

ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF RETURN IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN RETURNEE AND RESIDENT HOUSEHOLDS

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1. INTRODUCTION

While the traumatic experience of displacement cannot be undone, the possibility of return home in a safe, dignified and sustainable manner can bring hope and alleviate suffering after displacement. Self-managed return to locations of origin is commonly assumed by the humanitarian community and governments alike as the ‘preferred’ durable solution to internal displacement. However, the reality often illustrates the great complexity of the return process. The return home after displacement goes hand in hand with a wide variety of psychosocial and economic challenges that can have important implications for post-conflict reconciliation and community recovery.

In north-east Nigeria, rising numbers of IDPs are returning to their towns and villages of origin. However, often they find their homes damaged and communities destroyed. Too often, when IDPs return to their communities of origin, there is a risk that they will be considered to have achieved a durable solution to their displacement, simply for the fact of having returned home. A solution can only be designated as durable, however, when the returnee no longer has any specific needs associated with their displacement. The return process does not end in the act of arriving back home, but requires finding ways that will enable returnees to reintegrate in their communities of origin, to live in safety and rebuild their lives.

A return from internal displacement takes place when an IDP undertakes a voluntary, self-managed or assisted return to their community of origin, based on a preference for return over (a) local integration in the location of displacement, or (b) resettlement to a third location. The voluntary nature of the return is crucial as the free choice of a solution to displacement is believed to increase the durability of the solution.

The north-east Nigeria returns caseload is a historical, self-managed returns caseload, primarily returned in 2016, 2017 and 2018. It is important to note that around three quarters of the returnees had been displaced for two years or less, meaning these were not protracted displacements. It is also notable that because this assessment was conducted in locations of return, the caseloads of former IDPs that were displaced by the same events yet chose to resettle or locally integrated – and their success or otherwise in so doing – cannot be captured. This means there is no analysis of whether durability of a solution correlates to the particular solution chosen. This is something that needs to be assessed in the future, in order to improve solutions outcomes across all contexts. As these returns were self-managed, this report does not address potential differences in the durability of return when it is assisted or involuntary. This report therefore offers a narrow analysis that looks exclusively at how durable the former IDPs self-managed returns were.

2. OBJECTIVE

As part of its DTM programme, IOM Nigeria has incorporated a return assessment that was conducted at household level in the northeastern states of Borno and Adamawa. While new displacements continue to occur across the region, the trend of continuously increasing returnee numbers presents a major challenge to humanitarian and development actors. To assist returnees, and to facilitate a sustainable return, it is essential to measure the socio-economic profiles and needs of the returnee populations, as well as their access to services, education and participation in governance and public affairs at the household level.

This assessment aims to better understand ‘return to communities of origin’ as a solution to internal displacement. The primary objective is to assess the quality of return, and to assess if returnees are still experiencing needs that are linked to their previous displacement. To do this, the assessment uses durable solutions indicators from the IASC (Inter-Agency Standing Committee) framework to compare living conditions between returnees and their non-displaced counterparts in the same locations of high return. A comparative analysis of the living conditions of these two groups provides a clear overview of the dynamics of return, and can help to determine the extent to which returnees have reached a durable solution or still experience needs linked to their previous displacement situation. The purpose of the report is to give accurate and reliable information of the conditions of return in north-east Nigeria and to provide an evidence-base for comprehensive humanitarian responses and development planning to populations in locations of return.

3. METHODOLOGY

The returns assessment was conducted using two household questionnaires from 25 October 2021 to 29 November 2021. The assessment took place in 102 locations in nine Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the states of Borno and Adamawa in north-east Nigeria. These LGAs included Lamurde, Madagali, Shelleng and Song in the state of Adamawa and Askira/Uba, Chibok, Jere, Kaga and Magumeri in the state of Borno. One questionnaire was directed at returnee households, the other questionnaire was directed at non-displaced resident households in the same locality. In order to compare the living conditions of returnees and residents, it was important that both questionnaires were similar and only localities were assessed where both populations were present.

A total of 4,185 households responded to the questionnaire. Of these, 2,051 households (or 50%) were returnee households residing in their respective communities of origin, while 2,134 households (50%) were resident households or households who reside in the same localities but have never been displaced. In order to provide a complete understanding of the conditions of return and to include gender-differentiated data, 23 per cent of the surveyed households were female-headed households. The heads of households that participated in the survey were randomly selected from the returnee or resident population living in the locations surveyed. Before participation, consent was obtained and the objectives of the survey were clearly explained to the respondents. To ensure the accuracy of the data collection, the household survey was conducted by trained IOM DTM enumerators and in close collaboration with the administrative authorities of the respective locations.

Sampling strategy: Locations were selected for sampling using Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) Cluster Sampling. The returnee population size, assessed in DTM Mobility Tracking Round 37, was used as the measure of population size to ensure that all households had the same probability of being sampled. Due to security concerns (insecurities, limitations imposed by the military...), some of the initially sampled localities could not be assessed and flexibility was needed to meet the required sample size.

Weighting: Weights were added based on population size for each group in each locality. Returnee population figures were sourced from DTM Mobility Tracking Round 37. Resident population size was calculated by subtracting the number of returnees from the total population size, sourced from (eHealth Africa's Nigerian Ward Population Estimate data).

4. LIMITATIONS

- In some of the initially selected wards, the entire population was displaced and only returnees were found. This made it impossible to compare living conditions with their non-displaced counterparts. These locations were replaced with localities where both returnees and non-displaced residents were present.
- The security situation in some wards in Borno and Adamawa remains unstable and as a result, access was limited. During the time of data collection, some initially selected wards in the LGA Magumeri were not accessible and were replaced with more accessible wards in the LGA Askira/Uba.
- Linked to the security situation, access and time are often limited as a result of insecurities and movement restrictions imposed by the military. During the assessment period, this was particularly the case in the LGA of Askira/Uba where data collection activities were suspended and postponed to a later and safer date. This inevitably had an effect on the timeline of the assessment.
- Due to the poor and unstable network in a number of assessment locations, especially in areas that are hard to reach, a delay was caused in uploading the data to the server which prolonged the timeframe of the assessment in Borno State.
- Many respondents are increasingly reluctant to cooperate with the surveys due to perceived lack of response. In some cases, this has resulted in the intimidation of enumerators.

5. KEY FINDINGS



There is a clear distinction in the year of return between the states of Adamawa and Borno. Adamawa State has a more recent history of return movements compared to the state of Borno. In the state of Borno, 66 per cent of the return movements occurred before the year 2017 with the majority or 53 per cent of return movements in the year 2016. Conversely, in the state of Adamawa, 78 per cent of the return movements took place in the year 2018 or later, with the majority or 36 per cent of return movements in the year 2018.



Overall, few disparities were noted in living conditions and access to service between resident households and returnee households. However, the analysis indicated that 73 per cent of returnee households did not have access to handwashing facilities with water and soap. For resident households, this number was reported lower at 51 per cent.



Important disparities were noted in the possession of identification documents between returnee households and resident households. The possession of passports (37% vs 23%) and school records (73% vs 46%) was reported notably higher among returnee households compared to the resident population. Conversely, marriage certificates were less available in returnee households (18% vs 28%).



More resident households live in shelters with brick walls (55% of the resident households, 46% of the returnee households) while more returnee households live in traditional shelters or thatched houses (47% of returnee households, 35% of resident households).



Ninety-nine per cent of the returnee households stated that the return to their locations of origin was self-managed. In 52 per cent of the surveys, the return movement was primarily motivated by the improved security situation in the locations of origin.



Ahead of the return movement, 84 per cent of the surveyed returnee households conducted 'go and see visits' in order to assess the security situation and living conditions in their respective locations of origin.



Seventy-five per cent of returnee households and 74 per cent of resident households were living below the internationally agreed poverty line, defined by the World Bank at \$1.90 or ₦789 per person per day to cover basic expenses.



Ninety-eight per cent of returnee households and 99 per cent of resident households described their relationship with the other party as harmonious and friendly.

6. ASSESSMENT AREA



7. RETURN HISTORY AND CONDITIONS OF RETURN

Return history

Year of return

Thirty-one per cent of surveyed returnee households reported to have returned to their locations or origin in the year 2016. When disaggregating the data per state, it is noteworthy that there is a clear distinction in the year of return between the states of Adamawa and Borno. In the state of Borno, 66 per cent of the return movements occurred before the year 2017 with the majority or 53 per cent of return movements having occurred in the year 2016. Conversely, in the state of Adamawa, 78 per cent of the return movements took place in the year 2018 or later, with 36 per cent of return movements having occurred during the year 2018. It can be observed that conditions for return in Borno have become much more scarce, while less dramatic decreases in returns in Adamawa indicate that opportunities for return, while reduced since the 2018 peak, have remained in some areas.

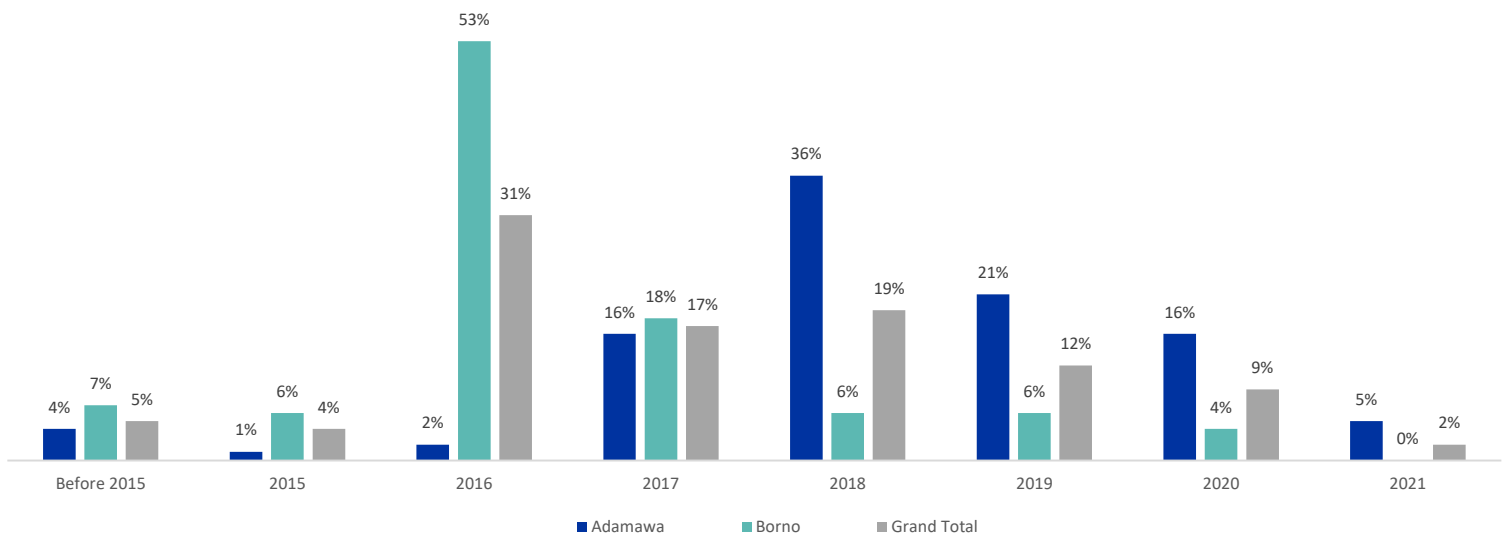


Figure 1: Year of return

Reasons for returning to locations of origin

Ninety-nine per cent of the returnee households stated that the decision to return to their locations of origin was self-managed. In 52 per cent of the cases, the return movement was primarily motivated by the improved security situation in the locations of origin. Other reasons cited were the lack of access to services in locations of displacement and to join family members in the location of origin.

Reason for returning to locations of origin	Percentage
Improved security/safety situation in this location	52%
Lack of access to services in locations of displacement and poor living conditions	20%
To join family members in this location	16%
Lack of livelihood opportunities in locations of displacement	11%
Deterioration of the security situation in the location of displacement	1%

Figure 2: Reasons for returning to locations of origin

It is important to note that before returning home, 84 per cent of the surveyed returnee households conducted 'go and see visits' to assess the security situation and living conditions in their respective localities of origin. Additionally, 98 per cent of the returnee households that participated in this survey were planning to stay in their locations of origin in the upcoming six months.

Conditions of return

The great majority or 98 per cent of the returnee households described their relationship with the non-displaced resident households as harmonious and friendly. Only in one per cent of the cases the returnee households felt stigmatized by the non-displaced resident community. Another one per cent of the returnee households described their relationship with the residents as rather tense and nervous. Seventy per cent of returnee respondents stated that they were able to restart the same livelihood activities as prior to their displacement.

Housing, land and property

Returnees who have achieved a durable solution have access to effective mechanisms for timely restitution of their housing land and property (HLP). Therefore, it was of crucial importance to assess the level of need for and access to effective procedures for HLP restitution or compensation. Eighty-six per cent of the returnee households (71% for female headed households and 88% for male headed households) declared that they owned land, a house or other property prior to their displacement. Of these households, 46 per cent stated that their land, house or other property was damaged upon return to their locations of origin. Forty-nine per cent found their property in rather good condition and five per cent mentioned that their property was completely destroyed upon the return to their locations of origin.

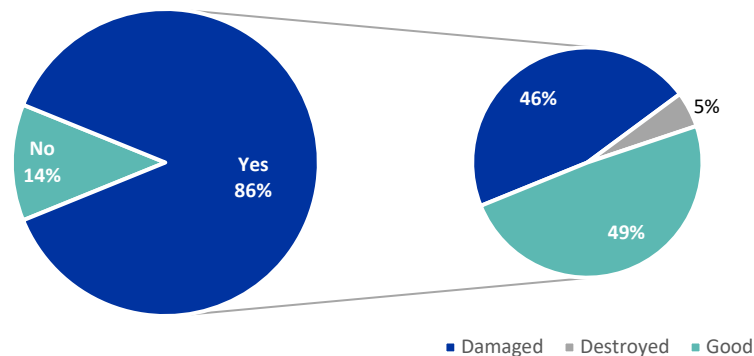


Figure 3: Land/house/property ownership before displacement and state of property upon return

The graph below illustrates the level of damage and destruction of housing, land and property in locations of origin, per assessed LGA. Kaga, Madagali and Jere were the LGAs where the highest levels of damage and destruction to HLP was reported. Conversely, in the LGAs Chibok and Askira/Uba, 78 per cent and 66 per cent of the respondents stated to have found their HLP in relatively good condition upon return to their locations of origin.

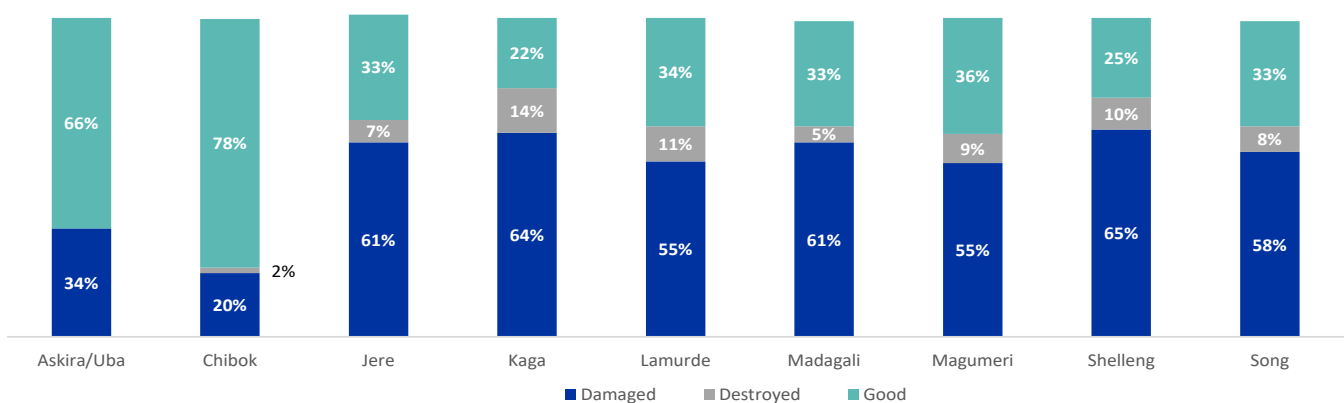


Figure 4: Level of damage and destruction of HLP per assessed LGA

In many returnee contexts, secondary occupation in locations of origin can be a major obstacle to successful restitution of housing, land and property. However, 82 per cent of the respondents who owned land prior to their displacement stated that their household was able to successfully access their house, land or other property upon the return to their location of origin. Eighteen per cent of the respondents reported that their household was unable to access their land, house or other property because it was occupied by others.

Furthermore, 10 per cent of respondents stated that they were unable or unwilling to reside in their previous home. The main reasons cited for this were damaged or destroyed properties and the occupation of houses, land or properties by different households upon the arrival in locations of origin.

Family separation

IDPs are often forced to flee on short notice and in heavily chaotic circumstances. During the moment of flight, family members, and in particular young children, elderly persons or persons with disabilities may be left behind or become separated en route. Forty-five per cent of the returnee households that participated in the survey declared that one or more members of their household were separated during the period of displacement. Of those, 92 per cent stated that their household was able to reunite with the separated family members.

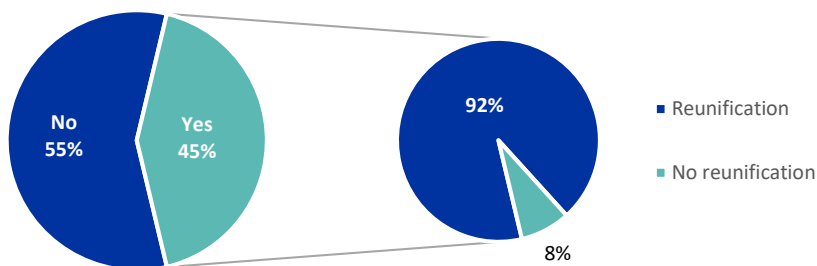


Figure 5: Family separation and reunification

8. CONDITIONS OF THE RESIDENT COMMUNITIES

Impact of the arrival of returnee households on the resident households

The impact of large-scale returns on the resident population cannot be underestimated. The influx of returnee households in communities of origin may affect access to services and resources, and influence the local labour markets. The section below illustrates the impact of returnee arrivals on the resident population per sector:

Income levels

Fifty-five per cent of respondents stated that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on the income level of their household. Conversely, 21 per cent of the resident households declared that their household income level of their household had decreased since the arrival of the returnees, while 24 per cent indicated that the income level of their household had increased since the arrival of the returnee families.

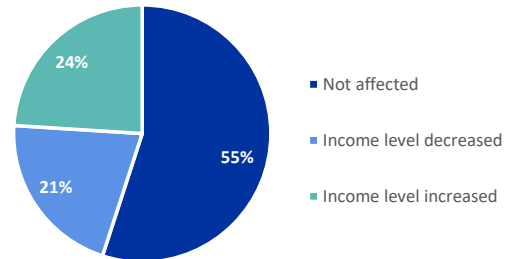


Figure 6: Impact of returns on the income levels of the resident households

Access to livelihood

Forty-eight per cent of respondents stated that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on their access to livelihood. To the contrary, 27 per cent of the resident households noted that it is harder to access work since the arrival of the returnees, while 25 per cent indicated that it is easier to access work since the arrival of the returnees.

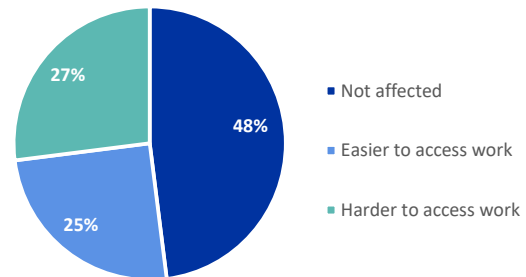


Figure 7: Impact of returns on livelihood access of the resident households

Housing

Seventy-three per cent of respondents stated that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on the housing situation of their household. Eleven per cent stated that the prices of housing in their locality have increased since the arrival of the returnees. Thirteen per cent of respondents indicated that the impact stems from the fact that they are currently hosting a returnee household and two per cent mentioned that the costs for electricity and water have increased since returnee households arrived in their locality.

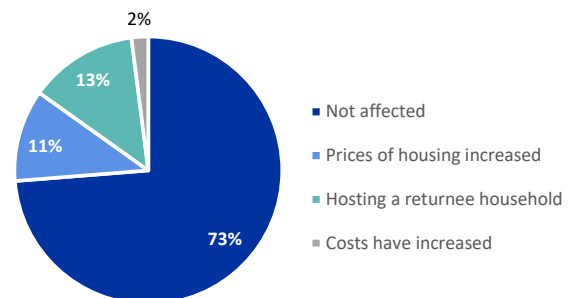


Figure 8: Impact of returns on the housing situation of the resident households

Health

Sixty-five per cent of respondents declared that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on the health situation in their locality. Twenty-two per cent stated that accessing healthcare has become more difficult since the arrival of returnees and 13 per cent said that the costs of healthcare have increased.

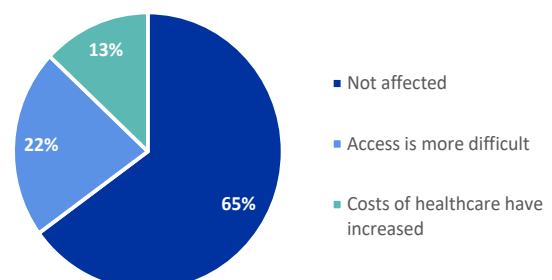


Figure 9: Impact of returns on access to healthcare of the resident households

Security

Fifty-two per cent of respondents stated that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on the security situation in their locality. Forty-four per cent were under the impression that the security situation did improve since the arrival of the returnees and four per cent declared that the security situation has deteriorated since the arrival of the returnees.

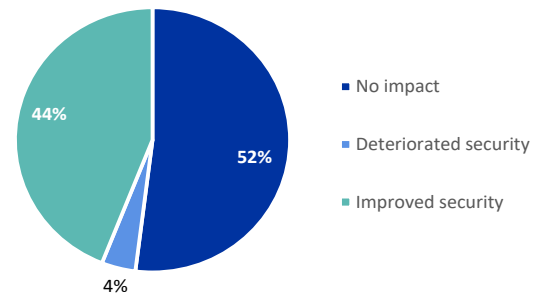


Figure 10: Impact of returns on the security situation in the locality

Education

Sixty per cent of respondents declared that the arrival of returnees in their community had no impact on the education level in their locality. Twenty-six per cent of respondents stated that the classrooms have become more crowded since the arrival of returnee households, 11 per cent mentioned that the costs of education have increased and three per cent said the level of education has decreased.

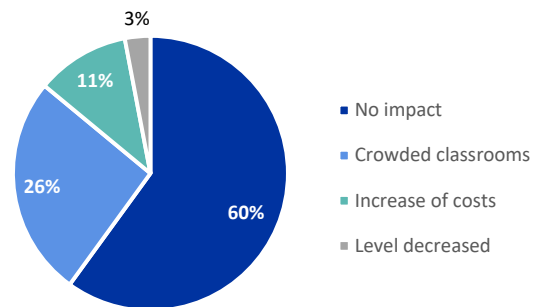


Figure 11: Impact of returns on the education situation in the locality

It can be concluded that the arrival of returnee households in their communities of origin impact the living conditions of the resident population only to a limited extent. In some areas, the arrival of returnees appeared to have a rather positive effect on the locality. As such, 24 per cent of respondents stated that income levels have increased since the arrival of returnee households, 25 per cent of respondents stated that livelihoods have become more accessible and 44 per cent of resident respondents declared that the security situation of the locality has improved since the arrival of returnees. Conversely, the arrival of returnee households had negative impacts on education (37 per cent cited that classrooms have become more crowded or costs of education have increased) and the healthcare situation of the locality (35 per cent stated that the access to healthcare has become more constrained or that the cost of healthcare has increased).

Hosting returnee households

Thirteen per cent of the resident households in the assessed localities indicated that they are currently hosting a returnee household. In Kaga and Chibok LGAs of Borno State, these numbers were reported at 25 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. Twenty-eight per cent of the resident households that reported to host a returnee family received some form of support. In most cases, the types of support provided are food and NFIs (Non-Food Items).

It is important to note that almost all or 99 per cent of the resident respondents described their relationship with the returnee households as harmonious or friendly.

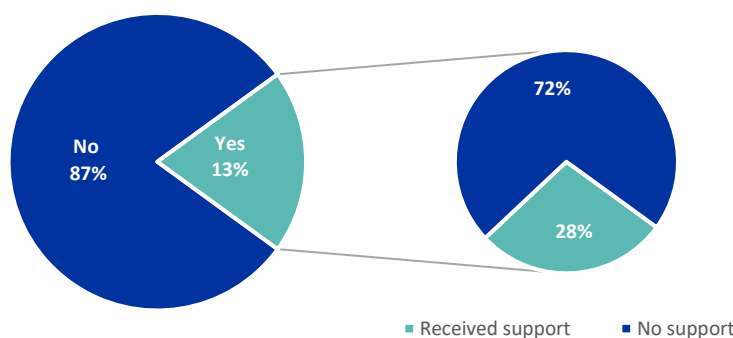


Figure 12: Households hosting a returnee family and support received

The presence of unaccompanied or separated children

The presence of unaccompanied and separated children and the primary consideration of their best interests in every decision affecting them is important in measuring the progress towards durable solutions. In 16 per cent of the surveys, the presence of unaccompanied or separated children was reported. In the LGAs Kaga and Magumeri, unaccompanied and separated children were reported in 55 and 38 per cent of the surveys, respectively. No unaccompanied or separated children were reported in the LGAs Askira/Uba and Song.

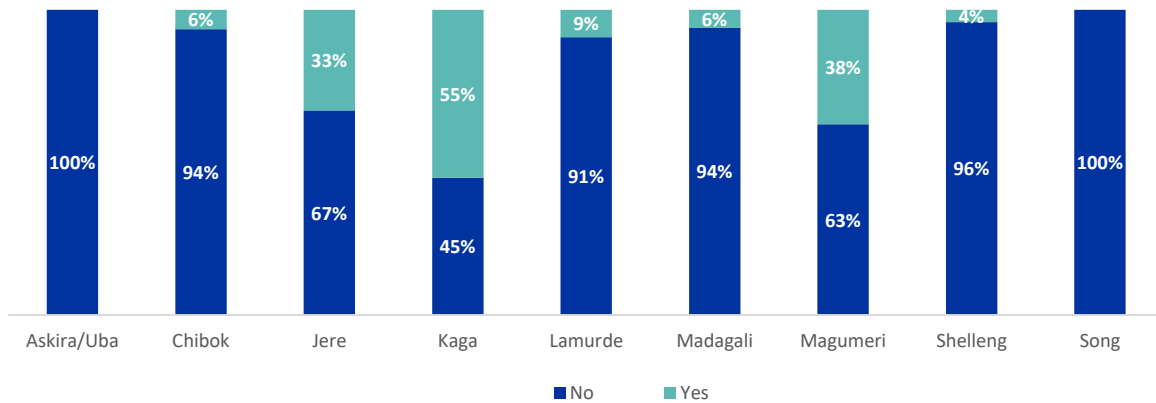


Figure 13: Presence of unaccompanied or separated children in return locations per LGA

The graph below divides the assessed localities according to the presence of unaccompanied or separated children. In the great majority or 78 per cent of the locations assessed, no unaccompanied or separated children were reported. To the contrary, in two per cent of the localities, the presence of more than 15 unaccompanied or separated children was reported.

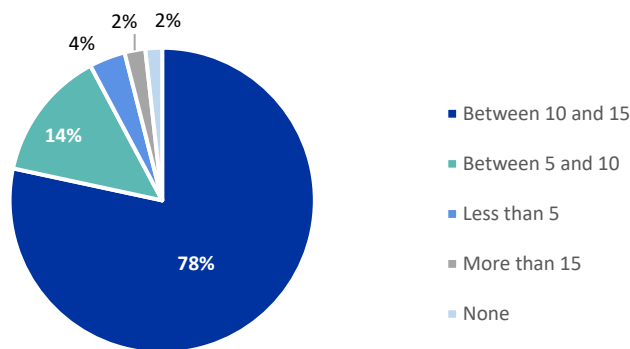


Figure 14: Presence of unaccompanied or separated children in assessed localities

It is important to mention that not all unaccompanied or separated children present in the assessed localities were members of the returnee community. In 47 per cent of the locations where unaccompanied or separated children were reported, it is estimated that they were solely part of the returnee community while in 44 per cent of the locations, the unaccompanied and separated children were part of both the returnee community and the resident population. In nine per cent of the localities assessed, the unaccompanied and separated children were reported to be members of the resident population only.

9. LONG-TERM SAFETY, SECURITY AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Stability of the locality

Returnees who have achieved a durable solution should enjoy safety and security on the basis of effective protection by national and local authorities. The protection of returnee households must not be less effective than the protection provided to residents that were not affected by displacement. Additionally, for the return movement to be successful, returnees should not be the subject of attacks, harassment, intimidation or any form of persecution upon return to their locations of origin. Therefore, it was of great importance to assess the feeling of security and stability in locations of high return and to examine whether differences exist in the perception of safety and security between the non-displaced resident households and returnee households.

Overall, non-displaced resident households and returnee households perceived the safety and security situation in similar ways. Eight-nine per cent of the resident households reported to feel safe and secure in their locality while this number was reported at 88 per cent for returnee households. When disaggregating the data by sex, 83 per cent of female headed households reported that their locality was safe and stable against 90 per cent for male headed households.

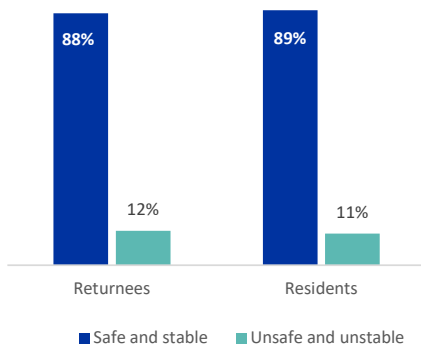


Figure 15: Feeling of stability in the assessed locations

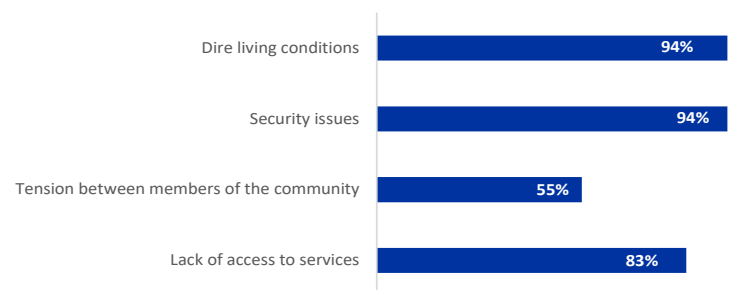


Figure 16: Reasons for not feeling safe in the locality

In localities where respondents reported to feel unsafe and unsecure, a combination of various reasons were cited to illustrate the perceptions of instability. Dire living conditions and security issues were both reported in 94 per cent of the surveys where respondents reported to feel unsafe. The lack of access to services and tensions between members of the community were reported in 83 per cent and 55 per cent of the surveys where respondents reported to feel unsafe, respectively.

Thirty-four per cent of respondents stated that they witnessed security incidents in the past 12 months. No major differences were recorded between returnee households and resident households. However, when disaggregating the data at LGA level, the reporting of security incidents in the past 12 months varied considerably as indicated in the graph below:

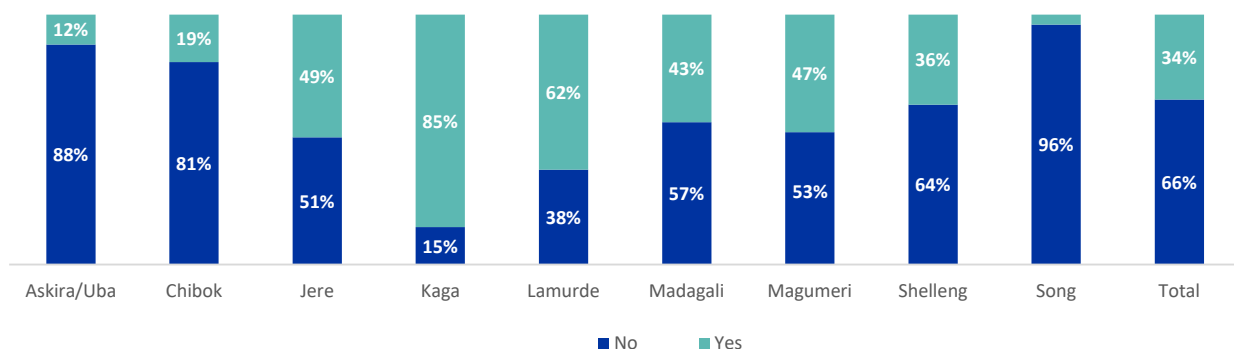


Figure 17: Security incidents in the past 12 months per LGA

The nature of these security incidents were primarily related to the activities of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAG) as indicated by 72 per cent of respondents. Activities by NSAG were followed by communal violence (reported by 14% of respondents), clashes between farmers and pastoralists (reported by 6% of respondents) and military operations (reported by 6% of respondents).

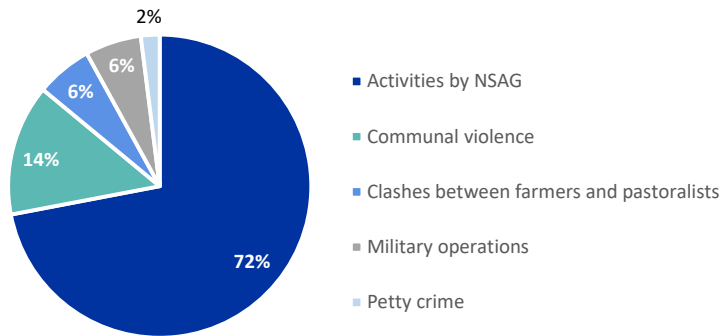


Figure 18: Nature of security incidents witnessed during the past 12 months

In addition to security incidents, 44 per cent of resident households and 25 per cent of returnee households mentioned that they fear the consequences of natural hazards (drought, rain and/or windstorms, floods...). This 19 point difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. Potential consequences include displacement, loss or damage of livelihoods, injury or illness. Thirty-eight per cent of the respondents who were worried about natural hazards, feared floods the most. Floods were followed by windstorms (reported by 23% of households who feared natural hazards) and rainstorms (reported by 19% of households who feared natural hazards).

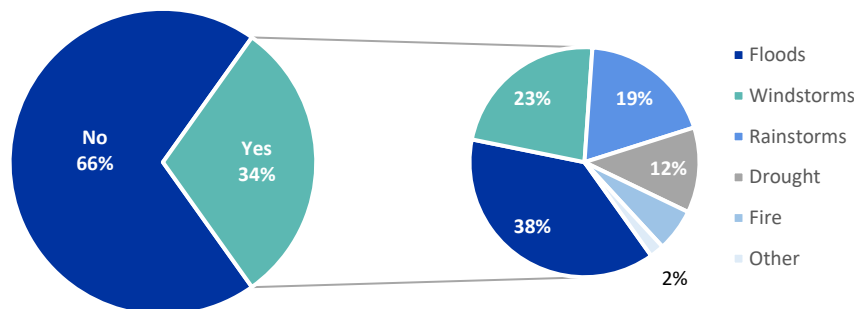


Figure 19: Fear of natural hazards and types of hazards feared

Restrictions to freedom of movement

Restrictions to freedom of movement potentially impede access to services and restrict progress towards durable solutions. For the purpose of this report, it was important to assess whether possible restrictions to freedom of movement only apply to the returnee community or affect all inhabitants of a locality equally. Sixty-seven per cent of returnee households stated that they always feel safe walking around in the locality. For resident households, this number was reported at 52 per cent. This 15 point difference between the two population categories is statistically significant at the five per cent level. Three per cent of resident households and one per cent of returnee households declared that they never felt safe walking around by themselves. Forty-nine per cent of female respondents mentioned always feeling safe when moving around in the locality. This is considerably lower compared to the 61 per cent of male respondents who always feel safe when moving around in the locality.

When disaggregating the data per LGA, the perception of movement and safety varied considerably per LGA. In Madagali LGA of Adamawa State, five per cent of respondents stated that they never felt safe when moving around alone in their locality. Another 83 per cent stated that they only felt safe moving around alone during the day. To the contrary, in Lamurde LGA, also located in Adamawa LGA, a high of 74 per cent of respondents stated to always feel safe when moving around by themselves in their locality.

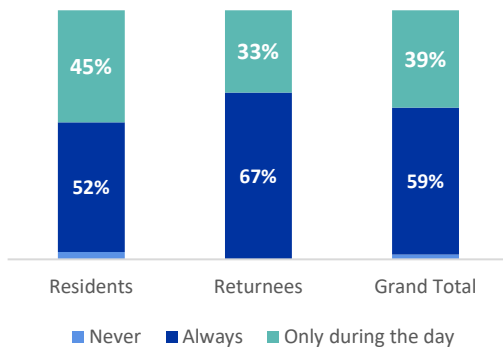


Figure 20: Feeling of safety when moving around alone in the locality

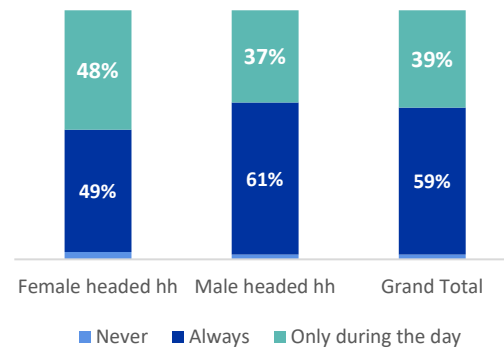


Figure 21: Feeling of safety when moving around alone in the locality

Sixty-seven per cent or the majority of respondents stated that they experienced no restrictions to freedom of movement in their locality. Only three per cent of respondents cited that movements in their locality were restricted and this had a significant impact on their daily life. In Song LGA of Adamawa State, all of the respondents indicated that there were no restrictions of movement. To the contrary, 81 per cent of respondents in Chibok LGA of Borno State stated that restrictions on their movements were imposed. The impact varied between no impact (36%), minor impact (42%) and significant (3%). A high of 14 per cent of respondents in Madagali LGA of Adamawa State reported that their movements were restricted and this had a significant impact on their daily activities. Returnee households and resident households were impacted in similar ways by the restrictions to freedom of movement.

Restrictions of movement	Askira/Uba	Chibok	Jere	Kaga	Lamurde	Madagali	Magumeri	Shelleng	Song	Grand Total
Movements are restricted, significant impact	0%	3%	6%	1%	0%	14%	10%	0%	0%	3%
Movements are restricted, no impact	0%	36%	15%	23%	18%	32%	25%	3%	0%	15%
Movements are restricted, minor impact	12%	42%	1%	35%	0%	16%	9%	0%	0%	14%
No restriction on movement	88%	19%	78%	42%	82%	39%	56%	97%	100%	67%

Figure 22: Restrictions of movement and impact on daily life

Conflict resolution mechanisms

The presence of competent authorities or other officially recognised conflict resolution mechanisms where safety and security incidents can be reported is directly linked to the social cohesion of the locality. When effective, it illustrates trust in national and local authorities and other institutions. Eighty-eight per cent of resident respondents and 82 per cent of returnee respondents reported to have access to conflict resolution mechanisms. This six point difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. When disaggregating this number per sex, female headed households reported to have access to conflict resolution mechanisms in 92 per cent of the surveys. The most popular conflict resolution mechanisms were elders or local authorities (55%), the police (16%) and the Civilian Joint Task Force or CJTF (16%).

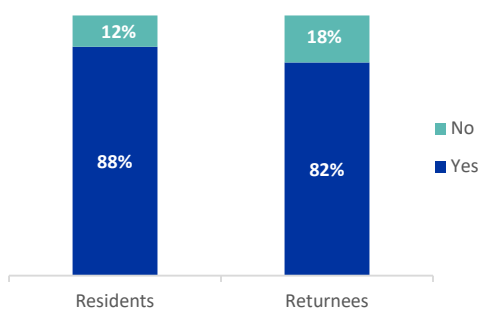


Figure 23: Access to conflict resolution mechanisms

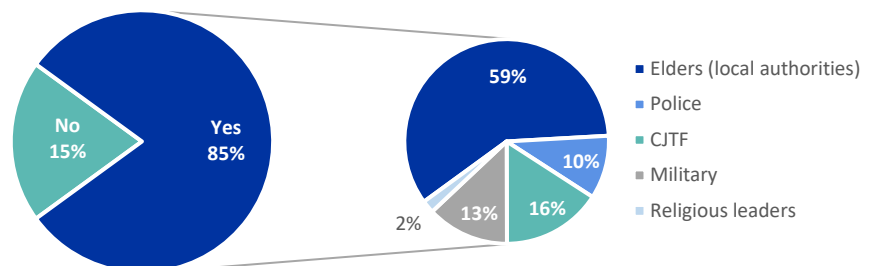


Figure 24: Types of conflict resolution mechanisms

10. ADEQUATE STANDARD OF LIVING

Returnee households who have achieved a durable solution should enjoy, without discrimination, an adequate standard of living. Adequate signifies that basic services and goods are available in sufficient quality and quantity and are accessible to the returnee population. These services include a minimum of shelter, healthcare, food, water, sanitation and education.

For the purpose of this report, the indicators primarily focus on equal access to these services by returnees and their non-displaced counterparts or the resident community. In this way, potential displacement-related vulnerabilities or discrimination can be identified. Where differences in access to services between returnee and resident populations are observed, it is important to examine whether these are linked to their previous displacement.

Access to basic services and goods

Sources of drinking water

Source drinking water	Percentage
Hand pumps	39%
Out of house piped water	26%
Unprotected wells	11%
Surface water	9%
Protected wells	6%
Spring	4%
In house piped water	3%
Water trucks	2%
Lake/dam	1%

Figure 25: Drinking water sources for resident households

Source drinking water	Percentage
Hand pumps	52%
Surface water	16%
Out of house piped water	13%
Unprotected wells	6%
Protected wells	6%
Spring	2%
Water trucks	2%
Lake/dam	2%
In house piped water	1%

Figure 26: Drinking water sources for returnee households

As illustrated in the graphs above, the sources of drinking water are very similar when comparing resident households and returnee households. Within both population categories, hand pumps, out of house piped water, surface water and unprotected wells are reported to be the most common sources of drinking water. Although returnee households reported a higher access to hand pumps, it cannot be concluded that this is linked to their former situation of displacement. Comparable numbers were reported by female headed households.

The reported average collection time for drinking water was similar in returnee households and resident households. Fifty per cent of respondents stated that the average collection time for drinking water is less than 15 minutes. Thirty-two per cent of surveyed households indicated that the average collection time is between 15 and 30 minutes. Only four per cent of respondents reported that drinking water was available in the house.

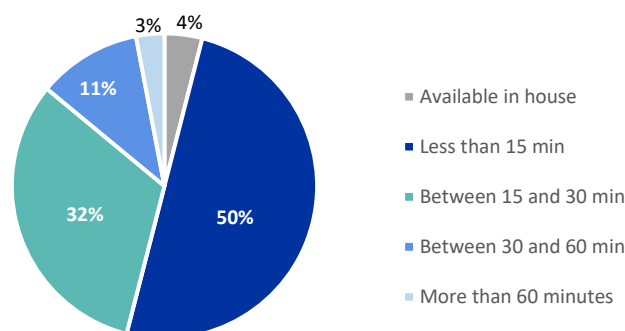


Figure 27: Average collection time for drinking water

WASH

It is notable that the access to handwashing facilities with water and soap was more restricted for returnee households compared to resident households. Seventy-three per cent of returnee households did not have access to handwashing facilities with water and soap. This number was reported at 51 per cent for resident households. This difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. When disaggregating access per sex, female headed households reported to have no access to handwashing facilities with water and soap in 59 per cent of the surveys, compared to 62 per cent for male headed households. In case the surveyed households had access to handwashing facilities with water and soap, more private facilities were reported than handwashing stations that were shared with other households.

Eighty-five per cent of the households that reported to have access to handwashing stations filled with water and soap stated that they have these facilities at home. For returnee households, this numbers was reported at 87 per cent, while this number was reported at 84 per cent for resident households.

Basic sanitation facilities such as toilets and showers were reported to be more accessible than handwashing facilities. Fifty-nine per cent of resident households and sixty-one per cent of returnee households reported to have access to basic sanitation facilities. No statistically significant difference between the resident population and returnees was noted. Fifty-one per cent of resident respondents and 57 per cent of returnee respondents reported to have access to toilets and showers in their homes.

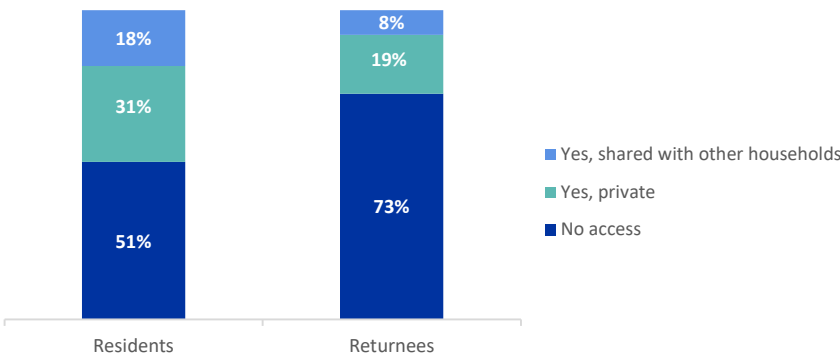


Figure 28: Access to handwashing facilities with water and soap



Figure 29: Access to sanitation facilities (toilet, shower...)

Health

Returnee households and resident households reportedly have the same level of access to health facilities. In both population groups, 83 per cent of respondents reported to have access to health facilities. The reasons that are preventing some of the surveyed household from accessing health services are similar when comparing returnee households and resident households. The main reason cited is the lack of personnel in healthcare services, followed by the high costs of healthcare services.

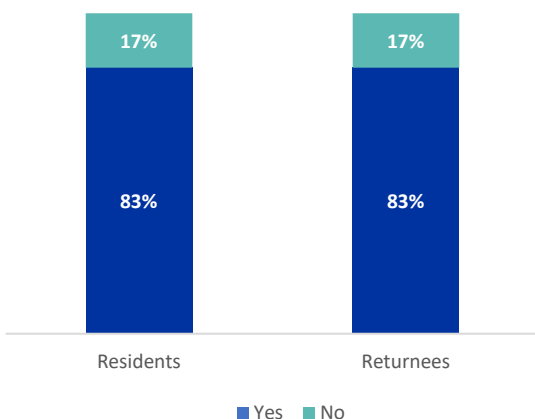


Figure 30: Access to health facilities

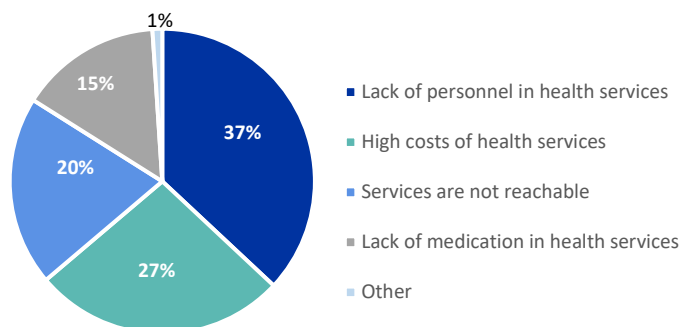


Figure 31: Reasons preventing households to access healthcare services

It is important to note that only in 13 per cent of the surveys where the households reported to have access to healthcare facilities, mental health services were provided. For 44 per cent of the households who reported to have access to healthcare facilities, these services were located between 15 and 30 minutes away. For 29 per cent of the households, they were located less than 15 minutes away. For 21 per cent, they were located between 30 and 60 minutes away and for six per cent, they were located more than one hour away from their locality.

For both returnee households and resident households, the most prevalent health concern was malaria. Malaria was followed by fever and cough. As illustrated in the graph below, the percentages reported for both populations were rather similar. Additionally, for both resident households and returnee households, 55 per cent of respondents mentioned that births in their households were attended by skilled and trained health personnel.

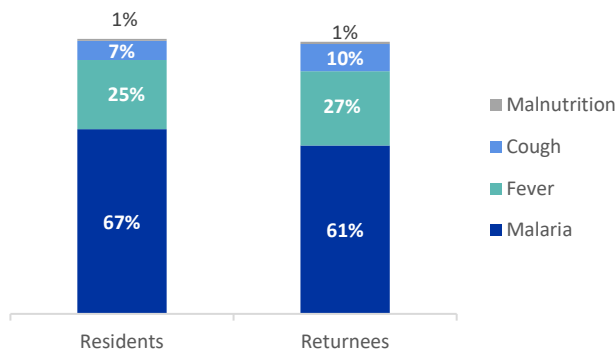


Figure 32: Most prevalent health concerns

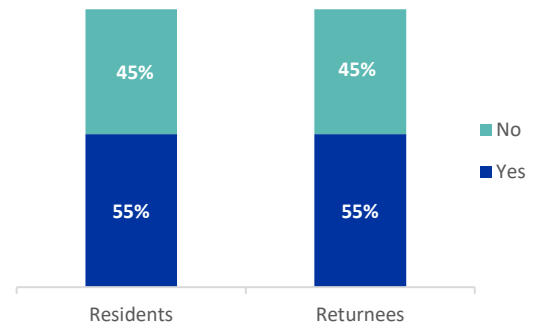


Figure 33: Births attended by skilled health personnel

Education

The great majority of children in both returnee households and resident households had access to education. This number was reported at 86 per cent for resident households and 92 per cent for returnee households. While the disparity seems rather limited, the six point difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. For 47 per cent of the households where children did not attend school, the family reported to have other priorities for their children. Other reasons that prevented children's access to education were the distance to school (16%) and the lack of teachers (16%). The segment 'other' in the graph below includes the lack of teaching materials (4%), the lack of infrastructure (3%), the lack of personal documentation (1%) and discrimination (1%).

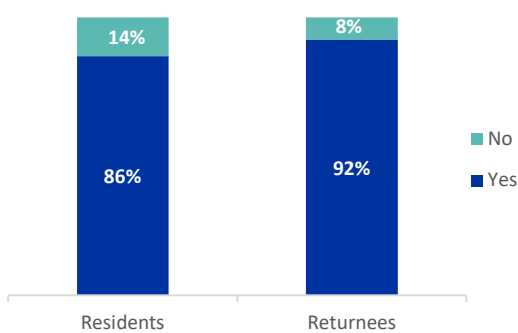


Figure 34: Access to education

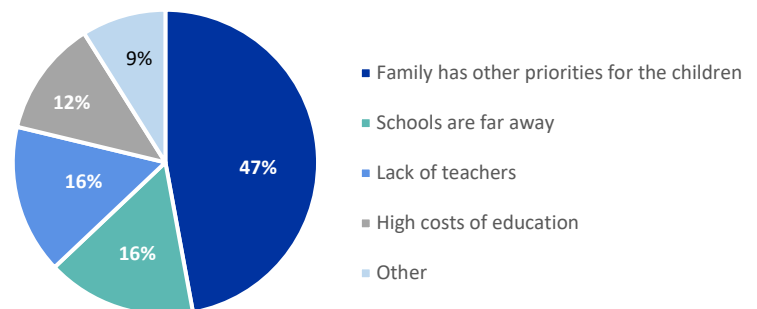


Figure 35: Reasons preventing the access to education

Communication

The majority of surveyed households reported that the adults in their family had access to a mobile phone. For resident households, this number was reported at 84 per cent while for returnee households, this number was reported at 91 per cent. Seventy-nine per cent of female headed households reported to have a mobile phone.

Food security

Food security indicators include prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity, obstacles to obtaining sufficient food and potential coping mechanisms for food insecurity. Only a minority of respondents indicated that their household is never concerned about the ability to obtain sufficient food. This number was reported at 20 per cent for resident households and 15 per cent for returnee households. Sixty-three per cent of both resident households and returnee households noted that they sometimes are concerned about obtaining sufficient food. No statistically significant differences were noted for female headed households.

Also the obstacles to obtaining sufficient food were reported to be very similar between the two population groups. The primary obstacle was the cost of food, cited by 82 per cent of respondents who were concerned about obtaining sufficient food. The cost of food was followed by the lack of access to farmland, reported by 16 per cent of respondents, the absence of a market in the locality, cited by one per cent of respondents, and the fact that the products needed are not sold on the market (1%).

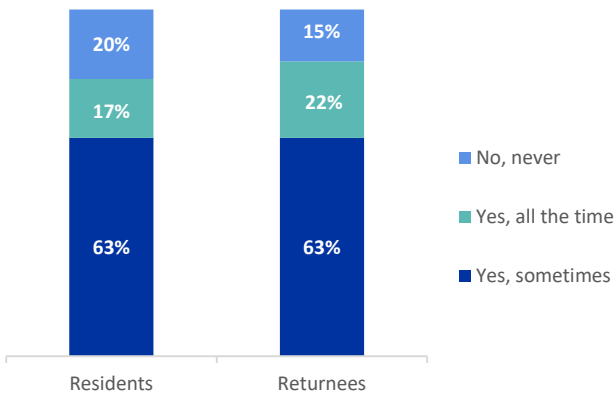


Figure 36: Concerns about obtaining sufficient food

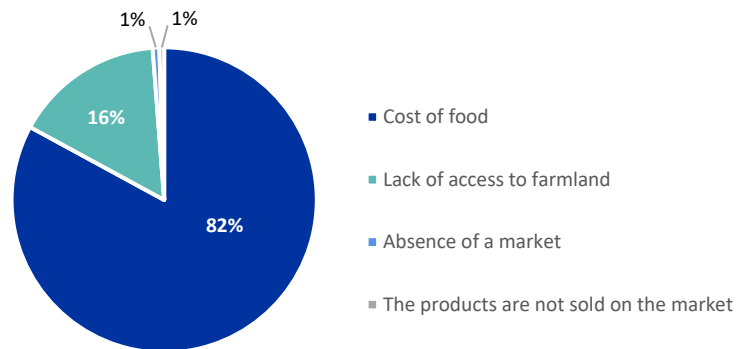


Figure 37: Main obstacles to obtaining sufficient food

Various coping mechanisms for food insecurity were investigated during the assessment. In both population groups, 77 per cent of surveyed households indicated that they sometimes were forced to reduce the intake of food by cutting portions or skipping meals. For female headed households, this number was reported at 80 per cent. Twenty-one per cent of respondents stated that they never were never forced to reduce their intake of food (18% for female headed households).

However, as illustrated in the graphs below, statistically significant disparities between resident households and returnee households were noted in the following coping mechanisms for food insecurity. Eighty per cent of resident households indicated that they sometimes had to compromise on the quality or diversity of the food consumed. This number was reported at 65 per cent for returnee households. Additionally, 60 per cent of resident households mentioned that they sometimes are hungry and cannot access food for a whole day. This number was reported at 52 per cent for returnee households.

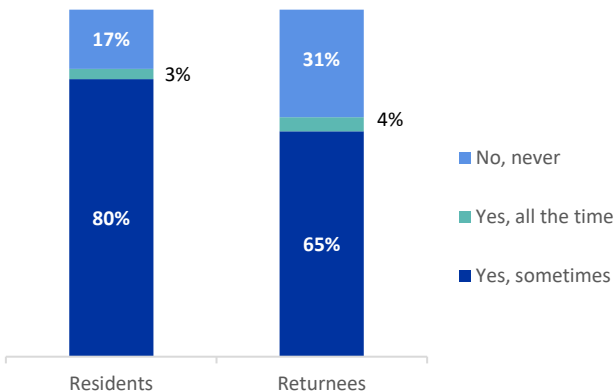


Figure 38: Percentage of households that compromise on the quality of food

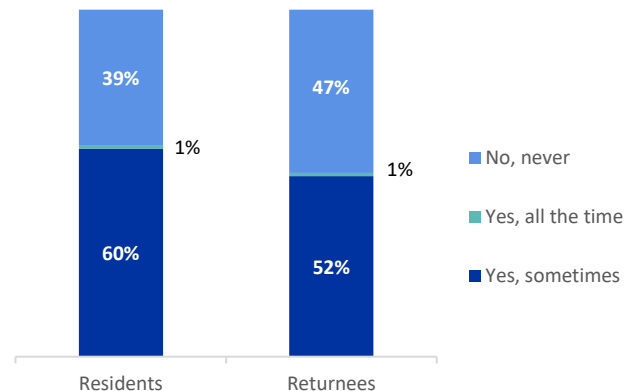


Figure 39: Percentage of households that are hungry or cannot access food for a whole day

Tenure security and housing conditions

Adequate housing conditions and tenure security are essential to an adequate standard of living. Tenure security can relate to houses or land when relevant. Indicators on tenure security include ‘actual tenure’ such as types of tenure and experiences of eviction. Adequate housing conditions include basic access to drinking water and sanitation facilities, sufficient living area for the household or family, durable or long-term housing and security of tenure.

Tenure security

The types of tenure were similar between returnee households and the resident population. In both population categories, the majority of the households owned the house in which they lived (85% for resident households and 88% for returnee households). Small percentages of households rented a house or lived for free. When disaggregating the data by sex, the disparity between female and male headed households was more compelling. While 88 per cent of male headed households indicated that they owned the house in which they lived, this number was reported at 75 per cent for female headed households. Additionally, 15 per cent of female headed households stated that they were renting the house in which they lived.

Sixty-four per cent of resident households and 75 per cent of returnee households that reported to be house owners stated that they are in the possession of legally recognized documentation to prove tenure rights. This 11 point difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. No difference was noted for female headed households. Furthermore, 86 per cent of the surveyed households declared to never have been evicted or experienced fear of eviction in the past 12 months.

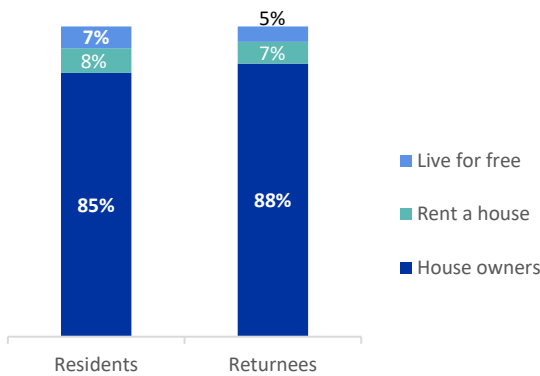


Figure 40: Types of tenure per population category

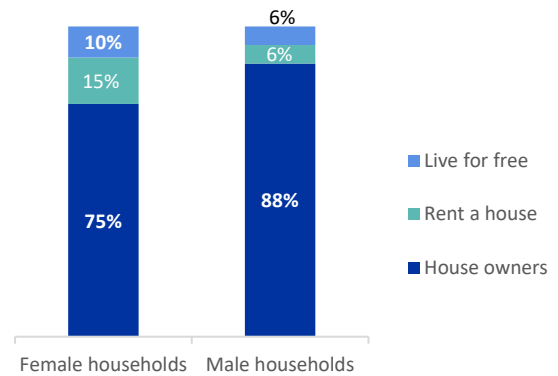


Figure 41: Types of tenure per type of household

Housing conditions

The majority of surveyed households lived in houses with brick walls and traditional shelters (bukka, gidan zana or thatched houses). It is notable that more resident households tend to live in houses with brick walls while more returnee households live in traditional shelters or thatched housing. Only a small percentage stated that they lived in houses made out of wood. Other types of shelter generally referred to shelters made out of mud. It is noteworthy that 66 per cent of the resident households and 72 per cent of returnee households indicated that their house or shelter is in need of a major repair. This result is statistically significant at the five per cent level.

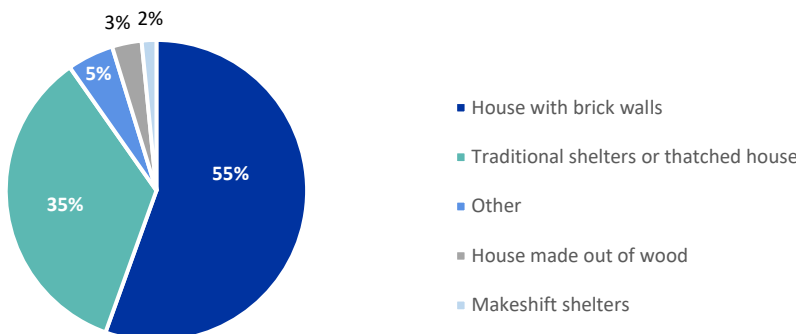


Figure 42: Housing conditions for the resident population

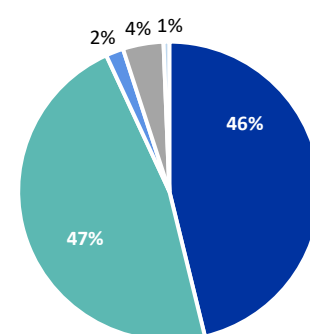


Figure 43: Housing conditions for returnee households

11. ACCESS TO LIVELIHOODS AND EMPLOYMENT

Returnees who have achieved a durable solution can fulfil their basic socio-economic needs on an equal basis with the non-displaced resident population. This entails access to employment and general income sources, including productive assets and financial services. The IASC framework acknowledges that the access to livelihoods is a relative indicator. Post-displacement economies are often fragile with high levels of unemployment affecting the entire population. The key question within this theme is whether returnees face discriminatory obstacles that are preventing them from accessing livelihoods or is employment available equally for both population groups.

Employment

On average, 62 per cent of the members of the working age population (age 15 to 64) in resident households were currently employed. For returnee households, this number was reported at 65 per cent. This means that average unemployment rates are estimated to be 38 per cent for the resident population and 35 per cent for the returnee households. The calculations for these percentages were based on the reported working age population per household. Sixty-one per cent of the members of the working age population in female-headed households were currently employed.

Seventy-four per cent of resident households reported that members of their household find it difficult to find a job. For returnee households, this number was reported higher at 80 per cent. This disparity is statistically significant at the five per cent level. When disaggregating the obstacles perceived to finding jobs per population category, it is noted that discrimination plays an important role as to why returnees find it challenging to find a job. However, for both population categories, the lack of economic opportunities was reported as the main obstacle to finding employment. Other obstacles included the lack of livestock, the lack of fisheries and communal tensions).

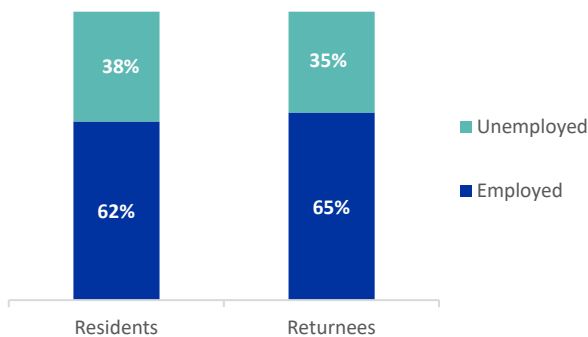


Figure 44: Employment rate (working age population)

Obstacles	Residents	Returnees
Lack of economic opportunities	72%	70%
Discrimination	7%	19%
Safety and security	10%	5%
Lack of access to farmland	9%	4%
Other	2%	2%

Figure 45: Obstacles to employment

An estimated 37 per cent of resident households and 50 per cent of returnee households reported that members of their household undertook seasonal or pendular movements for work. This 13 point difference is statistically significant at the five per cent level. For female headed households, this number was reported at 48 per cent, while 43 per cent of the male headed households reported that members of their household undertook seasonal or pendular movements for work.

Forty-seven per cent of surveyed households reported that children aged between 5 and 17 were currently engaged in economic activities. This number was reported at 50 per cent in returnee households and 44 per cent in resident households.

Household economy

Sources of income

The reported primary sources of income were very much alike when comparing returnee households and resident households. The primary source of income was farming, reported by 84 per cent of the surveyed households. Farming was followed by small businesses (4%) and salaried employment (4%). Other primary sources of income included petty trade, daily labour and fishing.

When only considering female headed households, farming was reported at 79 per cent as the primary source of income. Farming was followed by petty trade, reported in six per cent of female headed households. Other reported sources of income included daily labour, fishing, humanitarian assistance, donations and collecting firewood.

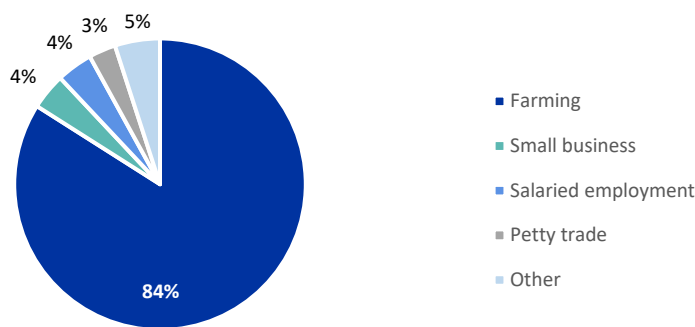


Figure 46: Primary sources of income for all surveyed households

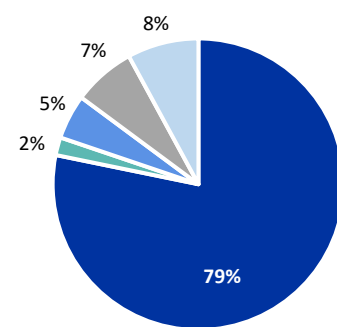


Figure 47: Primary sources of income for female headed households

Income and expenditure

Seventy-eight per cent of returnee households and 71 per cent of resident households reported that they were able to pay for their daily expenses, a statistically significant difference at the five per cent level. This despite the fact that 74 per cent of the surveyed households were living below the internationally agreed poverty line, defined by the World Bank at \$1.90 or ₦789 per person per day to cover basic expenses. For female headed households, this number was reported at 76 per cent.

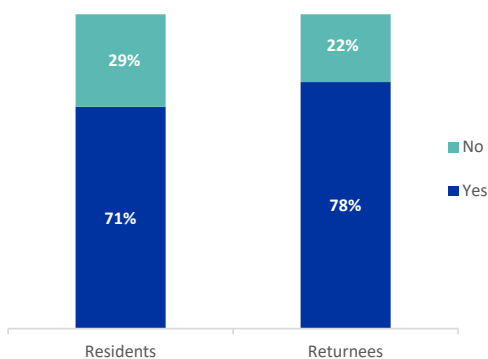


Figure 48: Ability to pay for basic expenses

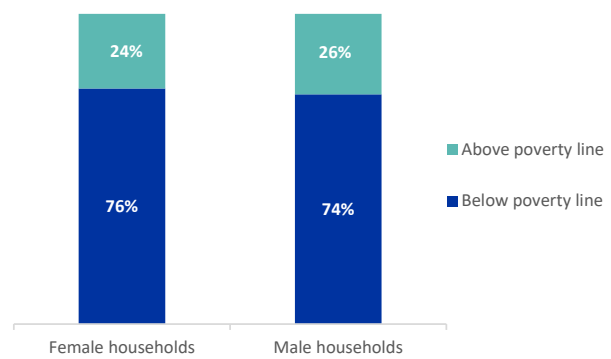


Figure 49: Percentage of households living below or above poverty line

The limited budget to cover basic expenses is reflected in the average income levels of the surveyed households. Once more, little disparities between the resident population and returnee households were noted. Thirty-four per cent of the resident households and 33 per cent of returnee households stated that the average monthly income per person in their household is below ₦5,000 or \$12. Only the persons who actually have an income were considered for this question.

The average monthly income per person for 69 per cent of the resident households is reported to be below ₦10,000 or \$24. For returnee households, this number is reported at 53 per cent. It is to be noted that returnee households scored higher in the scales 'between ₦15,100 and ₦20,000' and 'between ₦20,100 and ₦30,000'. Only a small minority of surveyed households reported to have a monthly average income of ₦30,000 or above (\$72 or above). As illustrated in figure 47, the average monthly income for female headed households was reported to be very similar compared to the average monthly income for male headed households.

Average monthly income per person	Residents	Returnees
Less than 5,000 naira	34%	33%
Between 5,100 and 10,000 naira	35%	20%
Between 10,100 and 15,000 naira	16%	12%
Between 15,100 and 20,000 naira	7%	14%
Between 20,100 and 30,000 naira	6%	16%
More than 30,000 naira	2%	5%

Figure 50: Average monthly income for resident households and returnee households

Average monthly income per person	Female hh	Male hh
Less than 5,000 naira	32%	34%
Between 5,100 and 10,000 naira	33%	26%
Between 10,100 and 15,000 naira	17%	13%
Between 15,100 and 20,000 naira	7%	11%
Between 20,100 and 30,000 naira	8%	12%
More than 30,000 naira	3%	4%

Figure 51: Average monthly income for female and male headed households

The graphs below illustrate the average monthly expenditure per person in resident households and returnee households, and compare average monthly expenditures between male and female headed households. The majority of surveyed households reported to spend between ₦1,100 and ₦5,000 (between \$3 and \$5) per person per month. The average expenditure in returnee households tends to be slightly higher in comparison with the resident households. It is noteworthy that 27 per cent of female headed households reported an average expenditure per person per month of less than ₦1,000 (under \$3). For male headed households, this number is reported at 17 per cent.

Expenditure per person per month	Residents	Returnees
Less than 1,000 naira	21%	17%
Between 1,100 and 5,000 naira	53%	41%
Between 5,100 and 10,000 naira	20%	26%
Between 10,100 and 15,000 naira	3%	11%
Between 15,100 and 20,000 naira	2%	3%
More than 20,000 naira	1%	2%

Figure 52: Average monthly expenditure for resident households and returnee households

Expenditure per person per month	Female hh	Male hh
Less than 1,000 naira	27%	17%
Between 1,100 and 5,000 naira	44%	47%
Between 5,100 and 10,000 naira	21%	23%
Between 10,100 and 15,000 naira	5%	8%
Between 15,100 and 20,000 naira	2%	3%
More than 20,000 naira	1%	2%

Figure 53: Average monthly expenditure for female and male headed households

Access to productive assets, markets and financial services

Seventy-six per cent of the resident households reported to own agricultural land. This number was reported at 81 per cent for returnee households. This five point difference is statistically significant at the 5 per cent level. In resident households, only 55 per cent of agricultural land owners reported to be in the possession of legally recognized documentation to prove tenure rights. For returnee households, this number was reported at 67 per cent. Female headed households reported to own agricultural lands in 68 per cent of the surveys.

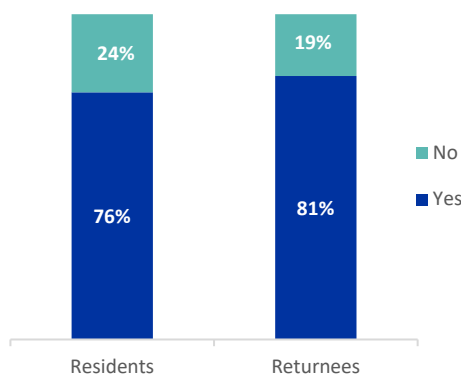


Figure 54: Ownership of agricultural land

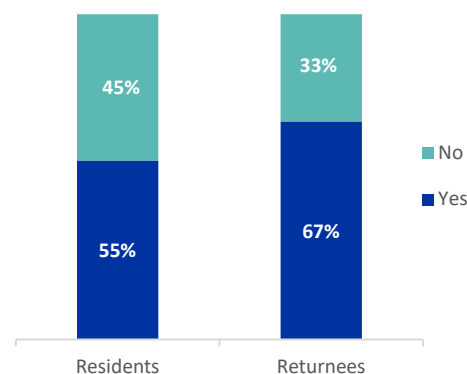


Figure 55: Documentation to prove tenure rights

Of the respondents that stated to own agricultural land, 12 per cent reported that they fear to involuntarily lose their land within the next five years. This could be due to intra-family threats, community threats or external threats. The majority or 88 per cent of respondents who owned agricultural land were confident to still own the land in five year's time. For returnee households, this was reported at 90 per cent while for resident households, this was reported at 86 per cent.

Livestock was reported to be the most common type of productive asset owned by both groups of surveyed households. Seventy-one per cent of returnee households and 56 per cent of resident households stated to own livestock. Other productive assets included agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers nutrients or animal feed, and production equipment as in tools or machinery. Twenty-six per cent of resident households and 22 per cent of returnee households declared not to own any type of productive asset. For female headed households, this number was reported at 37 per cent.

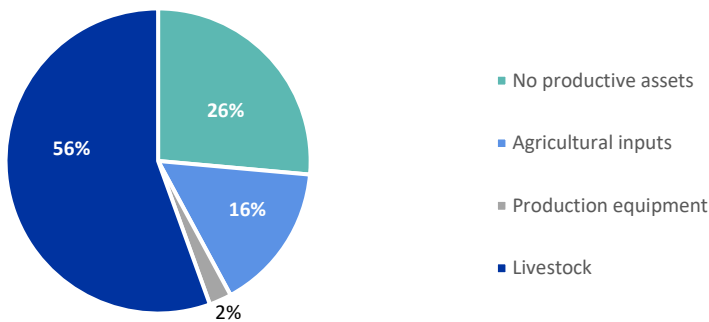


Figure 56: Productive assets for resident households

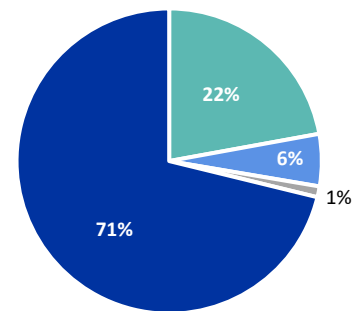


Figure 57 Productive assets for returnee households

The great majority or 96 per cent of surveyed households cited that they had access to local markets. No disparities were noted between returnee households and resident households. Also for female headed households, this number was reported at 96 per cent. Furthermore, 61 per cent of resident households and 76 per cent of returnee households stated that at least one member of their household owns a bank account. This 15 point difference is statistically significant at the five er cent level. For female headed households, this number was reported at 51 per cent.

12. ACCESS TO AND REPLACEMENT OF PERSONAL AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

During the course of displacement, people often lose documents such as passports, personal identification documents, birth or marriage certificates, voter identification cards, school records, social security cards... Returnees who have achieved a durable solution should have access to personal and other documentation necessary to enjoy and exercise their legal rights. They must be able to access public services, reclaim property and possessions or vote. Returnees should be able to obtain or replace this documentation without discrimination.

Type of identification document	Residents		Returnees		Female headed households	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Passport	23%	77%	37%	63%	18%	82%
National ID card	88%	12%	92%	8%	78%	22%
Birth certificate	55%	45%	60%	40%	48%	52%
Marriage certificate	28%	72%	18%	82%	18%	82%
Voter ID card	97%	3%	96%	4%	92%	8%
Social security card	7%	93%	5%	95%	5%	95%
School records/Academic certificates	46%	54%	73%	27%	39%	61%

Figure 58: Type of documentation owned per population category

Some statistically significant disparities were noted in the possession of identification documents between returnee households and resident households. As such, the possession of passports and school records was reported significantly higher among returnee households compared to the resident population. Conversely, marriage certificates were less available in returnee households. Documents that were reported to be widely available in both population categories were national ID cards and voter ID cards. It is to be noted that on average 58 per cent of surveyed households reported that members of their household were issued birth certificates. In female headed households, this number was reported at 40 per cent. It is noticeable that female headed households scored consistently lower in the possession of identification documents compared to male headed households. The difference was most explicit in school and academic records. Sixty-four per cent of male headed households reported that they were in the possession of school records or other academic records while this number was reported at 39 per cent for female headed households.

Forty-four per cent of returnee households and 16 per cent of the resident households stated that one or more members of their household lost their identification documentation at some point in the past. This number was reported significantly higher among returnee households as during the period of displacement, identification documents regularly get lost or are forgotten in the chaos of flight. However, the majority of household members that lost their identification documents were able to replace them when needed (75% for resident households and 87% for returnee households). Furthermore, 65 per cent of resident households and 82 per cent of returnee households with children under five years old reported that these children were not registered with a civil authority.

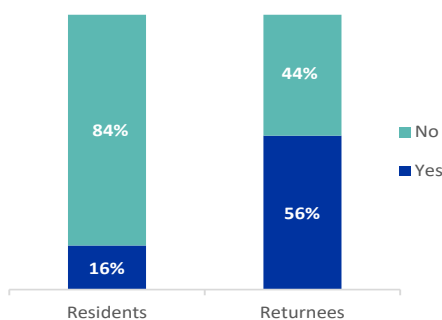


Figure 59: Percentage of households with members that ever lost documents



Figure 60: Percentage of household members able to replace lost documentation

13. PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Participation in public affairs

Households that have returned to their locations of origin and that are considered to have reached a durable solution should be able to exercise the right to participate in public affairs at all levels on the same basis as non-displaced resident households without any form of discrimination. This includes the right to vote and to stand for elections but also the right to associate freely and participate equally in community affairs, as well as the right to work in all sectors of public service.

Ninety-four per cent of the eligible members (18 years and older) of resident households and 97 per cent of the eligible members of returnee households were registered to vote. This number was reported at 89 per cent in female headed households. Ninety-five per cent of the resident household members and 94 per cent of returnee household members that were eligible and registered to vote, did vote in the latest local or national election.

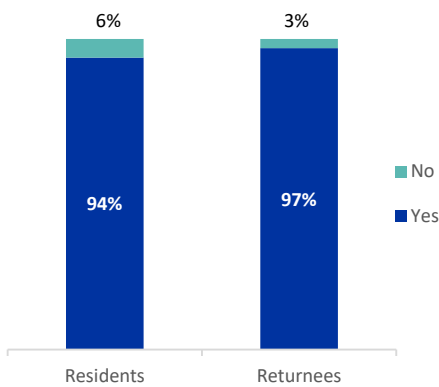


Figure 61: Percentage of eligible members registered to vote

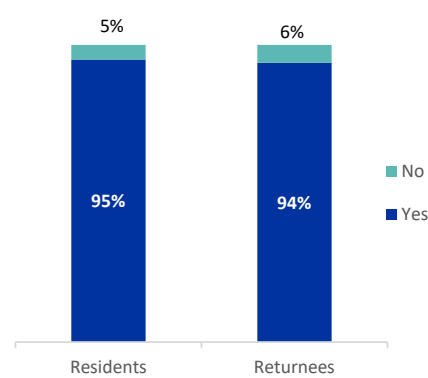


Figure 62: Percentage registered voters that actually voted

The reasons why a small minority of registered voters did not vote in the last local or national elections included the lack of interest in politics, the fact that voters did not feel represented by the candidates and the fear of electoral violence.

Sixty-one per cent of resident households and 50 per cent of returnee households declared that they feel represented or able to participate in public decision-making in their locality. When considering only female headed households, this number was reported at 54 per cent. Furthermore, 49 per cent of resident households and 71 per cent of returnee households stated that members of their household actively participate in community, social or political organizations in their locality. This can be in the form of youth organizations, women's organizations, environmental organizations, political movements, etc.

Participation in reconciliation and confidence building activities

Thirty-nine per cent of resident households and 37 per cent of returnee households mentioned that members of their households were involved in reconciliation initiatives, confidence-building initiatives or peace processes in this locality. For female headed households, this number was 38 per cent.

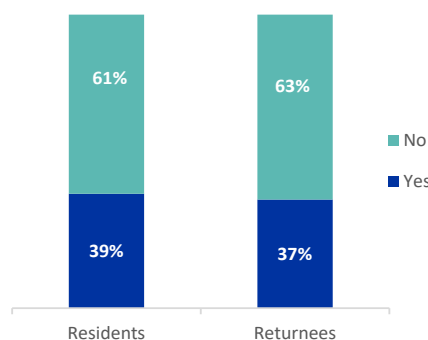


Figure 63: Percentage of households with members involved in reconciliation initiatives

14. ACCESS TO REMEDIES

Returnees who have been victims of violations of international human rights (IHRL) or humanitarian law (IHL) which occurred during the course of displacement must have full and non-discriminatory access to effective remedies and access to justice, including access to existing transitional justice mechanisms, reparations and information on the causes of violations. Securing effective remedies for IHRL and IHL violations may have a major impact on prospects for durable solutions for returned individuals.

Seventy-two per cent of resident households and 69 per cent of returnee households stated that they were aware of formal or informal dispute resolution mechanisms. For female headed households, this number was reported at 78 per cent. The most reported types of dispute resolution mechanisms were community leaders and religious leaders, reported in 65 per cent of the localities. Community and religious leaders were followed by the CJTF or Civilian Joint Task Force, reported in 43 per cent of the locations, and the police, reported in 31 per cent of the locations. Other dispute resolution mechanisms included the military, court or tribunal and the government or formal authorities. Respondents were asked to cite all dispute resolution mechanisms that were available in their locality.

In addition, 55 per cent of resident households and 58 per cent of returnee households reported that one or more members of their family accessed one of the available dispute resolution mechanisms (60% for female headed households).

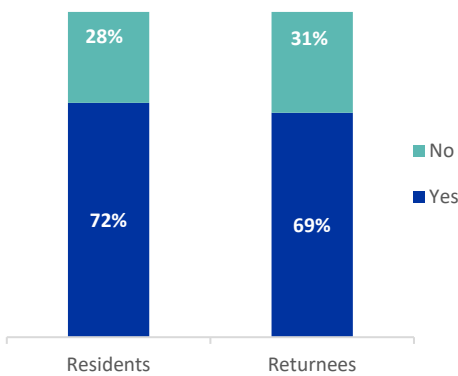


Figure 64: Percentage of households aware of dispute resolution mechanisms

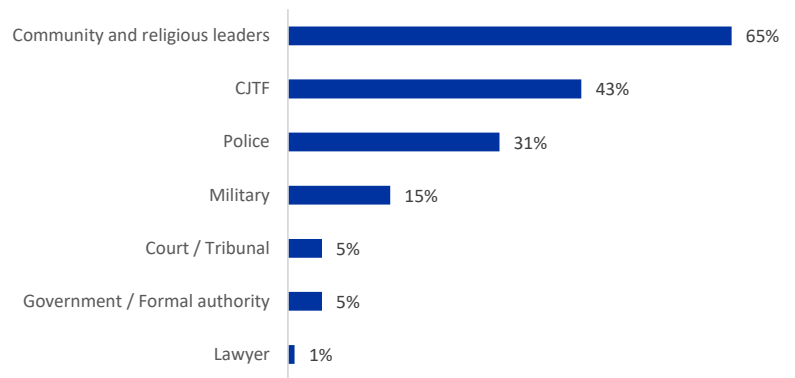


Figure 65: Most reported types of dispute resolution mechanisms

15. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the report is to give accurate and reliable information of the conditions of return in north-east Nigeria and to provide an evidence-base for comprehensive humanitarian responses and development planning for populations in locations of high return. The research was intended by the urge to better understand return to communities of origin as a solution to internal displacement in north-east Nigeria. The primary objective was to assess the quality of the return movement and to determine whether returnees were still experiencing needs linked to their displacement.

The outcome of the analysis indicates that few disparities exist in general living conditions and access to services between returnee households and resident households. The most explicit disparities were noted in the access to handwashing facilities with water and soap and housing conditions. A lower number of returnee households reported to have access to handwashing facilities with water and soap, and a higher number of returnee households reported to live in traditional shelters or thatched houses. To a rather limited extent, returnee households find it more difficult to find a job compared to resident households. This results in the fact that more returnee households undertake seasonal or pendular movements for work.

On the other hand, more returnee households indicated feeling always safe in their locality and reported being able to pay for basic expenses. Additionally, a higher number of returnee households reported possessing bank accounts, documentation to prove tenure rights, and livestock and agricultural land, compared to resident households. This might suggest unidentified, non-negative impacts and effects of displacement, such as strengthened resilience and the exposure or access to peri-urban or urban services.

As the assessed returnee populations no longer have specific needs or requirements directly linked to their earlier displacement they can be assessed to have achieved a Durable Solution. Consequently, a conversation with the wider humanitarian and development community should be initiated, as a priority, to discuss and agree whether a process or mechanism is needed to remove these former IDPs from displacement datasets and consider them as residents on a par with the non-displaced resident community. Additionally, the findings of this report suggest that if the return is organic and self-managed, it is highly probable that the returnee population will meet the criteria for durable solutions as per the IASC framework.

However, this does not mean that no further assistance is required. There should be a common understanding that the former IDPs' needs and requirements should now be identified and addressed in the same way as those of the non-displaced resident community. The generally positive relationships between returnees and the resident population, and the fact that few disparities exist between returnees and the non-displaced resident households must be considered as an opportunity for intensified and long term community based development assistance. Ongoing community level assistance in locations of high return will be needed to support and reinforce strong community networks and address communal needs and vulnerabilities.

These interventions should include both returnee households and members of the resident population since the distinctions between the two population categories are few, as illustrated in this report. Returnees and members of the resident population now share similar needs and vulnerabilities. In order to enhance living conditions in areas of high return, it is important to promote comprehensive development policies and inclusive community-centred approaches that reduce socio-economic fragility, and build resilience.

The overwhelming majority of the returnees had freely chosen to and implemented their own return home (99%), When cross-referenced with DTM's Mobility Tracking data on returnees, it emerges from the data that over three quarters of returnees had experienced relatively a short period of displacement. Given the durability of these returns, it would be valuable to further examine the links between a freely chosen and self-managed return and its improved durability. While the greatest challenges around improving solutions outcomes for the displaced arise in protracted displacement settings, such an exercise could likewise inform analysis of how duration of displacement may link directly to ability to self-manage and execute a durable return. As per this report, it can be concluded that in north-east Nigeria, self-managed returns for those not displaced for a protracted period have been largely successful in the assessed communities and should now be classified as 'resident population' in the same way as the non-displaced community members.