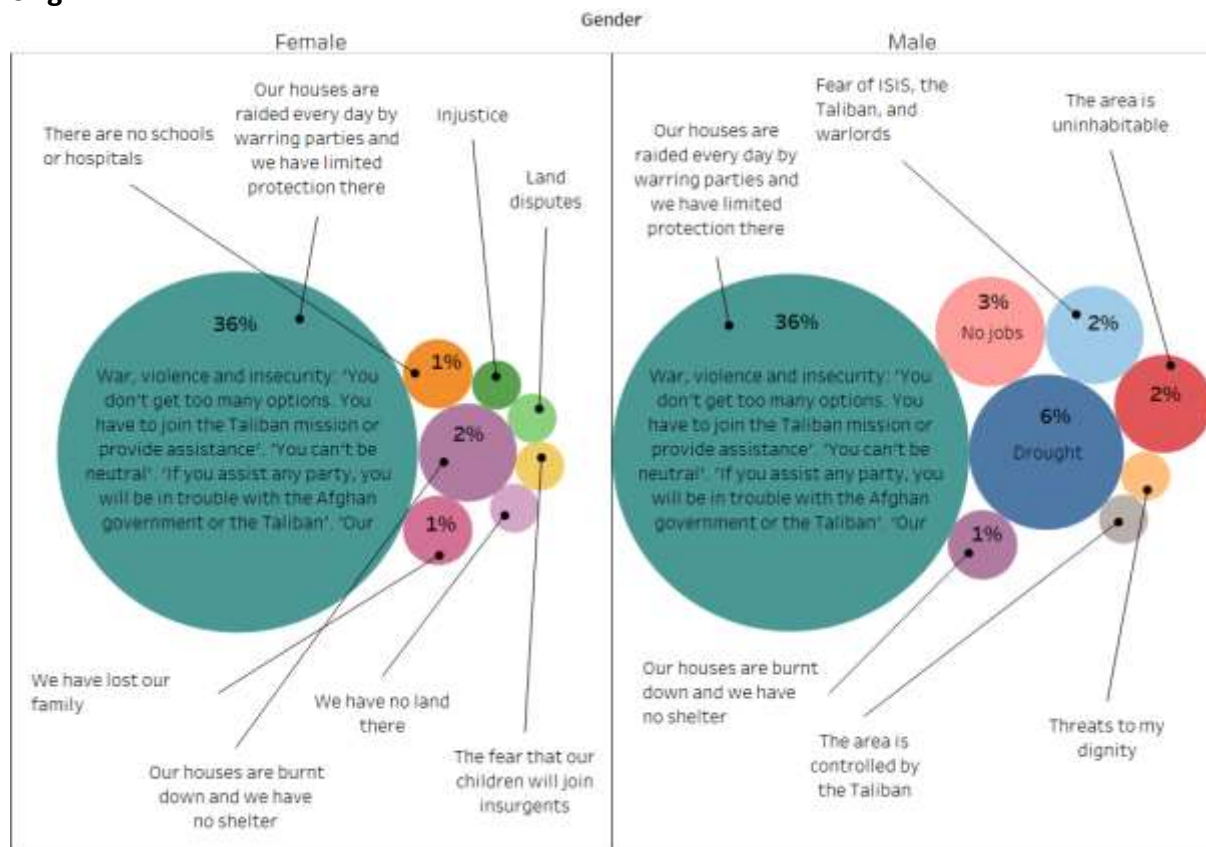


Figure 7.4 Barriers preventing internally displaced people from returning to their places of origin

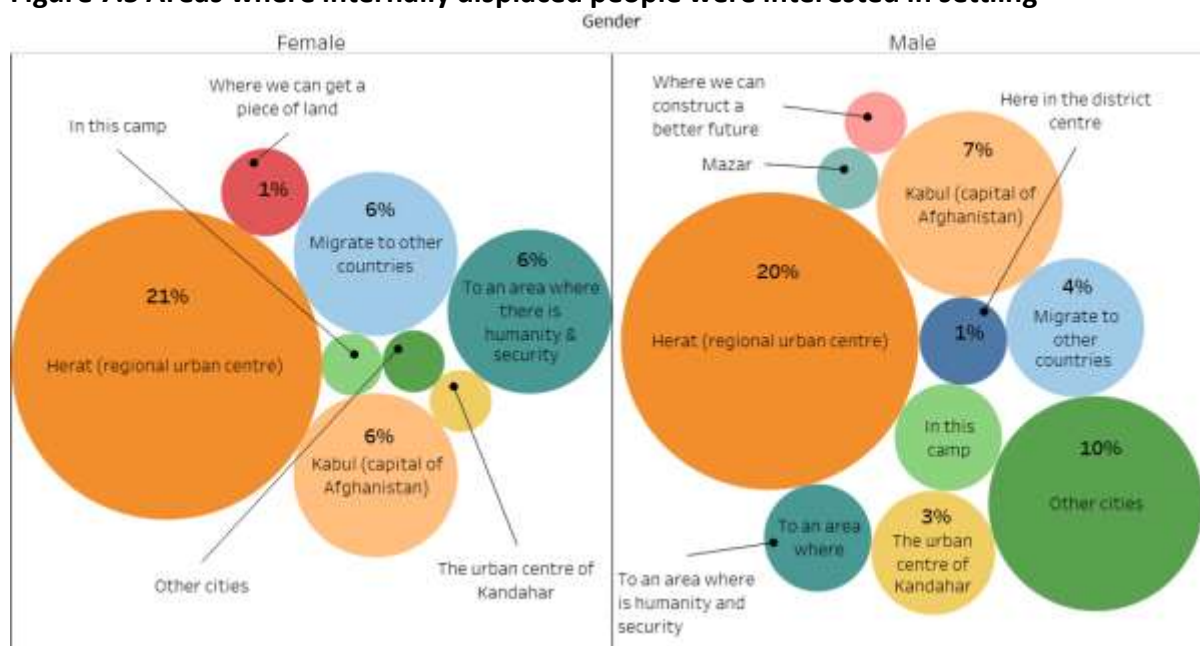


IDPs called on the government and aid organisations to assist them in their efforts to return home by providing **multidimensional support** in their places of origin, including support in accessing basic services, education and healthcare for their children, and income-generating opportunities.

The government and organisations have to support us in returning to our district to make a secure living and support us in the provision of basic services. That will help us to regain our dignity. **A202, a male IDP, Mazar**
 We want to go back to our homeland but we request the government to provide our children with education opportunities, health clinics, and safe roads between our village and Kandahar. **A178, a male IDP, Kandahar**

As illustrated in Figure 7.3, of those IDPs who did not want to return to their homeland, the majority (41%) were interested in settling in Herat, followed by Kabul (13%), other cities (11%), and other countries (10%). Others were interested in settling anywhere where there was peace and security, land, or opportunities to build a better future for themselves.

Figure 7.5 Areas where internally displaced people were interested in settling



7.6 Long-term settlement and integration

For many IDPs who are unable to return to their places of origin due to ongoing conflict, danger from potential natural disasters or food insecurity resulting from drought, the goal is successful and sustainable integration into their host communities. Again, IDPs emphasised that they are in urgent need of multidimensional support from the government and humanitarian actors in order to achieve this. Many reported that if they had access to employment opportunities and basic facilities to improve their lives then they would be happy to stay put.

They should build schools for our children so they can gain knowledge. We want support, work for our males and females, schools and clinics for our children. If we have these facilities available here, we will not return to our original place. **A191, a female IDP, Kandahar**

If the government and the institutions decide to build a house for us and provide us with jobs, we would not want to return home. Our request of the government and organisations is to build a school for our children in this camp, a health centre, and shelter us. **A111, a male IDP, Herat**

We request the government to make sure that our home is secure. If it is impossible then the government should provide us with work opportunities and make sure that our dignity is secured here. **A176, a male IDP, Kandahar**

Staff remarked that the main barrier to integration and re-settlement for IDPs has been the **allocation of land** and, up until recently, the **lack of IDPs rights to land** in areas that they have displaced to.

The biggest hurdle in implementing an IDP integration plan was the lack of land because the IDPs had no right to have property or land in the area where they had migrated according to the former Presidential Charter. However, the current president ordered that they can have this right. Fortunately, Presidential decree 305, about the right to own land for IDPs, is a universal and comprehensive decree. The land problem was a major problem that we hope will be resolved by implementing this decree and implementing the IDPs national policy. **AS 330, a male senior staff member, Kabul**

As described in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, successful integration into host communities also depends on **IDPs relations with the local residents** and their compatibility in terms of their culture, language, and ethnic background. IDPs reported a mixture of responses from their host communities. While many described good relationships with their neighbours and found the host population to be compassionate and helpful, particularly in Herat, others were confronted with hostility, suspicion, and disdain. Aid programmes should (1) take such issues into account when considering how best to facilitate successful integration of IDPs into their host communities, and (2) consider the potential impact that IDPs have on the situations of the host community themselves.

We have returned to our country, we're no longer immigrants, but we are treated like immigrants. The camps shouldn't be called camps or immigration areas, we are labelled as refugees, and the locals discriminate against us. There are people in the government who think we have left the country in revolution and supported the people who have ruined the country. We're stereotyped. **A274, a male IDP, Paktya**

We had better dignity in our own place. Here, they call us refugees. **A193, a female IDP, Kandahar**

7.7 Chapter summary

The current chapter has provided recommendations for actions that government and humanitarian organisations can take to protect and uphold the dignity of IDPs in Afghanistan, and has emphasised the need for increased support and assistance for IDPs throughout the country. In addition to increased emergency aid, we recommend that sustainable development support is provided to IDPs in ten key areas, as a matter of urgency. Increased support and assistance from humanitarian, development, and government organisations may help to preserve the dignity and improve the lives of IDPs throughout Afghanistan.

7.8 Key findings

- We recommend seven ways in which government and humanitarian staff can protect IDPs dignity when they are providing assistance: (1) ensure that aid is provided to those who need it; (2) distribute aid fairly, systematically, and transparently; (3) inform IDPs about the aid available and how to access it; (4) ensure aid is based on IDPs real needs; (5) improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations; (6) always consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid; and (7) always show respect and compassion to IDPs when providing assistance
- IDPs called on the government to secure peace and stability within the country and to provide them with more support
- Both IDPs and humanitarian actors called for increased assistance for IDPs in in terms of both emergency aid and sustainable development support
- Although actors reported undertaking some sustainable development activities, overall the research findings indicate that much more needs to be done to develop durable and sustainable solutions for the many problems and challenges experienced by IDPs in Afghanistan
- IDPs have called for development support in the following ten areas: (1) the provision of land and sustainable shelter; (2) construction of clinics, schools, capacity building centres; (3) construction of roads, factories, and power stations; (4) restoration of houses, roads, and land; (5) agricultural assistance; (6) education for children; (7) the provision of employment opportunities; (8) capital for business investment; (9) skills development and training; and (10) peacebuilding
- Actors need to ensure land is given to IDPs under Presidential decree 305 to facilitate successful integration and settlement
- Actors should take into consideration cultural factors and the impact of IDPs on host communities when planning aid programmes

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Chapter overview

This chapter reiterates the objectives of this research, summarises the key research findings, discusses the findings in relation to the existing literature, and provides recommendations for policy and practice.

8.2 Research objectives

As described in Chapter 1, this research focused on understanding:

- causes of displacement and IDPs displacement journeys;
- the socioeconomic conditions IDPs are living in and the impact of displacement on the physical and psychological wellbeing of IDPs
- the conceptualisations of dignity among both IDPs and actors (those working to deliver aid to IDPs);
- the impact of displacement and delivery of assistance on the dignity of IDPs;
- actors' experiences of providing assistance;
- ways in which the dignity of IDPs might be improved; and
- how to begin to deliver durable solutions which are meaningful to IDPs.

The findings highlight what realistic changes will make a positive difference to leading safe and peaceful lives for IDPs in Afghanistan where they are treated with dignity, justice and equality and allowed and supported to move out of poverty and re-build (or build new) healthy lives and communities. Clearly, this will have the potential to impact on and shape the way in which sustainable governance and sustainable human development are delivered in Afghanistan. A focus on dignity was chosen because sustainable development requires just institutions, alleviating poverty, education etc. all of which are central to dignity, and because it captures, from the perspective of those in need, how they view a 'good' life or a positive and sustainable future, one in which their well-being is protected. Therefore, to support meaningful sustainable development it is imperative to understand what the IDPs perceive as dignity (and loss of it) and how it underpins their calls for supporting their future. Tracking the experiences of the IDPs in Afghanistan: delivered a clearer understanding of how displacements happen and are experienced; created the knowledge necessary to improve the just and dignified delivery of support necessary to sustain displaced persons and their communities; explored practical solutions to provide pathways to healthier and safer lives (both short-term and more durable); and highlighted the multidimensional support necessary to help IDPs to return to their places of origin, resettle elsewhere, or integrate into their host communities.

8.3 Summary of the research findings

8.3.1 Chapter 3: Causes of internal displacement and the journeys of displaced people in Afghanistan

Chapter 3 described the causes of internal displacement and the displacement journeys of the IDPs in Afghanistan who participated in this study. The research found that the majority of IDPs had become displaced for multiple reasons, including war, natural disasters, and poverty, and some had been displaced multiple times; however the main cause of displacement for the IDPs who took part in this study was conflict and war. Most conflict-induced IDPs experienced severe violence and traumatic events during migration,

and many are unable to return to their places of origin due to ongoing conflict, meaning that they can remain displaced for many years. Interestingly, while many IDPs suffered loss of dignity during some or all stages of their displacement journeys, many stated that they had managed to preserve their dignity in spite of the violence and poverty that they had suffered. It is likely that those who felt their dignity was preserved focused more on their inner dignity and that gave them resilience, whereas those who suffered a loss of dignity focused more on social dignity and felt degraded (Kantab, 2011). This second group's *karāma* (dignity, honour, respect and high status in Arabic, cultural values: see Kandiwali, 2019), *ghairat* (zeal) *nang -wa-namos* (protection of family – especially women - and its property) or *izzat -wa- abro* (respect, prestige, status) may have been particularly badly affected.

In terms of the response of the government and humanitarian aid organisations, this was often described as being delayed, sporadic, inconsistent, and woefully inadequate, and when assistance was given, it was described as undignified and insufficient for solving IDPs longer-term problems. While many conflict-induced IDPs are interested in returning to their places of origin if peace and security are established, most disaster-induced IDPs are not interested in returning home due to a lack of income-generating opportunities and life-sustaining conditions, therefore their goal is successful integration into their host communities or resettlement elsewhere. Whether their goal is return, resettlement, or integration, IDPs reported that they require multidimensional and sustainable development support from the government and humanitarian aid organisations in order to achieve this.

8.3.2 Chapter 4: Locations and socio-economic conditions of internally displaced people in Afghanistan, and the impact of displacement on physical and psychological wellbeing

Chapter 4 described the locations and socio-economic conditions of the IDPs in Afghanistan who participated in this study to provide context to their everyday living situations. This chapter also illustrated the impact of displacement on IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing. The findings demonstrated that IDPs struggle to meet their most basic daily needs, and are in dire need of adequate shelter and sustainable housing for protection of their lives as well as their dignity. In addition, it is clear that IDPs struggle to access basic services such as healthcare and education due to both poverty and a lack of available/nearby facilities. Female displaced children face additional cultural barriers to accessing education, for example armed groups and community leaders often prevent girls from attending school. Income-generating opportunities are scarce and sustainable employment opportunities are almost non-existent. While IDPs are largely safe from conflict or war in displacement, they are concerned about the lack of job opportunities as without these they are living in extreme poverty and are unable to provide for their families. However, those IDPs who are able to work reported that they are willing to undertake almost any type of work if the opportunities are provided for them.

Displacement, violence, and poverty has a profound impact on IDPs physical and psychological wellbeing, which in turn impacts on IDPs livelihoods as some are unable to work at all due to their ill health. It is clear that war, violence, and conflict has led to psychosocial difficulties for many IDPs, including children. Certain groups such as widows are more vulnerable to violence in displacement due to cultural norms and practices.

Despite this, there was a surprising lack of gender-based violence (GBV) or sexual violence reported throughout this study, especially because other research considers GBV in Afghanistan (Mannell *et.al.*, 2018 and Stokes *et.al.*, 2016). However, previous research concerning GBV in Afghanistan did not consider IDPs specifically. There is clearly a need for a study of this type to be conducted. The lack of GBV in this study may be attributed to the fact that the majority of those conducting the interviews and surveys were male, and the fact that we did not specifically ask about such victimisation because to do so without being able to offer any support would have been unethical. Overall this chapter highlighted that IDPs principal concerns are food and clean water; shelter; education and psychosocial support for their children; and employment opportunities.

8.3.3 Chapter 5: Conceptualisations of dignity among internally displaced people and humanitarian actors in Afghanistan, and the impact of humanitarian assistance on dignity in displacement

Chapter 5 explored how dignity is conceptualised among the IDPs and humanitarian actors who participated in this study, and described the impact of humanitarian assistance on the dignity of IDPs in Afghanistan. Drawing on their lived experiences in displacement, IDPs conceptualised dignity in multiple different ways, specifically in terms of:

- access to their basic needs (such as food, water, and shelter);
- prosperity and wealth;
- self-reliance and self-sufficiency;
- protection of their lives, homes, and families;
- peace, safety and security;
- freedom and rights;
- mutual respect and compassion;
- religion and Islamic values; and
- education

In contrast, humanitarian actors and senior government staff mainly conceptualised dignity in terms of respect and human rights and gave less emphasis to the roles of education, independence, self-reliance, and self-sufficiency in protecting and restoring IDPs dignity. These differences may be explained by the reliance of humanitarian workers on a top-down conceptualisation of dignity (Patrick and Simpson, 2019). As noted in Chapter 2, humanitarian organisations often set out their own definition of dignity and examine whether that is being respected in certain contexts, rather than gathering or reporting on the affected communities' lived experiences or their views and perspectives on dignity (Grandi, Mansour and Holloway, 2018). Clearly, IDPs draw on their lived experiences, and community and cultural perspectives of dignity, and this difference in perspective gives rise to clear differences in conceptualisations of dignity between IDPs and humanitarian actors.

In terms of the aid received by IDPs, the majority of IDPs were not satisfied with the humanitarian assistance provided, often describing the aid received as inadequate, insufficient, and inconsistent with their real needs. They reported that not all IDPs who are entitled to receive aid do so, and some vulnerable groups such as disabled people, widows, and the very poor and needy miss out on aid. In addition, many IDPs felt that their dignity was not protected when they were receiving aid, mainly due to chaotic procedures, lack of concern for their culture, religion and values, abuse and mistreatment by staff, and

corruption in the distribution of aid. IDPs who felt that their dignity had been harmed were reluctant to complain or to report abuse using a formal complaints mechanism, as in many cases they feared what might happen.

8.3.4 Chapter 6: Humanitarian actors' experiences of working with internally displaced people in Afghanistan: Challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance

Chapter 6 described humanitarian actors' experiences of working with IDPs in Afghanistan and focused on the challenges and gaps in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Humanitarian staff reported various challenges in the provision of humanitarian assistance, including:

- working with limited budgets;
- corruption, poor management, and lack of coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations;
- disruption by local elders, warlords, and other stakeholders;
- identifying IDPs and those most in need;
- cultural and language differences; and
- insecurity and the politicisation of aid.

Staff called for increased funding, improved assessment and distribution processes, improved coordination between organisations, and support from the government in supervising the distribution of aid, to help them to reach all of those in need. In the present continued uncertain climate in Afghanistan and at a time when there is a global pandemic (2020) it seems unlikely that there will be extra aid available. However, were organisations to improve their assessment of needs they might be able to better focus spending into areas of real need within the IDP communities. For example, this report highlights areas of provision which are not useful. Furthermore, money might be saved in the long-term were the government able to provide more land and the agencies focused more on long-term provision of some aid, particularly accommodation (or the means to construct accommodation) rather than repeated provision of temporary shelters such as tents. In terms of gaps in the provision of aid, humanitarian actors felt that:

- the aid met IDPs most important needs;
- that IDPs dignity was considered during the provision of assistance;
- that IDPs views and needs were accounted for in the planning and implementation of aid programmes; and
- that IDPs were treated with respect during the distribution process.

These views were directly opposed to those of IDPs as discussed in Chapter 5. However, humanitarian actors and IDPs largely agreed that the assistance provided does not focus on long-term and permanent solutions for IDPs and that IDPs are in urgent need of durable solutions to become self-reliant and improve their circumstances and quality of life.

8.3.5 Chapter 7: Dignity in humanitarian action: The call for increased support, durable solutions, and sustainable development to improve the lives and preserve the dignity of internally displaced people in Afghanistan

Chapter 7 illustrated the role of the government and humanitarian organisations in protecting the dignity of IDPs in Afghanistan, and highlighted the urgent call for increased

support and assistance for IDPs throughout Afghanistan, in terms of both emergency aid and sustainable development support. We recommend seven ways in which government and humanitarian staff can protect IDPs dignity when they are providing assistance:

- (1) ensure that aid is provided to those who need it;
- (2) distribute aid fairly, systematically, and transparently;
- (3) inform IDPs about the aid available and how to access it;
- (4) ensure aid is based on IDPs real needs;
- (5) improve coordination between humanitarian, development, and government organisations;
- (6) always consider IDPs dignity, culture, and religion when distributing aid; and
- (7) always show respect and compassion to IDPs when providing assistance.

Both IDPs and humanitarian actors called for increased assistance for IDPs in terms of both emergency aid and sustainable development support. Although actors reported undertaking some sustainable development activities, overall the research findings indicate that much more needs to be done to develop durable and sustainable solutions for the many problems and challenges experienced by IDPs in Afghanistan. IDPs have called for development support in the following ten areas:

- (1) the provision of land and sustainable shelter, including access to water, sanitation and energy (SDG Goals 1.4, 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 11.1, 11.3);
- (2) construction of clinics, schools, and capacity building centres (SDG Goals 1.4, 3.8, 4.a, 7.1, 9.1, 11);
- (3) construction of roads, factories, and power stations (SDG Goals 7.1, 9);
- (4) restoration of houses, roads, land, drinking water and sanitation (SDG Goals 6.1, 6.2, 7.1, 9.1, 11.2);
- (5) agricultural assistance (SDG Goals 1.4, 2.3, 2.4, 2.a, 9.3);
- (6) education for children (SDG Goals 4.1, 4.2, 4.4, 4.5, 4.7);
- (7) the provision of employment opportunities (SDG Goals 2.3, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.5);
- (8) capital for business investment (SDG Goals 8, 9.2, 9.3);
- (9) skills development and training (SDG Goals 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 5.5); and
- (10) peacebuilding and provision of safe and secure environments (SDG Goals 5.5, 11.1, the whole of goal 16 but in particular 16.1, 16.2, 16.3)

IDPs called on the government to secure peace and stability within the country and to provide them with more support. Actors need to ensure land is given to IDPs under Presidential decree 305 to facilitate successful integration and settlement. Future research and aid programmes should examine the impact of cultural factors on IDPs ability to integrate into their host communities, and examine the impact that IDPs have on their host communities. Although we did not investigate these issues explicitly in the current study, there was some evidence that IDPs with different cultural backgrounds (still within Afghanistan) faced hostility from local residents, leading to feelings of isolation. In addition, some aid workers felt conflicted giving aid to IDPs while excluding the host community, as often those in the host community were also living in poverty and deserving of humanitarian assistance. Some local residents expressed concern that IDPs would bring insecurity and may worry that IDPs presence would have a further impact on the job market.

8.4 Recommendations for policy and practice

In addition to the seven recommendations and ten potential areas for durable solutions outlined in Chapter 7, based on this study we provide the following further recommendations for policy and practice.

- Humanitarian organisations must aim for a more timely and consistent response to conflict, drought, and other natural disasters in Afghanistan, with more frequent assistance and enough aid to at least fulfil each families' basic daily requirements.
- Humanitarian and government organisations should focus on sustainable development activities and creating income-generating opportunities in rural drought-affected areas and poverty-stricken areas in order to prevent people from migrating from these areas in the first place.
- In terms of the provision of education, particular attention should be paid to education for girls, who face additional cultural barriers in accessing educational facilities.
- Particular attention should be paid to providing a greater level of psychosocial support for IDPs, particularly those affected by conflict, war and violence, including children.
- Humanitarian workers should ensure that vulnerable groups such as widows are able to receive aid safely, taking into account cultural norms and practices and recognising that single women may be at risk of gender-based violence, sexual violence, discrimination or persecution if required to leave their homes alone.
- Rather than relying on top-down conceptualisations of dignity, humanitarian actors should seek to understand what dignity means to the affected communities and how to uphold IDPs dignity based on the views and perspectives of IDPs themselves.

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10 Appendix 1

Figure 1.1 – Detailed Overview of All Seven Phases of Afghan Displacement

Time Period	Conflict Event	Migration Pattern
Baseline		Migration for jobs, both internally and externally. Both short-term seasonal as well as long-term.
Phase 1 (1978–1989)	Saur revolution bringing to power the People's Democratic Party (PDPA); subsequent war of Mujahideen against Soviet-backed government; withdrawal of Soviet Army (1989).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass exodus abroad, steadily rising post 1979 and reaching its peak of over six million in 1989. • Internal displacement on the rise, starting in 1985.
Phase 2 (1990–1995)	Continued war against the Communist Government which is defeated in 1992. Civil war prompted by disagreement over power-sharing among Mujahideen parties and chaos in many parts of the country. Taliban join into the war in 1994 making advances and conquest by 1995.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First big refugee return-wave starting slowly in 1989 and peaking in 1992 when it is reported that about 1.2 million refugees returned home within a period of six months. About three million refugees returned to Afghanistan between 1989 and 1993: 2.5 million in 1992/3 alone. • Internal displacement rises again after 1993-94 as civil war rages (focusing on Afghanistan's cities, especially Kabul) and continues until the Taliban come to power in 1996. Much of the internal displacement (especially within cities) is never reflected in IDP figures which stay constant at around one million for several years. • New exodus abroad, though offset by return numbers.
Phase 3 (1996–2000)	Taliban seize control of Kabul in 1996, harsh Taliban rule follows.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed refugee return, though smaller in numbers (only about 900,000). • Internal displacement once again on the rise, and renewed exodus from the country (some Afghans leave for the first time). Internal displacement soared further in 2000, when the worst drought in thirty years hit Afghanistan, causing massive livestock losses among the nomadic Kuchi population, prompting many to shift to a more sedentary existence – often in Pakistan.

Time Period	Conflict Event	Migration Pattern
Phase 4 (2001–2002)	Post 9/11 bombing and US-led intervention to remove Taliban government; Northern Alliance takes Kabul.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 1.5 million Afghans flee within a few weeks due to US aerial bombing and ensuing ground combat. • Internal displacement of Pashtuns targeted in revenge attacks in North and West Afghanistan.
Phase 5 (2002–2006)	Bonn Peace agreement, transitional authority, new government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Largest UN-assisted refugee return in recorded history; about five million in total, mainly between 2002 and 2005. • At the same time, the majority of Afghanistan's 1.2 million internally displaced persons also returned home, widely assumed to have satisfactorily reintegrated.
Phase 6 (2007–2014)	Government increasingly loses legitimacy, insurgency resurges, security situation deteriorates and violence on the rise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee return slows, about one million still return between 2006-8, 'only' 427,561 did so between 2009-13. • Insufficient reintegration of refugees adds to growing internal displacement. UNHCR profiles IDP population first in 2008. By mid-2014 the IDP count had reached nearly 700,000, half were displaced since at least 2011, at a rate of about 100,000 per year. • Renewed exodus emerges.
Phase 7 (2015–present)	Political (elections) and security transition leads to a drastic deterioration of security as well as economic situation. Neighboring countries Iran and Pakistan step up (refugee) return.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External displacement on the rise again with 962,000 Afghans seeking asylum between 2015 and 2017. • Steady growth of internal displacement, estimated at about 1.8 million in 2018, with an average of about 450,000 a year. • About four million Afghans return (or are returned to Afghanistan), most from Pakistan and Iran (but also Europe).

(Compiled by S. Schmeidl, 2019)