

Humanitarian Situation Overview in Hard-to-Reach Areas Adamawa and Yobe States | Nigeria

February - March 2022

CONTEXT

The continuation of conflict in Northeast Nigeria has created a complex humanitarian crisis, rendering sections of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states as hard-to-reach (H2R) for humanitarian actors, limiting affected people’s access to basic infrastructure and services.¹ To support the humanitarian response for affected populations, REACH has been conducting data collection in Northeast Nigeria to collect, analyse and share up-to-date information regarding multi-sectoral humanitarian needs in the area since November 2018. These H2R assessments aim to provide information on the situation of the estimated one million² persons living in H2R areas to humanitarian service providers, including demographics, (inter)sectoral needs, access to services, displacement trends, and movement intentions. This Situation Overview reports on assessed settlements in six local government areas (LGAs)* in Adamawa State (Hong, Maiha, Madagali, Mubi North, Mubi South and Michika) and three LGAs in Yobe state (Geidam, Gujba and Tarmua) and covers a recall period of one month.**

METHODOLOGY

This assessments adopts the “Area of knowledge” methodology. The aim of this methodology is to remotely monitor the situation in H2R areas. Data was collected at the settlement level, through interviews with key informants (KIs) who are either (1) newly arrived internally displaced persons (IDPs) who have left a H2R settlement in the last month prior to the data collection or (2) KIs who have had contact with someone living in or having been in a H2R settlement in the last month (traders, migrants, family members, etc). These KIs were selected based on their recent (less than a month) and detailed knowledge about a settlement. Findings for this Situation Overview are derived from individual KI responses who reported on the settlement level and whose responses are aggregated to the LGA or state level for analytical purposes. To deepen the information provided by the KIs, 10 Focus Group Discussions and 15 In-Depth Interviews were held with KIs and/or members of the displaced population, and these discussions focused on the dynamics of displacement and the severity of humanitarian needs. The primary data collected is triangulated with secondary sources including other REACH assessments and those conducted by other humanitarian organisations in the assessed areas.

This report presents the most recent results from the data collection carried out between the 1st of February and 31st March 2022 in three LGAs in Yobe (Geidam, Gujba and Tarmua) and six LGAs in Adamawa state (Hong, Maiha, Madagali, Michika, Mubi North and Mubi South). **As the geographical coverage of this assessment is limited in its scope, it is important to note that H2R data and the contents of this brief are indicative only and not statistically generalisable and, therefore, must be triangulated with other sources.**

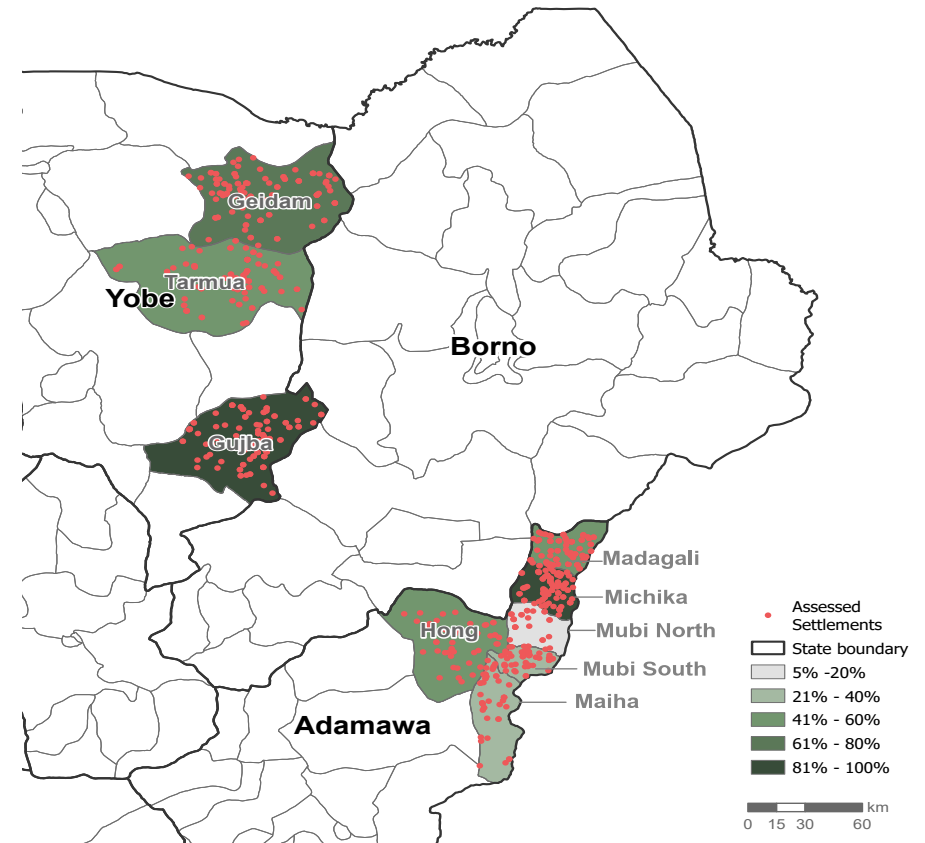
¹ REACH hard to reach reports

² UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Nigeria: 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview

Figure 1: Number of assessed settlements per LGA

State	Adamawa						Yobe		
LGA	Hong	Madagali	Maiha	Michika	Mubi North	Mubi South	Geidam	Gujba	Tarmua
SETTLEMENTS	60	65	34	96	20	38	83	97	71

Map 1: REACH assessment coverage in Adamawa and Yobe state in February and March 2022



* LGAs represent one administrative level below the state level

** Unless otherwise stated, the recall period is one month



KEY FINDINGS

Findings indicate recent commodity price surges across Yobe and Adamawa states appear to have worsened food security in H2R settlements already beset by dwindling arable farmland, and livelihood and movement restrictions caused by insecurity. Findings suggest people in the assessed settlements are in need of critical food assistance with some forced to adopt negative food consumption coping strategies such as eating wild foods, reduction of quality and quantity of meals among others.

According to KIs, difficulties obtaining food and engaging in livelihoods are exacerbated by general insecurity caused by the conflict and a range of protection incidents including looting, abductions, sexual and gender based violence, forced labour etc. There are reports of recent incursions by Armed opposition groups (AOGs) especially into remote communities in parts of Gujba and Geidam in Yobe state leading to loss of life, property and mass displacement. Farmer-herder conflicts, in conjunction with other threats, appear to have also contributed to cases of abduction and trafficking in Adamawa.

Finally, findings indicate access to key services such as improved water sources, sanitary facilities, healthcare, and education is limited in most of the assessed H2R settlements. Recent [REACH assessments](#) indicate some people in these areas face great difficulty obtaining water and have in some cases been forced to relocate, travel further or use less preferred sources of water. Added to these are the absence of health and educational facilities in many assessed settlements due to lack of existing infrastructure and resources both human and otherwise.

POPULATION MOVEMENT AND DISPLACEMENT

Findings suggest that the conflict in Northeast Nigeria continues to impact communities in the hard-to-reach areas; dislodging host community members and sometimes leading to **family separations, unaccompanied minors, and forced relocations.** KIs in most of the assessed H2R settlements reported IDPs were living in the H2R settlement, especially settlements in Mubi North (100%) and Hong (98%). Findings from an International Organisation for Migration (IOM) Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT) assessment suggest many people were displaced in the most conflict-affected LGAs of Fufore, Girei and Yola South in Adamawa. These displacements were triggered by military operations, voluntary relocations, and poor living conditions in the area of origin and camp closures.³

Findings suggest that displacement was often local; most KIs from the assessed settlements reported having traveled to a garrison town in the LGA of origin. Some

KIs from Yunusari (63%), Geidam (47%), Gulani (36%), Tarmua (23%) and Gujba (14%) in Yobe, travelled to the Yobe state capital Damaturu instead of to garrison towns in their LGA of origin. In Hong (100%), Mubi South (100%) and Maiha (98%), most KIs reportedly travelled to Mubi North.^{***} Perhaps reflective of the differences in journeys found among KIs, FGD participants reported a plethora of reasons for displacement, including the desire to be reunited with relatives, the perceived safety of a location, and access to livelihoods and humanitarian assistance.

PROTECTION

Findings indicate safety threats in the assessed hard-to-reach areas ranged from AOG violence, herdsman-farmer conflicts, looting/theft and kidnapping (abductions), all of which might have adverse effects on communities in H2R areas, for instance in the form of triggers of displacement and barriers to livelihoods and other essential services. In the majority of the assessed LGAs, KIs reported protection concerns to have stayed the same for most people in their settlements compared to the previous month. In about 7% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and in 21% of assessed settlements in Yobe, KIs reported people’s perception of safety was that it had gotten worse.

Figure 2: Most commonly reported protection concerns perceived for women, men, girls, and boys, by % of KIs

Groups/Age	Protection concerns					
	Concern	%	Concern	%	Concern	%
Women >18	Looting	23%	AOG violence	15%	Domestic violence	14%
Girls <18	Early marriage	19%	Sexual violence	17%	AOG violence	11%
Men >18	AOG violence	19%	Looting	10%	Abduction	6%
Boys <18	AOG violence	16%	Abduction	6%	Forced recruitment	6%

However, FGD respondents reported perceiving that abductions and kidnapping have been on the rise in Adamawa, which is supported by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reports of child trafficking and abductions in the state.⁴ Incidents of conflict resulting in the death of a civilian(s) was also reported in some assessed settlements. The highest proportions of settlements in an LGA where this was reported were in Gujba (51%) and Madagali (20%). In line with this, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), a large-scale AOG attack in Gujba LGA has led to over 3000 people being displaced towards Damaturu with some civilians being

^{***} Data in this paragraph is from individual IDP KI data collected.

³ IOM Nigeria DTM Emergency Tracking Tool (ETT) Report : No. 264 | 21 - 27 February 2022

⁴ UNHCR Northeast Nigeria Operational Update, March 2022.

⁵ OCHA Situation Report No. 18 Nigeria Yobe State

killed, while several smaller scale attacks in other H2R communities in Gujba were also observed.⁵

Movement restrictions appear to strongly affect the ability of people in the assessed H2R areas to engage in their regular livelihoods and activities or to gain access to areas where they may obtain assistance. In 92% and 87% of assessed settlements, men and women respectively, were reportedly able to freely move within the settlement. However, KIs reported men and women were able to move freely outside the settlement in 68% and 48% of assessed settlements respectively. KIs in **62% of assessed settlements in Yobe reported women were not able to move freely outside the settlement.** The most commonly reported reasons for women being unable to move freely outside the settlement were security concerns and forcefully imposed AOG restrictions.

Findings suggest that abductions appear to be a major issue in the LGAs of Madagali, Maiha, Mubi North and Mubi South all in Adamawa. The highest proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported abductions (especially of men) were in these LGAs. The LGAs with the highest proportion of assessed settlements where abductions of men was reported were Mubi South (63%), Mubi North (55%) and Madagali (55%). While these settlements are located in or close to zones with overlapping AOG presence, FGD participants also reported herder-farmer conflict as a major contributor to these abductions. Loss of property as a result of theft and looting appear to be an additional concern. KIs in most assessed settlements (74%) reported incidents of looting by AOGs and/or bandits. Additionally, **KIs in most assessed settlements (84%) reported a concerning trend in the H2R settlements of people being subjected to forced labour by AOGs.**

These reported protection issues appear to negatively impact food security and livelihood outcomes in the H2R settlements assessed. Given the reportedly limited access to food and livelihoods, theft and looting coupled with an inability to engage in livelihoods due to AOG violence and movement restrictions may further exacerbate the conditions of affected persons. Beyond the mental and physical impact of forced labour, FGD participants reported that this negatively affects access to food as people are unable to engage in their usual livelihoods activities and remain solely dependent on the AOGs for food and other essentials as a result.

FOOD SECURITY AND LIVELIHOODS (FSL)

Food access and barriers

According to the Cadre Harmonize (CH) analysis from March 2022, access to food in the assessed LGAs is limited by adverse stresses on cultivation, lack of alternative livelihoods, insecurity and price hikes, which in turn are deepened by fuel and gas shortages that have negatively impacted distribution systems for food haulage.⁶

Findings suggest many people in the H2R settlements are food insufficient which is mostly down to reduced/exhausted harvests stemming from shrinking farmland sizes and restricted access to farms due to the general security context in these areas. KIs in the majority of assessed settlements (84%), reported most people in the settlements were unable to access enough food. In those assessed settlements where KIs reported inadequate access to food (84%), the most commonly reported reasons were reduced harvests, exhausted food stores, unsafe access to farms and loss through theft/looting.

Figure 3: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported most people had no access to enough food per LGA

State	Adamawa						Yobe		
	Hong	Madagali	Maiha	Michika	Mubi North	Mubi South	Geidam	Gujba	Tarmua
SETTLEMENTS	93%	98%	88%	97%	85%	95%	70%	87%	54%

In most assessed settlements in Adamawa (91%), KIs reported the main source of food was cultivation, while in most assessed settlements in Yobe state (71%), the main source of food was reportedly bought. This difference in food sources may perhaps be down to the relatively higher proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported access to markets in Yobe state (78%) compared to in Adamawa state (29%).

However, it is important to note that **given the rise in food commodity prices across the BAY states to a 5 year high,⁷ a dependence on bought food as a main source given reported barriers to livelihood and income opportunities in most of the assessed settlements in Yobe (75%) does not appear sustainable for people in these areas.** In particular, KIs in most assessed settlements in Yobe state (57%) reported perceiving that hunger in the settlement was at its worst, which may suggest that the populations' reliance on bought food is already being affected by rising food commodity prices. On the other hand, in Adamawa, where people in assessed settlements were reportedly mostly reliant on their own cultivation, KIs in most assessed settlements (70%) also reported people had less access to farmland than in the previous farming season which may indicate reduced harvests and access to food. In 13% of assessed settlements in Adamawa, KIs reported that hunger was at its worst.

According to the CH March 2022 analysis, populations in inaccessible areas in Adamawa and Yobe are facing high food deficits, particularly in Geidam, Tarmua and Gujba LGAs (Yobe) and Madagali (Adamawa), which were classified as likely facing crisis-levels of food insecurity. Between June and August 2022, food insecurity is projected to deteriorate slightly in most LGAs, particularly among IDP populations.⁸

⁶Cadre Harmonize for Identification of Risk Areas and Vulnerable Populations, March 2022

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

Food coping mechanisms

Indications of high food insecurity faced by populations across Adamawa and Yobe state are reflected by the range of livelihood coping and food coping strategies people reportedly adopted. **Findings suggest reliance on traditional coping mechanisms continue to be stretched thin by insecurity resulting from the conflict context and protracted stressors.**

In most of the assessed settlements in the H2R areas, KIs reported that when people in the community did not have enough food to eat, they resorted to reducing the size of meals (75% of assessed settlements), limiting the size of meals (72%), or ate less preferred but less expensive meals (56%). Other coping mechanisms reportedly employed by people were to only feed the children (52% of assessed settlements) or skip whole days without meals (18%). FGD participants also reported people had insufficient access to food, because their own harvested crops were exhausted. This has led to some of them adopting some coping strategies such as eating wild foods that are not usually part of their diet.

" We collect a bitter sabiila plant which is soaked in water for three to four days then dried and served with suga" - Male FGD participant Geidam

Livelihood activities and barriers

Livestock rearing, subsistence farming and casual labour were the most commonly reported livelihoods activities in the assessed H2R settlements. FGD participants also reported some people in the assessed settlements, where possible, engaged in cutting and selling of firewood. While this may provide some short term support, the longer term effects of deforestation in a region facing increasing desertification and climate change variability is concerning.⁹

Figure 4: Top 3 most commonly reported coping strategies used by people in the assessed settlements to find food, by % of assessed settlements per state

	Adamawa	Yobe
Gather wild foods that are not usually a part of their diet	67%	65%
Borrow food from friend or relative	62%	72%
Purchase food with borrowed money	58%	49%

KIs in 30% of assessed settlements in Adamawa and 75% in Yobe state reported most people in their settlements were unable to engage in their usual livelihoods activities. In both states, among KIs who reported most people were unable to engage in their usual livelihoods, the most commonly reported reasons were general insecurity and movement restrictions.

WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

Access to and sources of water

Findings from this assessment indicate most people rely on unimproved drinking water sources of doubtful quality. In both states, KIs in a majority of assessed settlements reported unimproved water sources as the main source of drinking water for residents. Even though KIs in 35% of assessed settlements reported there was a functional borehole in the H2R settlement, KIs in only 10% of assessed settlements reported a borehole was the main drinking water source. The most commonly reported sources of water in the assessed settlements were unprotected wells in Yobe and surface water in Adamawa.

Problems collecting water were reported in 79% of the assessed settlements.

Insufficient water at the collection points was the most commonly reported problem, which was further echoed by FGD participants who reported water was one of their top 3 priority needs for people in the H2R settlement. Water was also a commonly reported top priority need according to KIs, particularly in Tarmua (95%), Mubi South (90%), Geidam (90%) and Gujba (90%). In addition to this, problems related to long traveling times to collect water were reported by KIs in most assessed settlements in Tarmua 98%, Geidam 90% and Mubi South 86%. To cope with the lack of sufficient water, KIs in more than half of all assessed settlements (53%) reported that most people had to walk long distances to get water which can further expose people to security risks along water collection routes. Also, in some assessed settlements in Hong, Maiha and Mubi South, KIs reported people tend to use non-preferred water sources to cope with water shortages. The above appears to be corroborated by findings from a recent [REACH rapid assessment](#) on water scarcity and displacement in Tarmua and Gujba LGAs.¹⁰

Figure 5: Main types of water source by % of assessed settlements per state

	Adamawa	Yobe
Unprotected well	39%	54%
Surface water	35%	4%
Protected well	1%	24%
Borehole	11%	9%

⁹ Pushed To The Brink? The impact of COVID-19 on environmental migration in the Sahel, REACH, January 2021

¹⁰ REACH Water Scarcity and Displacement Brief, Gujba and Tarmua LGAs, Yobe State.

Latrine usage

The assessment found that there was limited access to sanitary facilities for people living in the H2R settlements. Overall, in 68% of assessed settlements, KIs reported no latrines were available in the H2R settlement. Moreover, in those assessed settlements where KIs reported latrines were available (27%), less than half of the population was reportedly using the latrine, and latrines were reportedly often shared by multiple households. The most commonly reported sanitary disposal methods in use in the assessed H2R settlements were open pits (34%) and open defecation (29%). These types of sanitary disposal may lead to the creation of favourable conditions for disease causing agents to thrive.

Handwashing materials

Findings on handwashing practices of people in the assessed settlements suggest communities in the H2R areas may be at elevated risk of water and sanitation-related diseases and illnesses. In the majority of assessed settlements (77%), KIs reported most people only wash their hands with water. In only 7% of assessed settlements did KIs report most people used soap and water for handwashing.

HEALTH

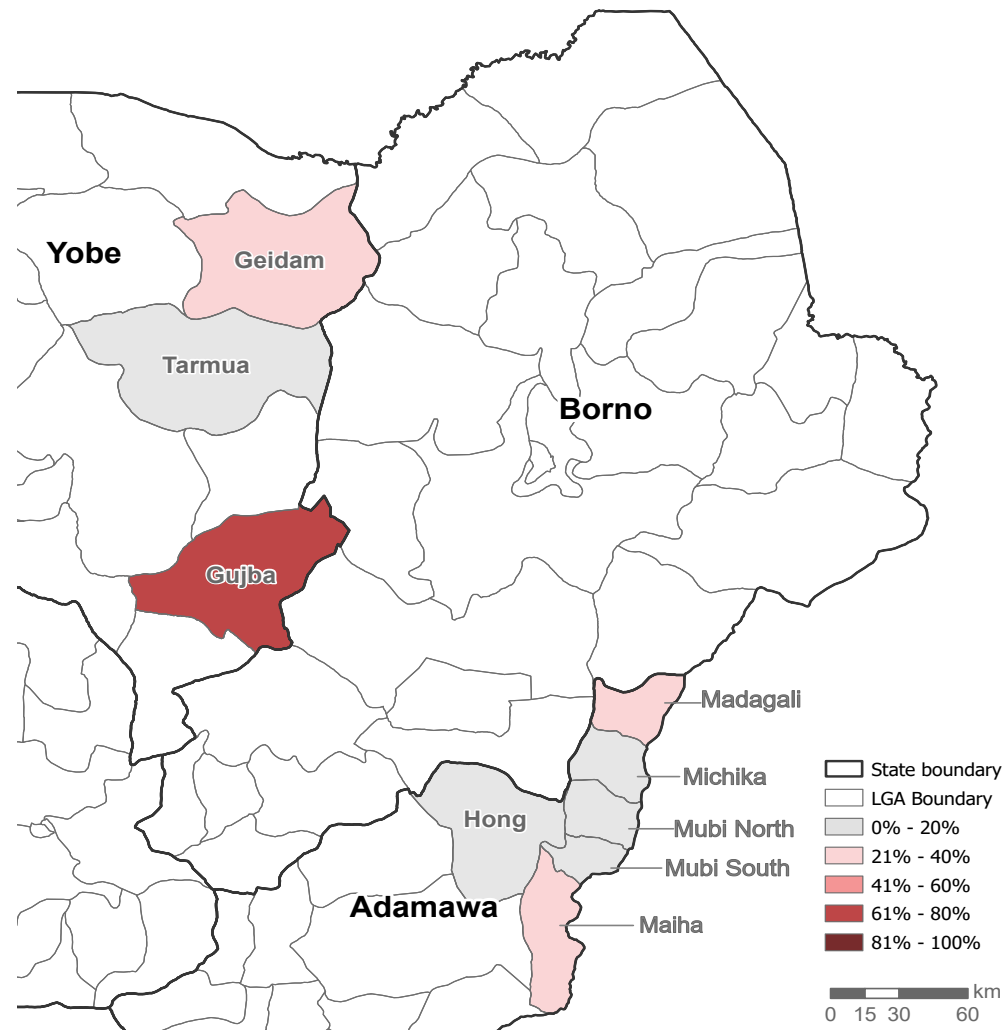
Despite reports of many people in the Northeast being exposed to multiple ailments and in need of healthcare, people in H2R settlements continue to face a variety of health access barriers.¹¹ In more than half of the assessed settlements (59%), KIs reported no available healthcare facility or services within a day's travel. The highest proportions of assessed settlements where it was reported that there was no access to healthcare within a day's travel were found in Hong (81%), Maiha (79%) and Michika (74%), all in Adamawa. The most commonly reported barrier to accessing healthcare in the assessed settlements was the lack of healthcare facilities nearby (56%). In some assessed settlements in Mubi South (52%) and Mubi North (36%), KIs reported a lack of drugs in the facility as the main barrier to accessing care. Another commonly reported barrier was the lack of health personnel.

To cope with the lack of access to health facilities, FGD participants described that people in H2R settlements have to transport the sick to the garrison towns for treatment. Traveling to reach a primary care provider may be costly and burdensome for patients living in these H2R settlements. With care often far away, these patients may decide to postpone or forgo treatment. FGD participants also reported many people resort to traditional remedies using herbs, and/or prayers for the sick. Moreover, some FGD participants from Gujba and Madagali reported perceiving that some people in their settlements tend to do nothing when someone falls sick.

SHELTER

Findings suggest that the conflict continues to result in shelter damage, either complete or partial, posing considerable challenges to the safety, dignity, health and well-being of people in H2R settlements.

Map 2: Proportion of assessed settlements where KIs reported there was at least one shelter that had been damaged by conflict in the month prior to data collection.



¹¹ [Northeast Nigeria Humanitarian Response, Health Sector Bulletin, March 2022](#)

FGD participants reported people’s inability to obtain building materials have led to predominant use of makeshift structures and worse still, some people find themselves living in the open without shelter. **Additionally, they identified the most vulnerable group without shelter as children, mostly unaccompanied or those belonging to families who have lost their homes.** Sleeping in the open can potentially expose people to adverse physical conditions such as harsh weather and can also lead to increased vulnerability to conflict-related attacks, property looting, and theft.

In most assessed settlements (90%), KIs reported most people in their settlements were living in makeshift shelters. **With the start of the rainy season, their adverse living conditions may be further exacerbated. Also, given the reportedly flimsy nature of these makeshift shelters, they are unlikely to provide adequate protection from heavy winds or rain storms and could be destroyed, leaving many without shelter of any kind.** In some assessed settlements (28%), KIs reported shelters were partially or completely damaged in the month prior to data collection. The highest proportion of assessed settlements where this was reported was Gujba LGA (64%), which might be attributed to reported increases in security incidents in this LGA within the reporting period.^{12W} With many in need of building materials and the impending rains, continuous monitoring of conditions in these H2R areas and the identification of the most vulnerable population groups would be required.

EDUCATION

Findings indicate that in slightly over half of all assessed settlements (55%), there was access to education services within walking distance. Informal education services were reportedly more commonly available than formal services across all assessed settlements. Access to educational services within walking distance was reported by a relatively higher proportion of assessed settlements in Madagali (74%), Mubi South (71%) and Michika (60%).

Findings also suggest barriers to accessing education services in the H2R settlements are largely related to a lack of education facilities nearby (62% of assessed settlements) and no teachers (15%), mostly due to AOG activity which has reportedly made some schools unsafe for students and teaching staff alike.

Aligning with reports of increased attacks in remote settlements in Gujba LGA,¹³ the destruction of educational facilities was a commonly reported reason for education being inaccessible in Gujba, reported in nearly half (45%) of settlements where education was reportedly inaccessible (47%).

Figure 6: % of assessed settlements where KIs reported people did not have access to education per LGA

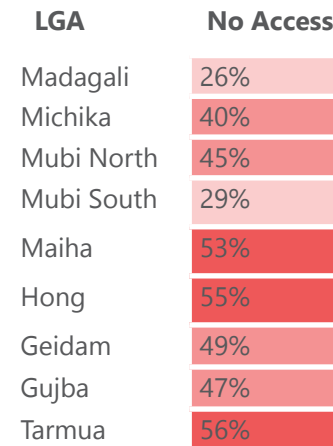


Figure 7: Types of education service available, by % of assessed settlements where education was reportedly accessible in Adamawa (n=187) and Yobe (n=124)

	Adamawa	Yobe
Formal Education	48%	23%
Informal Education	78%	94%

COMMUNICATION

In most assessed settlements, KIs reported that radios were present (88%) and that there was working signal (97%). In virtually all settlements where radios were reportedly present, KIs reported that community members could listen to them. The availability of cell phones appears to be less ubiquitous in the assessed settlements by comparison. Overall, KIs reported at least one person owned a cell phone in 71% of the assessed settlements, and that there was working cell phone signal in 58% of the assessed settlements. In Hong, Maiha, Mubi North and Mubi South, KIs in all the assessed settlements (100%) reported at least one person owned a cell phone while the lowest proportions of settlements where this was reported were in Gujba (68%), Tarmua (51%) and Geidam (42%). Similar to radios, in most assessed settlements (94%) where phone presence was reported, KIs mentioned that community members were able to use their cell phones.

Further, even in H2R areas with reported access to functioning radio and cell phones, findings suggest access to information on humanitarian assistance, security and important information on services was still limited. In less than half of all assessed settlements (45%), KIs reported that people in the H2R settlements had difficulty accessing the information they needed on humanitarian assistance. **This was mostly attributed to a lack of access to cell phone, electricity, and/or radio**

¹² OCHA Situation Report No. 18 Nigeria Yobe State

¹³ Ibid

services, as well as insecurity more generally. Difficulties in accessing information were particularly commonly reported in Yobe state (88% of assessed settlements), with KIs attributing this to a lack of cell phone connectivity in the settlements.

In most of the assessed settlements, KIs reported most people relied on in-person conversations (79%) as their primary source of information, while a lower proportion (5%) reported radios as a source of information in their H2R settlement. Community leaders and family and friends were commonly reported as the most widely trusted sources of information in 54% and 35% of assessed settlements respectively. Further emphasising the reliance on face-to-face interactions by people in the assessed H2R settlements, FGD participants reported information sourced from relatives visiting the settlement or from the marketplace was the most valued/trusted.

Overall, these findings confirm the inaccessible nature of these settlements and the dilemma they face with information sources. Sources that are familiar and personal appearances are to be trusted more even though in-person information may be prone to misinformation and may not be immediately verifiable for people living in H2R settlements.

Figure 8: Top 5 LGAs with the highest proportions of assessed settlements where KIs reported people faced barriers to accessing information.



On the other hand, information via the radio, which may be current and perhaps more reliable, is considered distant or unable to provide information that is considered directly or immediately useful to people living in these settlements. Despite this, the proportion of KIs who reported the presence of radios in some of these settlements may be an indication that it could potentially be a good medium for humanitarian organisations to provide important information on humanitarian services for affected persons in these H2R locations.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the findings in this situation overview indicate that insecurity has a multi-faceted impact on people in H2R settlements, limiting their ability to perform their usual livelihoods, as well as their access to food, improved water sources, and other basic needs. These circumstances seem to have made people reliant on unsustainable, insufficient, and sometimes erosive strategies to cope with a lack of access. Across both states, people in many assessed settlements have reportedly struggled with access to enough clean and safe drinking water and/or functional latrines. This lack of access, in tandem with limited accessibility and availability of basic service infrastructure such as health and sanitary facilities, exposes people in these H2R settlements to severe risks to their health and well-being. With reference to findings in this situation overview continued monitoring of these areas is essential to provide information needed to inform the humanitarian response.

ABOUT REACH

REACH Initiative facilitates the development of information tools and products that enhance the capacity of aid actors to make evidence-based decisions in emergency, recovery and development contexts. The methodologies used by REACH include primary data collection and in-depth analysis, and all activities are conducted through inter-agency aid coordination mechanisms. REACH is a joint initiative of IMPACT Initiatives, ACTED and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research -Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNITAR-UNOSAT). For more information, please visit our website: www.reach-initiative.org. You can contact us directly at: geneva@reach-initiative.org and follow us on Twitter @ REACH_info.