

Displaced populations' vulnerabilities to the impacts of slow- and sudden-onset disasters

1 Utilizing data from Multi-Sector Needs Assessments to inform the Loss and Damage debate and action

In submitting this short paper, IMPACT Initiatives seeks to respond to the second item of the questionnaire in relation to Human Rights Council resolution 53/6 asking to describe “relevant quantitative and qualitative data as well as mechanisms and tools to measure, monitor, report on, and evaluate the impacts of loss and damage, including from extreme weather and slow-onset events, on the full enjoyment of human rights.” In line with the questionnaire’s focus on specifically vulnerable populations, this paper will provide examples of the vulnerabilities of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to the impacts of riverine floods and drought in fragile and conflict-affected situations (FCS).

IMPACT analyzed data from the 2023 Multi-sector Needs Assessments (MSNAs) in Afghanistan, Central African Republic (CAR) and Somalia.¹ There are several key advantages of using MSNA data to inform the Loss and Damage (L&D) debate and action, specifically on Non-Economic Losses (NELs):

- MSNAs provide a comprehensive picture of NELs, by covering a wide range of data on NELs related to service access and well-being and households’ self-reported priority needs and impacts of recent disasters.
- MSNA data is available for most humanitarian contexts, including FCS, which are often a blind spot for climate and disaster loss data collection.
- MSNAs provide granular data at household and individual level, which can be used to disaggregate results by many different socio-demographic and economic variables.
- They include both data from displaced and non-displaced populations, enabling holistic comparison.
- They usually cover the entire country, which can inform both the national and global debate on L&D.
- They provide comparability over multiple years, which is useful when looking at contexts of climate impacts (e.g. slow onset, creeping environmental degradation processes).

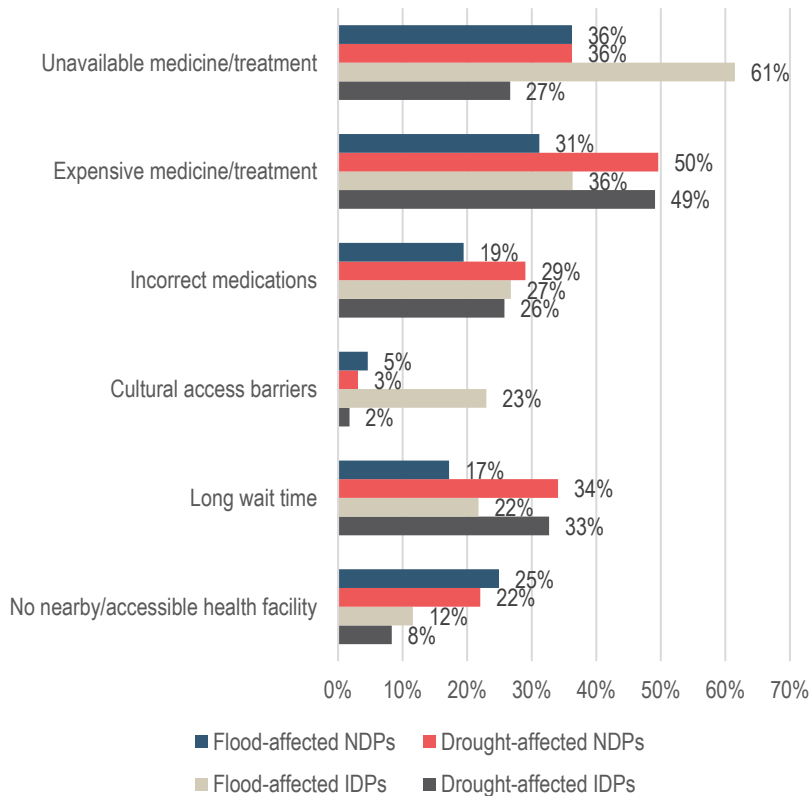
This paper illustrates the NELs due to specific vulnerabilities of displaced people to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change. It will compare the enjoyment of four human rights between IDPs and non-displaced persons (NDPs) affected by disasters: access to health, clean water and education, and protection from violence. The findings demonstrate that vulnerabilities and impacts related to disasters are highly context dependent and point to the usefulness of granular data and data-driven policies.

2 Evidence from Afghanistan, CAR, and Somalia

2.1 Access to healthcare, clean water, and education

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

Figure 1: Barriers to accessing healthcare in Afghanistan, by displacement status and type of disaster recently experienced.

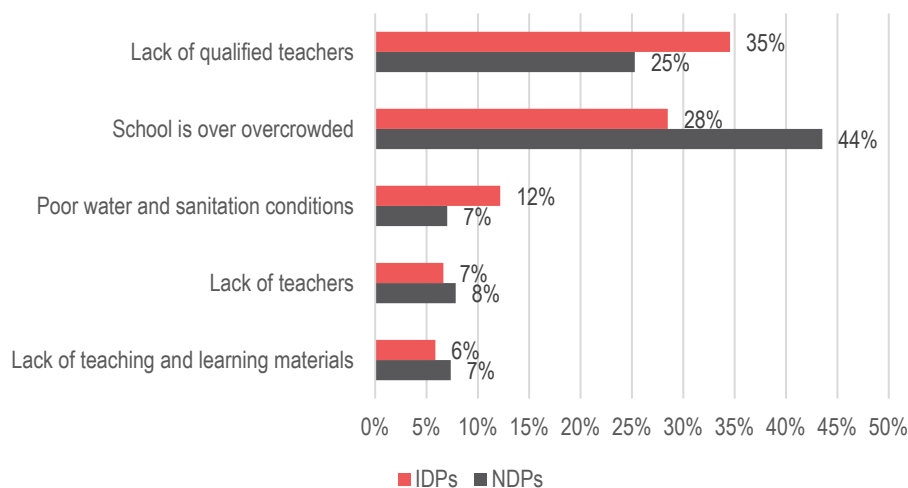


In **Afghanistan**, the differences in access to healthcare and water between IDPs and NDPs affected by drought and flood highlight the elevated vulnerabilities of displaced populations. Drought-affected IDPs generally have closer access to healthcare facilities than NDPs (33% vs. 55% with over 30 minutes travel time), suggesting that displacement may lead to settlement in areas with better healthcare coverage (42% of drought-affected IDPs are located in Kabul province, compared to 11% NDPs). However, time spent accessing healthcare increases for drought-affected IDPs displaced multiple times, suggesting a gradual strain on resources or a progressive shift towards less well-served settlements. IDPs reported more often negative impact of floods on their healthcare (35%) access than NDPs (10%). Flood-affected IDPs also face more significant healthcare barriers (see figure 1), such as the unavailability of specific medicines and cultural limitations, than their NDP counterparts, indicating an exacerbation of these challenges due to displacement.

Both drought (54%) and flood-affected (19%) IDPs reported more often negative impacts of the disaster on their water access than their respective NDP counterparts (40% and 8%, respectively). Moreover, drought-affected IDPs have less access to improved water sources (63%) compared to NDPs (74%), showing increased vulnerability due to displacement. In contrast, flood-affected IDPs have better access than NDPs (85% vs. 68%), possibly due to relocation to areas with better infrastructure.

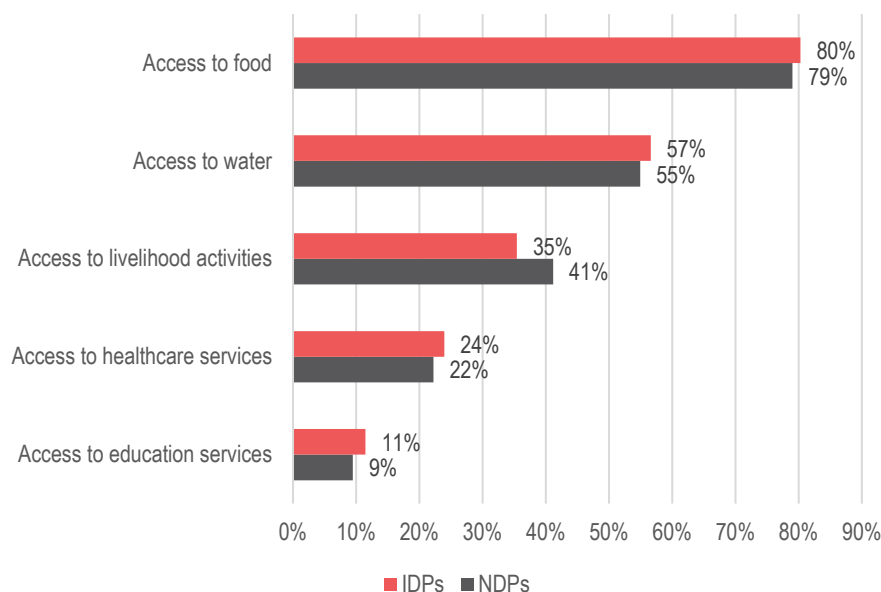
Reported impacts of flood and drought on access to education are relatively low for both IDPs and NDPs (4-12%), but there are notable differences in school enrollment according to disaster type: When exposed to flood, IDPs (47%) have lower enrollment rates compared to NDPs (63%), while in drought contexts, the pattern is reversed: IDPs (77%) and NDPs (61%). This suggests that floods occur in areas where IDPs *already* have low formal school access.

Figure 2: Top 5 reasons why children affected by recent drought or floods in CAR could not study under acceptable conditions, by displacement status.



In **CAR**, IDPs impacted by drought or flood access healthcare facilities faster than NDPs (49% vs. 67% with over 30 minutes travel time), potentially reflecting their settlement in areas with a greater density of healthcare facilities. However, IDPs more frequently report the unavailability of specific treatments or services (27% vs. 17%), indicating that quality of care becomes an increasing challenge. Displaced (75%) and non-displaced (70%) households have similar access to improved water sources. At the same time, IDPs experience water shortages more frequently (74% vs. 62%), suggesting their increased vulnerability. Despite similar school enrollment rates between IDPs and NDPs, IDPs face more significant challenges due to a lack of staff (see figure 2), pointing to potential reduced quality of children's learning experience.

Figure 3: Top 5 impacts of recent drought on households in Somalia, by displacement status.



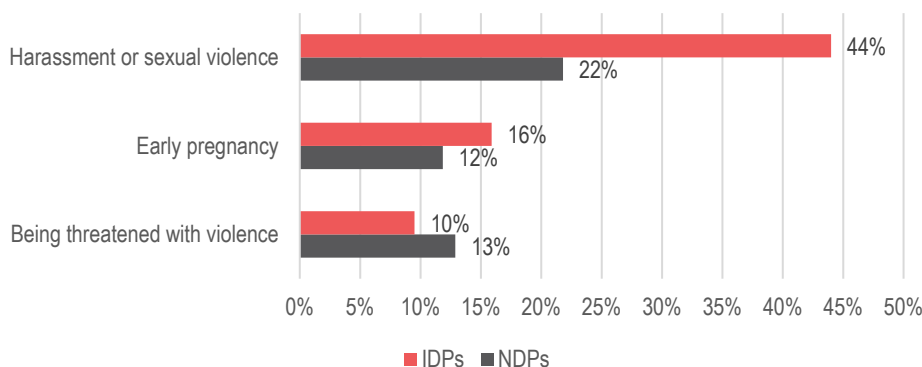
In **Somalia**, IDPs reported slightly higher, but still relatively similar impacts of drought compared to NDPs on their access to basic services (see figure 3). However, it is worth looking in more detail at the specific types of services: drought-affected IDPs are more likely to spend over 30 minutes accessing healthcare than NDPs (51% vs. 36%), which could reflect movement to less accessible areas. The higher cost barriers for IDPs (36% vs. 27%) suggest increased financial strain due to displacement. Notably, water access is equally challenging for both groups (both 49% accessing improved sources), but NDPs rely more on surface water (25% vs. 15% for IDPs). A larger share of drought-affected IDPs reports that they either rely on less preferred (unimproved/untreated) water (41% vs. 16% for NDPs) or surface water (16% vs. 9%) as drinking water to adapt to problems with accessing water. This points to elevated health risks for IDPs. Finally, school enrollment is lower for displaced girls (23%) and boys (20%) compared to NDPs (29% and 31%, respectively), with the cost of education being a significant barrier, especially for IDPs (75% for girls and 74% for boys), highlighting the exacerbated educational challenges faced by displaced populations.

2.2 Protection from violence

This section compares the extent to which displaced and non-displaced populations affected by drought or flood report protection incidences, especially related to GBV.

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

Figure 4: Top 3 types of safety and security concerns for girls in the host location in CAR affected by recent drought or floods, by displacement status.



In **CAR**, drought- or flood-affected IDPs and NDPs reported similar levels of threats to their household members' well-being (9% and 10%, respectively) and of concerns for the safety and security of girls (34% for IDPs vs. 31% for NDPs). However, when looking at the types of safety and security concerns for girls (see figure 4), disaster-affected IDPs report significantly higher rates of sexual harassment or violence than NDPs. As in Afghanistan, this highlights a distinct vulnerability for girls and women within displaced populations, necessitating targeted protection measures.

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

3 Conclusion

This paper highlighted the critical role of MSNA data in informing the L&D debate from a human rights perspective. The evidence presented demands tailored humanitarian responses and policies that specifically address the human rights of displaced populations, ensuring their protection and fulfillment in the face of sudden and slow-onset disasters.

MSNA data from Afghanistan, CAR, and Somalia suggests that often, IDPs who are exposed to riverine floods and drought face severe limitations to the enjoyment of their rights compared to NDPs – whether or not these limitations are caused by these disasters or by people’s displacement. This makes IDPs specifically vulnerable to cope with the experienced disasters. This analysis also shows how much the enjoyment of basic rights varies not only according to country and displacement status, but also according to the type of disaster experienced and the frequency of displacement:

Protection from violence: Displaced populations experiencing disasters often report higher insecurity than NDPs. In Afghanistan, flood-affected IDPs report more frequent protection incidents involving women than flood-affected NDPs. In CAR, IDPs experiencing disaster report higher rates of sexual harassment or violence against girls than NDPs. In Somalia, IDPs affected by drought report more security concerns and threats of violence than NDPs experiencing drought, underlining the increased protection risks in displacement settings.

Access to healthcare: IDPs in Afghanistan, CAR, and Somalia face significant challenges in accessing healthcare compared to NDPs. In Afghanistan, drought-affected IDPs initially have closer access to healthcare facilities than NDPs, but multiple displacements lead to increased barriers. Flood-affected IDPs experience more severe healthcare challenges, such as unavailability of specific medicines and cultural limitations. In CAR, IDPs access healthcare facilities faster than NDPs but report more frequent unavailability of specific treatments. In Somalia, drought-affected IDPs are more likely to face longer travel times and higher cost barriers to healthcare than NDPs.

Access to clean water: Water access is a critical issue for both IDPs and NDPs but varies based on the type of disaster. In Afghanistan, drought-affected IDPs have less access to improved water sources than NDPs, while flood-affected IDPs generally have better access. In CAR, IDPs and NDPs have similar levels of access to improved sources, but IDPs more often face water shortages. In Somalia, both groups face challenges in accessing improved water sources, but IDPs rely more on less preferred or untreated water, increasing health risks.

Access to education: Education is notably impacted by displacement and exposure to disaster, especially among flood-affected IDPs. In Afghanistan, flood-affected IDPs have significantly lower school enrollment rates compared to NDPs and drought-affected IDPs. However, there is indication that the floods occur in areas where IDPs already have low formal school access. In Somalia, drought-affected displaced children also have lower enrollment rates than non-displaced children and face more cost barriers. Finally, in CAR, despite similar enrollment rates between IDPs and NDPs, the two groups faced different additional educational challenges. IDPs especially highlighted a lack of teachers.

¹ Findings for this analysis were disaggregated by displacement status and households’ exposure to recent drought or flood. Depending on availability, data was further disaggregated by factors potentially shaping NELs, such as displacement frequency, duration of displacement, household size, climatic anomalies in people’s home and host areas, primary income source, and income level. For more information on the methodology used and for additional findings and policy recommendations, please refer to this [policy brief](#) jointly published by IMPACT and the Secretariat of the Platform on Disaster Displacement.