



## Speed and sustainability

### Reviewing the long-term outcomes of UNHCR's Quick Impact Projects in Mozambique

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# Introduction

1. Many papers have discussed UNHCR's return and reintegration programmes, what the organization does in countries of origin, and how it seeks to bridge the gap between immediate humanitarian assistance and longer-term development. This gap in particular – often called the humanitarian-development nexus – is increasingly the subject of study, as UNHCR intensifies its search for better strategies and methods.
2. However, despite general agreement that no single agency alone can ensure successful reintegration, many have preferred to criticize UNHCR for perceived failures, rather than give due recognition for its achievements. While it cannot be denied that some reintegration programmes have indeed had unwelcome outcomes, such as secondary internal displacement or buildings lying empty, this attention to the negative has led to self-criticisms of UNHCR's own capabilities in the countries of origin.
3. The true test of any reintegration programme is this: did it work in the eyes of the local population? But how and when do we measure this effectiveness? A 2001 UNHCR paper pointed out that many evaluations tended to take place while UNHCR still had a significant presence in the country, rather than after its phase-out, thus, the organization was unable to assess the longer-term consequences of its interventions. Important learning opportunities might therefore have been missed. What can be done about this?

## **Empirical survey**

4. Separately from UNHCR, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) conducted an empirical survey on reconstruction in Mozambique, as part of the planning process for its own post-conflict recovery projects there and elsewhere around the world. The survey – supported by UNHCR's headquarters and Maputo offices – visited former UNHCR Quick Impact Project (QIP) sites and interviewed villagers who returned home between 1992 and 1996. The survey results were underpinned by interviews with the Government, the UN and international agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations, as well as extensive documentation research.
5. The outcome was a report, published in Japanese, detailing the effectiveness of UNHCR's Mozambique post-conflict reconstruction assistance. The launch of this report, and the accompanying workshop in Tokyo in 2009, attracted over 200 aid actors and academics, together with a number of private companies and corporations.
6. Among other findings, the survey found that 89% of those interviewed responded that living conditions had improved from "very bad" during the civil war, which lasted until 1992, to "very good" since. 7% felt that living conditions were unchanged, 3% that they had fluctuated and 1% that they had deteriorated. Out of the QIPs traced – 12 health posts and 15 primary schools – every single one was still in use 13-16 years after their completion and UNHCR's phase-out departure in 1996/7.

7. The JICA report's main conclusions, although it is impossible to shorten the 70-page research document accurately into one paragraph, were:

- engage in post-conflict countries early and speedily;
- take over from humanitarian actors seamlessly;
- grasp the nature of the conflict and the peace process in each country;
- ensure non-discrimination among potential beneficiaries;
- go beyond post-conflict reconstruction and anticipate longer-term developmental needs;
- use the agency's own strengths and competencies;
- do no harm.

8. The survey was the first attempt to assess reintegration activities at the project level 10-15 years on: how effective they had been and how sustainable they had proved. The survey was led by the author of this paper - a former UNHCR Field Officer in Mozambique - while on a UNHCR-JICA staff exchange programme.

9. This paper shares a summary of the survey results with additional observations of the author (section 2), analyzes UNHCR's planning assumptions against the findings in the field (section 3), discusses transition from humanitarian to development phase through the example of Mozambique (section 4) and extracts key findings and suggestions (section 5) from the author's viewpoints.

## Have the projects survived?

10. The survey team visited Mozambique's capital, Maputo, and its Tete and Niassa provinces from 13 January to 16 February 2009. A consulting company was contracted in Maputo for data collection, verifying and processing. Locally-hired assistants in the provinces included two former UNHCR Field Assistants from Ulongwe Field Office and one former United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Field Coordinator in Tete.

11. To minimize variables and allow comparison between reintegration QIPs of different types, at different times and in different places, locations chosen for the survey were based on:

- availability of 1993-1996 data on UNHCR's return and reintegration programme;
- physical access to villages during the survey period (it took place during the rainy season);
- where the majority of the population were subsistence farmers rather than in mixed occupations;
- where there were no mega-projects or major foreign investments that brought rapid economic growth (and so skew survey results);
- where there had been no subsequent impediments to infrastructure recovery, such as the floods in 2000.

12. Based on these criteria, the districts of Angonia, Tsangano and Macanga in Tete province, and Sanga and Muembe in Niassa province, were selected for sampling. As well as meeting the selection criteria, these areas also represented a balance between densely and sparsely populated, formerly government- and opposition-controlled, and centre and north of the country.

Table 1: Basic demographic data of the sample districts (1996/7 and 2007)

| Province                | Tete                 |         |                |         |         |         | Niassa |        |        |        |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------|----------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
|                         | Angonia <sup>1</sup> |         | Tsangano       |         | Macanga |         | Sanga  |        | Muembe |        |
| Area Km2                | 3,427 (1996/7)       |         | 3,439 (1996/7) |         | 7,340   |         | 12,285 |        | 5,526  |        |
| Year                    | 1996/7               | 2007    | 1996/7         | 2007    | 1996/7  | 2007    | 1996/7 | 2007   | 1996/7 | 2007   |
| Population <sup>2</sup> | 315,000              | 335,808 | 118,000        | 179,796 | 60,000  | 112,551 | 41,373 | 56,282 | 17,000 | 29,083 |
| Returnees               | 248,869              | -       | 96,057         | -       | 39,101  | -       | 7,276  | -      | 7,239  | -      |
| Returnee %              | 79%                  | -       | 81%            | -       | 65%     | -       | 18%    | -      | 43%    | -      |
| Pop. density/km2        | 92                   | 98      | 34             | 52      | 8       | 15      | 3      | 5      | 3      | 5      |
| Pop. increase           | 6%                   |         | 44%            |         | 87%     |         | 36%    |        | 71%    |        |

Source: Table 4.2.1. page 27, JICA 2009

<sup>1</sup> After 1996/7, part of Angonia district was merged with Tsangano district. Thus, there are slight variations in the figures.

<sup>2</sup> 1996/7 figures are estimates.

13. In 1996/7, these five districts were home to some 23% of 1.7 million returnees from neighbouring countries. As of 2007, they represented approximately 3.5% of the total 20-million population of the country.

### **Thinking back: the household survey**

14. In order to understand through the eyes of the villagers what had happened over the last 15 years, only adults 30 years old and above were interviewed. Representative samples were taken based on the population size of each district. Efforts were made to ensure gender balance. Out of the 140 respondents, 59% were male and 41% female; 51% were aged between 30 and 50, while 49% were over 50 (including some in their 80s); 80% were returnees from neighbouring countries, while 7% were former internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 12% had never left the village; 91% were subsistence farmers, while 4% were merchants, 2% teachers and 3% retirees and others. Over 80% of the respondents were illiterate.<sup>3</sup>

15. An important consideration was to strike a balance between areas formerly controlled by government (FRELIMO) forces, and those formerly controlled by opposition (former RENAMO) forces. This was done by referring to UNHCR Field Office papers from the early 1990s. No documents differentiated clearly which villages were controlled by which forces, so the survey ended up with 60% of the respondents being from former government-controlled areas, and 40% from opposition-controlled areas. Given the sensitivity of the division in the past, no reference was made to this point during the interviews.

16. For the subsistence farmers in particular, the process of thinking back often involved considerable mental and emotional anguish, reminded as they were of the killings, the cruelty, the hatreds, and the times of distrust between each other. Talking to them and obtaining valid survey answers took both time and fluency in the local languages – Chichewa in Tete province and Yao in Niassa province – as well as a solid understanding of what the three decades of war, starting from the 1964 war of liberation, had meant for them.

17. The household survey verified earlier UNHCR reports that between 1992 and 1995, a large majority had returned to their villages of origin by their own means. Slight differences in the timing and speed of the returns were also confirmed. For example, in Niassa, few of the population returned “when the fighting stopped,” but only after the confirming of the 1992 peace agreement and the 1994 general elections; by contrast, a much larger proportion of the population in the three districts in Tete returned “as soon as the fighting stopped.” Hardly any quoted “international assistance” as the reason for return.

18. Key questions in the survey were “Which help (aid) was most important and why?” in the first 1-2 years of return after UNHCR’s phase-out departure in 1996/7, and “Why do you think life improved?” The interviewees were given standard multiple-choice answer options such as food, agriculture, water, health, education, housing, roads/bridges, freedom of speech, together with others such as kitchen sets, blankets, etc.

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<sup>3</sup> Illiteracy rates, for example, were 80.7% in Angonia District, 79.6% in Tsangano District, 80.2% in Macanga District, 78.1% in Sanga District, and 84.3% in Muembe District. (*República de Moçambique, Ministério da Administração Estatal, Perfil do Distrito, 2005 edição*)



19. An absolute majority singled out “food” as the most important factor during the first 1-2 years, followed by others such as hoes, seeds, blankets and kitchen sets. When asked why these things were useful, almost all automatically replied that “they were necessary for survival,” and “we had nothing.” One villager said, “Look at that woman. She has been using that pot all the time since she received it. That is the only pot the family has.” In other words, a kitchen set distributed by UNHCR as part of a reintegration package 15 years previously was still a valuable family property.

20. A number of former demobilized soldiers among the interviewees mentioned “pension” and “salary” as useful help. Both had been included in the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programmes of the United Nations Operations in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and the Government of Mozambique. This DDR package included two years’ salary, of which 6 months were paid by the government and the remaining 18 months by donors through a US\$35.5 million UN trust fund.<sup>4</sup> Some confirmed that they were still relying on the pension.

21. While most interviewees found it difficult to assign an order of priority to helpful factors following UNHCR’s departure, water, education and health were the most often singled out. When it came to determinants for a better life, education, health, food/agriculture and water were the factors most often cited.

### **Village profiling**

22. The scope of the village profiling was similar to that of the household survey. It tried to find out from six sample villages how infrastructure, peace and security, and socio-economic conditions had evolved during the previous 15 years. Four villages profiled had been under government control, and two were in former opposition-controlled areas. The results largely corresponded with the general trends observed in the household interviews: that life had become much better than it was either during the war, while in a refugee camp, or just after returning home.

23. Compared with individual interviews, group discussions tended to pinpoint problems still faced and needs for the future. Common concerns were that there had been no change in bad feeder roads, the long distances to water points and health posts, the importance of mine clearance (in the past), the need for electricity for lighting for schools and maternity wards, and the need for police stations in rural and border areas as robberies and thefts were on the increase. A useful by-product of this exercise was that it verified the information given by the various Ministries on the numbers of facilities, official mine-free zones and provinces, the availability/lack of maintenance, supplies, health and education staffing, and so on.

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<sup>4</sup> Hanlon (2010) p.81. The author states that the key to success seems to have been the two years period which was long enough to find a wife, have a child and establish a farm. He points out that “despite the success of Mozambican demobilization, it has not been repeated elsewhere because it was considered too expensive; more commonly after other wars, soldiers have only received six months money or a single lump sum, which was often proved ineffective.”

## QIPs tracing

24. UNHCR's reintegration programmes in Mozambique had three main components:

- food distribution until the first (or exceptionally second) harvest;
- the distribution of household items and agricultural seeds and tools;
- Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) for the construction or rehabilitation of infrastructure.

25. A typical set of QIPs consisted of water boreholes, health posts, primary schools plus the access roads and bridges needed to reach the QIPs sites and food distribution points. By June 1996, some 1,500 projects of this type had been initiated in Mozambique; the majority budgeted at below \$40,000 (UNHCR, 1997).

26. During the interviews in Maputo, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, which is responsible for rural water, roads and bridges, stated that an average of 25% of boreholes/shallow wells had stopped functioning, whether they were 15-year-old QIPs or not. The Ministry also reported that the road and bridge usage and maintenance were so difficult to measure that trying to assess the effect and sustainability of them as QIPs was unrealistic.

27. The Ministries of Health and Education in Maputo and in the provincial capitals (Tete city and Lichinga) and district administrative posts offered detailed information during the survey. However, while written records of the 2000s were largely available, those from the 1990s were extremely hard to come by. This meant that the exact whereabouts of QIPs from the era relied on the hand-written records and the memories of those former UNHCR staff members who happened to be available.

28. Having collected the baseline data, the survey team visited as many primary schools and health posts as feasible. In the five sample districts, there were a total of 52 health and education QIPs, according to UNHCR records. During the survey, 27 former QIPs, 4 non-QIPs but similar projects by NGOs, and 9 water boreholes and several roads and bridges were identified as being from the period 1993-1996.

Table 2: QIPs sites

|           | Tete province (Angonia, Tsangano and Macanga districts) |           | Niassa province (Sanga and Muembe districts) |           | Total of 5 districts/2 provinces |           |
|-----------|---|-----------|--|-----------|----------------------------------|-----------|
|           | # of QIPs   | # visited | # of QIPs                                    | # visited | # of QIPs                        | # visited |
| Health    | 14  | 11        | 2  | 1         | 16                               | 12        |
| Education | 34  | 12        | 4  | 3         | 38                               | 15        |
| Total     | 48  | 23        | 6  | 4         | 52                               | 27        |

Source: Table 4.3.3. page 31, JICA 2009

29. Constraints in the tracing of QIPs included the long distances involved, unpredictable road access due to the rains, the limited time available, and sometimes uncertainty as to which exact classrooms were QIPs from the 1990s or not among a number of buildings that were built in the same locations later on.

## **Health**

30. All 12 health posts visited were improved and functioning. According to the household and village interviews, all 16 former health QIPs were in good condition. Following the Ministry's plan to prioritize the quality of facilities before increasing their number, all the health posts but one were being upgraded to health centres, to include maternity wards.

31. According to health staff on the ground, the daily management of the facilities was "ok," although – as ever – needs outweighed capacity. Isolated health facilities seem to rely much on the goodwill of the people. For example, one nurse was using his own motorcycle to replenish medicines because "the road is too bad for cars." Similarly, villagers provided water for the nurses wherever there was no well nearby, cooked meals, and generally provided whatever support they could.

32. According to the Ministry, over 60% of the national health budget was derived from external aid, including a large portion of budget support. Health staff in Angonia district rightly perceived that at least 50% of services could not be delivered without the support of an NGO, MSF, Catholic churches and other aid. NGOs constructed and maintained the buildings, and provided staff training, medical supplies, technical services and transport when needed.

## **Education**

33. All 15 primary schools visited were standing and were fully- or over-utilized. According to the field interviews, all 38 former education QIPs were still functioning. According to the Ministry, the number of primary schools had increased threefold, the number of teachers' two-and-a-half times, the students fourfold. Field observations largely confirmed these increases. NGOs, churches and private (such as tobacco) companies had also constructed new schools.

34. Half of the returnee population was under the age of 15. Bearing this in mind, the Ministry had prioritized the number of primary schools first. As a result, building maintenance had been neglected. For example, out of the 15 schools visited, roofs were completely gone in two, six were on the verge of collapse, four were fair, and only three were in good conditions.

35. A vice-headmaster of one of the schools in good condition explained that trainings by an NGO, IBIS, on building maintenance (e.g. windows, doors, roofs) had saved the school. In other villages where there was no such support, maintenance was either nil or it depended on the goodwill of the local population, who provided thatched grass and hundreds of plastic bags filled with soil to prevent roofs from leaking. Many teachers confirmed the Maputo Ministry's information that the number of schools and children's access to schools increased, but that they – like the Ministry – were concerned about the quality of education provided.

## **Annexes**

36. All the health and education QIPs were supposed to have a staff house, toilet(s), and a borehole as annexes. 20 of the staff houses visited were in use either as

accommodation or office. Four houses were not used as the teachers and nurses preferred to live among the villagers. One pit latrine out of eight was not being used, since it had become full.

37. The idea of a borehole as an annex did not work systematically, due either to geological conditions or a shortage of drilling machines. Nevertheless, in Angonia district, nine boreholes, either annexes or independent QIPs, were visited. Of the nine, five were functioning and four were not, either because of broken pumps or because the wells had run dry. Tellingly, the functioning boreholes were all in villages which had water committees. The committee collected small funds and with these bought spare parts for the pumps. One old well from the colonial era had been rehabilitated as a QIP, and while it had given good service at a transit centre during return movements, it was no longer viable.

38. According to the Ministries and earlier research, roughly 50-60% (or more up to 70%) of the national budget consisted of international aid. So in theory, half of the recurrent costs of QIPs would not be sustainable. Continued donor commitment to supporting Mozambique's budget was thus seen as critical to the sustainability of QIPs and other public services. However, the wider implications of aid dependency were beyond the scope of the survey, as they are of this paper.

39. Despite adverse findings such as bad roads, blown-off roofs and a shortage of water points, plus the general continuing dependency on aid, it is fair to conclude that all the health and education QIPs were sustainable 10-15 years on, and that these facilities would be further utilized in the coming years. Some US\$40,000 per QIP can therefore be considered money well spent.

## Were planning assumptions correct?

40. UNHCR's Reintegration Strategy document was finalized in late 1994, after Mozambique's October 1994 general elections, and after 1.5 million refugees out of 1.7 million had already returned. Although this sounds like excessive delay, it was not necessarily negative. Finalizing the Strategy in parallel with the massive returns might equally have ensured correctly fine-tuned assumptions, with unrealistic expectations kept to a minimum.

### **Peace and dialogue**

41. The established assumption was that the end of Cold War and the change of government in South Africa worked favourably for the end of conflict in Mozambique. To that extent, Mozambique's success could simply be seen as lucky. However, external factors alone did not bring success.

42. For example, members of a Catholic church in Angonia district recalled that they started efforts towards "peace" back in the 1980s. The church network continued a "dialogue" campaign at the grassroots level for years to follow. Sant 'Egidio, which was a relatively small and low-key organization then, had access to the RENAMO leaders, and quietly played the role of mediator until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 1992 at the Sant 'Egidio headquarters in Rome. Similarly, in the deep field, there had been great efforts by many people for many years from well before the end of the Cold War.

43. 15 years later, a number of Mozambican interviewees repeatedly cited "peace" and "dialogue" as the keys to their recovery from the war. Even illiterate village men and women knew the word "dialogue" in Portuguese. The word was one of the most prevalent during the interviews, at all levels of the society.

44. For example, an ordinary village woman said in her own local language that "there is no development when there is war." Considering that virtually all the returnee female adults were illiterate, monolingual and had no exposure to formal education or vocational training, this reply was a sign of significant community participation in peace-building, and thus in the sustainability of the reintegration programme.

45. The Strategy paper stated that "a precondition for the implementation of a reintegration strategy for Mozambique is the continued prevalence of peace and security in the country." This precondition was right and was not an easy one.

### **Area-based programming**

46. The focus of UNHCR's reintegration programme was on geographical areas, as opposed to specific categories of population. Out of 128 districts in the country, 36 priority target districts were identified, based on:

- high concentration of returnees;
- lack of basic social infrastructure;
- need to improve access;
- no significant (previous or ongoing) rehabilitation activities (UNHCR 1994).

47. The Strategy included the provision of basic food items, the distribution of agricultural inputs (seeds and tools) and the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure, particularly water systems, roads, bridges, schools and health posts. The aim was to provide multi-sector assistance in order to create basic living conditions in one go.

48. The Strategy underlined that “a reintegration programme can only be successful when receiving communities and other beneficiary groups such as displaced populations, demobilized soldiers and local population in general equally benefit from the reintegration activities.” The field survey did not detect any indications of problems deriving from inequalities among different categories of population then. All seemed equally protected despite the extreme hardship of the war-torn country. All said they received the same help.

49. Making a large-scale reintegration programme work has in recent years become more difficult as conflicts have become more complex and as other groups, including non-state actors, have become involved. Various aid approaches and funding mechanisms have been tested and challenged. Although the survey does not permit comparisons between reintegration programmes that were category-of-population- or sector-based and the Mozambique model, which was area-based and multi-sector, one thing that can be said for sure is that an area-based, multi-sector approach had in this case worked, and its effects had lasted for a decade and more.

### **Community participation and gender issues**

50. The Strategy laid particular emphasis on community and female participation. But at the same time a mid-1996 deadline – in 18 months – was set to complete all the QIPs, handover and exit before 1997. A UNHCR paper suggested that short-term results had been sought at the expense of participation and sustainability, and that in future more attention be paid to the QIP guidelines to allow adequate time for real community involvement and its process, not just quick results (UNHCR 1997a: 55-56). Another UNHCR paper pointed out that incorporating community participation and gender issues should not just be a politically correct gesture but should be valued for its genuinely significant benefits (UNHCR 1997: 164-180).

51. During the interviews with villagers, no specific problems were noted due to community and female participation or the lack of it. As far as the QIPs were concerned, active community participation was certainly there 15 years on. Hundreds of children, mothers and fathers carried hoes and buckets, marched to the schools, discussed with teachers and built additional classrooms for the QIPs and other schools. The community provided local materials such as mud and grasses and labour, while the government provided iron sheets for roofing. The community was therefore surely participating although it was not exactly how and when the Strategy of UNHCR had said long time ago.

52. Probably the most genuinely significant community participation at the time was the “dialogue” campaign and “peace” as discussed earlier.

### **Employment opportunities**

53. It was assumed that QIPs would generate temporary employment for many in the local community. A UNHCR review of the operation confirmed this to be the case (UNHCR 1997: 37). However, during the survey, no interviewees recalled them as employment opportunities as such. Most likely, there were simply not enough such opportunities for the 1.7 million returnees, 4 million IDPs and over 90,000 former fighters, or the sample size was too small to confirm such opportunities. For the overwhelming majority, the seeds and tools for farming were the most important thing: getting these into as many hands as possible was the key to livelihood, whether the resulting labour was called ‘employment’ or not.

### **Phase-out**

54. UNHCR’s self-imposed deadline was much discussed; it was eventually decided that UNHCR would close its 17 field- and 3 sub-offices before the end of 1997. In theory, this date was set as marking the end of humanitarian phase and the beginning of development. In practice, the distinction was lost on most villagers. Basically, everything involving foreigners was considered a help. It was likewise hard for them to distinguish the period before or after the departure of ONUMOZ in 1994, the departures of UNHCR, World Food Programme (WFP) and NGOs around 1996/7 and the arrival of UNDP and others. What *were* clear to them were the peace agreement, the elections and the harvests.

55. Those interviewees for whom the periods were distinguishable and who could describe the evolutions of the time were asked questions that included the phase-out of UNHCR. Almost all recalled that the presence of UNHCR was necessary at the time because the needs were simply too many, and not everyone could enter parts of the opposition-controlled areas to provide food and health services. Their assessment was that the main issue in the phase-out of UNHCR was not the absence of its staff, but that of the food, seeds and tools distributions and the associate logistics and communication. On the question whether the timing of ending food distribution was right or wrong, the general view was that in retrospect it had been right, mostly due to external factors and luck: good weather and the resultant adequate enough harvest.





## Was there a transition from relief to development?

56. 15 years later, the life of ordinary villagers seemed little changed. As before, they had no shoes. A typical female carried a baby on her back, worked in the fields, pounded maize by hand, walked to a grinding mill if one existed and, if she had a little cash, carried firewood, cooked, and washed clothes in the river as before. Feeder roads were still so bad that carrying sacks of potatoes by bicycles was common, again as before. Mozambique was – and still is – one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 165<sup>th</sup> out of 169 according to UNDP's 2010 Human Development Index.

57. However, when I looked at details and thought back carefully, some distinct changes were there: mud houses were more firmly built than before; there were a few more grinding mills and a few more water points; there were many more bicycles than before (new tarmac roads, not there previously, were filled with bicycles, not cars); there were solar panels at health facilities for the cold chains; mobile phones were communal properties in those villages with a few entrepreneurs; and most of all, the faces of the people were calmer and happier than before.

58. Transition basically meant change for the better and as compared with before, even if not perfectly done as planned. From the household interviews, QIPs tracing and general field observations, we can conclude that the transition from humanitarian to development had indeed taken place. So how did it happen?

### **Demobilization and the elections**

59. ONUMOZ officially completed its DDR operation and left the country in 1994/5. For years after that, well into the 2000s, there were weapons aplenty for the government, with the support of international aid, as well as local NGOs to continue to collect. In theory, there was a peace by around 1995, but in practice, there was still a risk.

60. A former RENAMO administrator of the Angonia and Tsangano districts was interviewed as a retired villager. His answers echoed those of others: life had certainly improved. The difference, according to him and several elderly male interviewees, was that in their opinion it was the surrendering of weapons that was the big issue. While many surrendered their old weapons, many others kept theirs because “the situation was still tense” and “we could start fighting anytime.”

61. He observed that the environment remained fragile for quite a while, and that the last critical moment was the second elections in 1999, when the RENAMO party gained a majority in several major locations in the country. In the end, the FRELIMO party won the second elections as well as the first. It was only then that people like him felt that fighting would not reoccur. The change from war to peace thus took a much longer time than it might have seemed from the outside.

### **Dependency on hand-outs**

62. According to a Mozambican staff member of NGO, World Vision, and church members in Angonia district, the change that they faced as aid workers was a hard one. They devoted themselves to the distribution of food, seeds and tools, treated emergency mine-victims and pieced together longer-term projects for HIV/AIDS prevention or adult education projects. It also emerged from these interviews that the villagers, especially those who had been refugees in Malawi, found it difficult to manage without food hand-outs. For example, they used up their food.

63. Comparisons were drawn with those who had been in a refugee settlement in Zambia, where they were allowed to farm, thus, becoming used to the ideas of harvesting, storing, and planning food consumption throughout the year. From the viewpoint of the World Vision and the church staff, the most difficult thing was not the physical problems such as bad roads or poor harvests, but the habits and the psychology of people who had become used to hand-outs.

### **QIPs : slow impact projects?**

64. Teachers, nurses, and government officials were asked how the schools and health posts were managed and how their working conditions had changed. Several interviewees recalled that salaries and basic supplies were irregular and sometimes did not reach them. It was more or less around the year 2000 that they started to feel that their life stabilized. A former Governor of Niassa province and former Minister of Education, a former Minister of Health, provincial and district officials, a former RENAMO administrator, NGO workers and others all had a very similar sense on this timing, although for various reasons.

65. In other words, although UNHCR discussed at length about recurrent costs of QIPs, the importance of salaries for teachers and nurses and of building maintenance, and although the official handover documents were signed and stamped by 1997, in reality many QIPs did not function properly until around the year 2000. Had an evaluation been done before then, it would have concluded that the programme had been a "failure."

66. At the same time, many recalled that QIPs helped in the first elections in 1994 and also in 1999. All the QIPs, food distribution points (in 1994), and traditional clinics, and anything with roof, were used for voting. Although it was not part of the Strategy and planning, QIPs thus served an unexpected and important purpose at these times.

### **Institutional arrangements for linkages**

67. Between 1995 and 1997, UNHCR completed its stock-taking of reintegration projects through a joint District Development Mapping (DDM) exercise with UNDP, covering 34 districts. A subsequent UNHCR paper noted that this DDM initiative represented a concrete, yet realistic, approach to the elusive goal of "bridging the gap" (UNHCR 1997a: 191). UNDP later completed the remaining 94 districts and updated them to *Perfil do Distrito* in Portuguese. It is the 2005 versions of these that appear on the public website of the Mozambique Ministry of State Administration.

68. During the survey, it was not possible to use the 1995-7 information as the baseline, as it had been overwritten by the 2005 updates. However, at the end of the survey, the original DDM brochures were found in the UNDP's Maputo office, and the comparisons were made retroactively.

69. In the field, UNHCR created multiple linkages with development partners. In the areas surveyed, UNHCR had made links with the UNDP PROAREA project and with the European Union (EU), ensuring that all information and resources were passed on, and that where possible they took over UNHCR's office space. Former UNHCR local staff members were referred to these agencies for possible employment, since they could literally link the past and the future.

70. In the cases of three former Field Assistants, one returned to his teaching job in Tete city, another started his own business and contributed to the development of the area (Angonia district), and the other continued working for the EU in Niassa, remaining in the area for further two years. These three were fine examples. Although the situation varied, it was noted that salaries in the emergency projects were generally higher than those in the development projects. Thus, many NGO staff, labourers and others who were paid under the emergencies seemed to have had difficulties in moving straight into development projects.

71. In Niassa province, the Mozambican government made an official arrangement to invite South African farmers to develop massive lands. Some South African families arrived as of 1996. However, they subsequently moved out, mainly because the transport of agricultural products to potential markets was too costly.

72. From the survey, it was not feasible to systematically assess the effects of UNHCR's envisaged linkages at the time of the phase-out. Organized linkages gave new directions and opportunities to those who remained behind. In the end, some worked and some did not, while some seemed to have worked informally.



## Conclusion

73. How could we better support millions of people whose lives ought to change from conflict to peace, from humanitarian assistance to development? It goes without saying that there is no one-size-fits-all solution. This paper shared an example of what happened during and after a large post-conflict reintegration in the past, focusing on the long-term impact of quick interventions called “QIPs”, which proved effective and also sustainable. Based on the above survey results and my own past experiences, I attempt to extract five key findings. They are by no means a panacea, but could offer some ideas for managing unrealistic expectations.

74. First of all, in the eyes of the beneficiaries, there was no distinguishable difference between humanitarian assistance and development aid. Everything done by foreigners or by foreign agencies was considered as help. For them, what mattered was getting what they needed, when they needed and where they needed. Whether their needs were met by humanitarian or development funding sources was not to them an issue.

75. The survey looked at the case of subsistence farmers whose concerns were peace and the harvest. Contributing to the peace, for example, by two-year salaries to former fighters, even though it was costly, was crucial. Also, securing the food, seeds and tools by transporting them to the deep field for distribution was itself essential, as it involved demarcating mined areas, opening up almost 5,000 km of roads, fixing some 65 bridges, purchases of tractors, four-wheel drive trucks, and so on (UNHCR 1997: 38).

76. Making these things happen was quite costly.<sup>5</sup> With its long knowledge of the people and their devastated country from the time of refugees, UNHCR was probably well placed to understand the magnitude of the task before them. The key was joining forces and mobilizing all possible resources from partners and donors, creating an operation that was big enough and dynamic enough to make sure that people, all of them without discrimination, got what they needed in time.

77. Secondly, NGOs and religious organizations (mostly from Catholic churches) played a critical role in community participation and smooth transition. Because they remained in the geographical areas for 15 years or more, by shifting their own activities from humanitarian relief (e.g. food distribution, emergency health) to development (e.g. agriculture, education), they were able to contribute to the continuity and sustainability of reintegration, thereby making a difference in the society. World Vision and MSF (Belgium) in Tete, and Concern Universal and IBIS in Niassa were concrete examples of this. Some of the NGOs had been familiar with their beneficiaries even before they returned home, from the time when they were refugees in neighbouring countries.

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<sup>5</sup> The ONUMOZ budget was US\$490 million. The UNHCR budget was US\$145 million, over US\$100 million of which was for inside Mozambique and the rest was for neighbouring countries. Costs of food were covered by WFP until the Extended Delivery Points. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) partially contributed to seeds and tools procurement.

78. I believe that UNHCR and its partners could play a more influential and supportive role than they presently do in building the capacity of area-based NGOs and civil society groups so that, strategically and in a predictable way, some of them will be able to transform themselves from humanitarian relief to development actors.

79. Thirdly, dependency on aid – or more accurately, a psychology of dependency – proved an obstacle to long-term reintegration. From the examples of returnees from Zambia and Malawi back in Mozambique, the survey confirmed that having farms to cultivate as refugees made it easier for them to reintegrate once back home. The inescapable conclusion is that all refugees should be encouraged to work in their country of asylum.

80. However, and understandably, asylum countries do not always allow refugees to work for fear of encouraging protracted stay or because of competitions over limited jobs, or because it was physically impossible such as in the case of Malawi, which hosted over 1 million refugees on its already over-populated small land. Although it is easier said than done, the benefit of self-reliance projects for refugees should be further emphasized, and UNHCR and its partner agencies should advocate persistently for their right to work.

81. Fourthly, linkage with private sector should be sought as early as possible, both with international companies who could create a volume of employment opportunities, and with local entrepreneurs who could nurture potential from the grassroots. Through the survey, it was clear that private sector companies and entrepreneurs were playing an influential role for the future of both the people and country, examples being tobacco companies in northern Mozambique, mega-projects in the south, a new coal-mining industry being developed near Tete city and a former UNHCR Field Assistant running an area-based multi-sector business from photocopy and internet shop to guest houses for truck drivers.

82. The expansion of such private-sector partnership could bring further potential. For example, if more private-sector actors were exposed to, possibly engaged in the situation of refugees and returnees, they could be better positioned to, just for example, pursue refugees' right to work.

83. Lastly, the timeframe for reintegration programme must be flexible. A deadline in a fragile situation, like the UNHCR's self-imposed phase-out, might or might not have worked depending on other factors. In hindsight, it took till around the year 2000 for the returnees in Mozambique to feel self-reliant, for the government public services (health and education) to start functioning "ok," and for all on the ground to feel that they "graduated" from the difficult immediate post-conflict phase.

84. This meant that it took some three to five years for the reintegration programme to be proved a "success." It may be assumed that in other situations it would take much longer, especially in those which – unlike Mozambique – face the threat of the resumption of conflict and continuous displacement.

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