

“Life-saving aid” does not meet people’s needs

Chad’s new response needs
urgent attention

April 2022 • Chad • Chari-Baguirmi



GROUND TRUTH
SOLUTIONS

Introduction

As rain in northern Cameroon becomes more scarce, Musgum fishermen and farmers dig large basins to retain water and fish, causing problems for the Choa Arab herders whose animals can fall into the basins and die. Violence between these ethnic groups last August led 11,000 Cameroonians to flee their homes and resettle in villages scattered along the Logone River in Chad's Chari-Baguirmi province. Repatriation of 8,500 refugees was at an advanced stage of discussion between governments when renewed violence in December forced 85,000 more Cameroonians to flee. Chari-Baguirmi province is where 37,000 have relocated, with the rest moving to N'Djamena.

Humanitarians affirm that crisis-affected communities should influence what kind of assistance they receive and how they receive it. [Ground Truth Solutions](#) (GTS) helps to evaluate whether people feel their views, indeed, influence humanitarian decision-making. Since 2018, GTS has conducted six rounds of face-to-face surveys across Chad to understand people's perceptions of the aid they receive. This sixth round of data collection explores how Cameroonian refugees and Chadian host community members perceive this new and urgent humanitarian response in the Chari-Baguirmi province.

Our analysis reveals:

- Affected people think the registration and subsequent targeting processes were poorly implemented.
- Most recipients find the “life-saving assistance” goals inadequate. [They do not think the aid they receive meets even their most basic needs.](#)
- [Few people \(38%\) feel informed](#) about available aid and [even fewer \(20%\) think aid providers listen to their communities' opinions.](#)

With such negative views evident at the very start of a response, when engagement tends to be higher, humanitarians risk increasing discontent as the response progresses. Rather than repeat the past 10 years of humanitarian programming, where repetitive and short-term emergency assistance has failed to enable people to recover on their own, humanitarians should support affected communities with both urgent and long-term assistance based on what people say they need. Otherwise, insufficient, short-term assistance will force people into perpetual insecurity and aid dependence.

Scope

GTS surveyed Cameroonian refugees and Chadian host community members in Chari-Baguirmi in October 2021. We then discussed the results with focus groups, divided by legal status – host community member or refugee – and gender. This report combines the survey data with the qualitative feedback and recommendations from these discussions. GTS also requested feedback from humanitarian staff via telephone. Their opinions are mentioned in the right-hand column of this report.

Access analysis of:

1. [Registration and targeting process](#)
2. [Project planning and consultations](#)
3. [Aid provision](#)
4. [Information-sharing](#)
5. [Complaint mechanisms](#)
6. [Safety and security](#)
7. [Durable solutions](#)
8. [Aid provider feedback](#)

¹ UNHCR. November 2021. [“Dwindling rains in northern Cameroon spark conflict and displacement”](#).

² UNHCR. September 2021. [“Situation report on the arrival of new refugees from Cameroon”](#).

³ United Nations. December 2021. [“Cameroon: Intercommunal clashes continue to displace thousands”](#).

Recommendations from crisis-affected people

The following recommendations combine direct suggestions from respondents with the GTS team's analysis of their feedback. Acting on these recommendations requires collaboration at all levels of the response. Click on a recommendation to jump to a related quotation.

Participation

1. Engage with diverse community leaders, representing young people, older persons, women and men, and traditional leaders, who will be:
 - a. [Included in the registration process to ensure accurate identification and inclusion of unregistered people, new arrivals, and minority groups.](#)
 - b. [Consulted during the inception phase of programme planning, and at project mid and end points.](#)
 - c. [Consulted on the types of aid people need. Provision must reflect the goods people need, especially if quantity is limited by funding or logistical constraints.](#)
 - d. [Consulted on distribution schedules to align with community needs.](#)
 - e. [Informed of upcoming humanitarian services and aid distributions well in advance, so they can share information in time.](#)
 - f. [Supported to share information with larger audiences by working with public announcers and youth representatives.](#)
 - g. [Used as complaint mechanism facilitators to transfer feedback to humanitarians and responses back to community members.](#)
2. [Respond systematically to complaints and feedback.](#)

Information-sharing

1. [Inform communities well in advance about registration timelines, schedules, and necessary documents, and how exactly the process will be conducted.](#)
2. [Clearly communicate delayed or altered plans. Minimise changes to the schedule whenever possible.](#)
3. [Explain how community leaders can help facilitate complaints to humanitarians and how people will receive responses to their complaints.](#)
4. [Coordinate regular community meetings, in addition to sharing information directly with community leaders.](#)

Safety and security

1. [Relocate refugees to more secure locations and deploy DPHR \(Detachment for the Protection of Humanitarians and Refugees\) teams to these sites.](#)
2. [Install lighting in public areas.](#)
3. [Move distribution sites closer to where people live to reduce their travel distances. This suggestion is a compromise with recommendations from community members, who find it logistically challenging.](#)
4. [Ensure distributions are speedy and better organised: stagger the distribution, group people by demographic, and ensure people can queue safely.](#)
5. [Train security personnel and aid providers in humanitarian standards to improve their conduct towards communities.](#)

Durable solutions

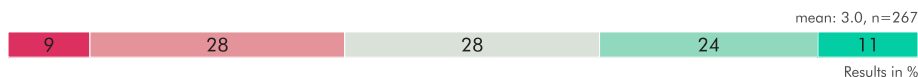
1. [Design programming and advocacy around increasing community access to fishing, gardening, and agricultural tools while strongly emphasizing the need for motorised pumps and seeds, as well as access to plots of land, livestock, and small trade training.](#)
2. [Ensure children can access education.](#)
3. [Support the establishment of a marketplace in host villages so people can trade goods.](#)
4. [Provide micro-financing programmes and include financial management training tailored to these communities' customs.](#)

Logistics

1. [Ensure enough time and personnel to register all targeted people.](#)

1. Registration is confusing and disappointing

Does aid go to those who need it most?

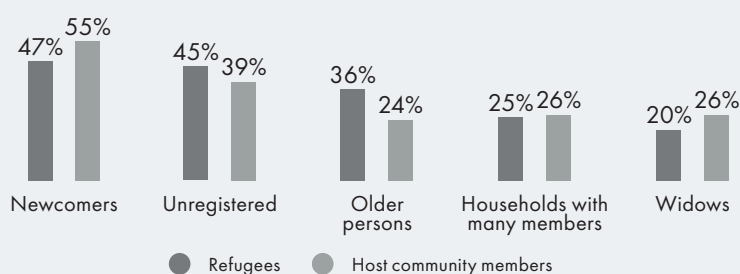


The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported in early September 2021 that of the estimated 11,000 people arriving from Cameroon, 8,749 people were registered across nine villages during just one week.¹ Although these statistics paint an encouraging picture of the registration process after the first wave of refugees crossed into Chad, only 32% of refugees interviewed in October think aid targets those with the most need. Host communities are only slightly more positive (41%).



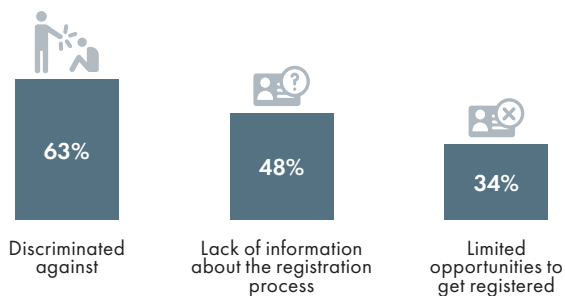
All humanitarian personnel surveyed (n=18) think their organisation's services reach those who need them most.

Who is left out? (n=175)



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Why are they left out?



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

To believe aid targets those in most need, people must feel everyone has a chance to register. But according to those surveyed, there were three limiting factors. First, humanitarians communicated poorly about registration events. **"The information about the registration process was not well shared, which is why some people were absent,"** said one female host community member in Oundouma. Second, the registration process was disorderly. People felt certain individuals were registered who should not have been. **"People started arriving from other villages to try to get enrolled, to the detriment of refugees,"** said one female refugee in Oundouma. To manage the situation, a male host community member explained that humanitarians **"were obliged to ask for identity cards, and some people who did not have identity cards were not registered."** This added to feelings of discrimination. Thirdly, people simply think there were not enough opportunities to register. A female refugee in Ngama Kotoko explains, **"The registration officers left some people behind because there were so many people and time was**

⁴ UNHCR. September 2021. ["Situation report on the arrival of new refugees from Cameroon"](#).

limited, so they did not register everyone. They left at the end of the working day, promising to come back and finalise the work, but they have not returned.”

These feelings concern information-sharing. The National Commission for the Reception and Reintegration of Refugees and Repatriates (CNARR) and the UNHCR did not clearly communicate who the aid was intended for or dates for registrations.

While most humanitarians say their organisations explain selection criteria to communities, when and how they do so is questionable. Testimonies from focus groups indicate selection criteria were poorly explained in advance. Although most aid recipients (76%) feel informed about eligibility, they probably received this information having gone through the registration process. [Humanitarians need to review the information shared about the registration and targeting process and how it is disseminated.](#)

Do you know how humanitarian organisations decide who receives assistance and who does not?



Host community members feel more aware of the selection process (86%) than refugees (72%). During at least one registration event, they “**were clearly told that we are not concerned and would not be registered,**” said one female host community member in Bourgouma.



Most humanitarian personnel (n=18) think their organisation explains the selection criteria to the people they serve.

R1. What communities want

“To better target unregistered people and new arrivals, inform and train refugees and the community before registration teams arrive” – Female refugee in Bourgouma

“The number of registration teams must be increased” – Female refugee in Oundouma

“Aid providers promised to come back, so they have to come back to finish the job with the new arrivals and the unregistered” – Male refugee in Bourgouma

“The registration team must be patient and understanding” – Female host community member in Bourgouma

“Involve the host population in the registration process in order to properly identify the refugees and the people of the village” – Male refugee in Bourgouma

“Involve local youth in the registration process to support personnel to register refugees and the host community” – Male host community member in Oundouma

“Take into account the people who do not have identity documents” – Male refugee in Bourgouma



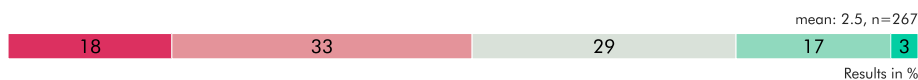
2. People feel consulted but their opinions do not seem to matter

Seventy percent of respondents think their community was consulted on humanitarian programming in their area. But only 20% think aid providers consider their opinions. Although aid providers tell us their organisations consult the people they serve, these consultations are most frequently conducted at the mid and end points of projects. Communities might feel they are not consistently included in the project inception phase and cannot influence programming before it begins. Aid recipients who feel their opinions are considered are more likely to think aid goes to those who need it most.⁵ Regularly involving communities at each phase may increase trust in targeting decisions.

Do you think your community has been consulted on the programming of humanitarian aid in your area?



Do you feel that aid providers take the views of your community into account when planning aid programming?



If aid providers do not consult a range of recipients, they can exclude important views. In Chari-Baguirmi, women feel especially unheard: 17% of women, compared to 26% of men, think humanitarians take their community's views into consideration. **"In particular, us women are not consulted about our views on the programmes,"** explains one female refugee in Bourgouma. **"Humanitarians are more interested in the point of view of men to the detriment of women. Humanitarians must involve all categories of people in the planning of programmes."**

Younger respondents (ages 18–35) are more likely to think their communities are consulted (73%) than older respondents (ages 36–60: 69%; and age 61 and older: 56%). But – like all respondents – few of these younger respondents (24%) feel their own opinions are integrated into programme plans.

Given that 60% of the Cameroonian refugee population in Chari-Baguirmi are women and 61% are children, [humanitarians need to systematically consult these groups and include their views in project planning.](#)⁶

Those respondents who felt their opinions were listened to shared instances in which they asked for specific items (such as rice, oil, lamps, pans, buckets, mosquito nets, soap, mats, and blankets) and subsequently received them. Some refugees appreciated that humanitarians listened to them when they said they did not want to return to Cameroon.



When asked if their organisations regularly involved affected communities at each stage in the project, most humanitarians (n=18) say they include communities during project implementation, and even more so during evaluation. Fewer humanitarians think affected people are involved at the project inception phase.

Most humanitarians think they have enough information about aid recipient preferences to make informed decisions.

Just over half of humanitarians interviewed think their organisations take corrective measures when implementing projects based on feedback from affected communities.

⁵ Pearson's correlation coefficient: 0.34.

⁶ UNHCR. January 2022. ["Cameroon – Chad emergency"](#).

R2. What communities want

“Consult everyone. The consultation must involve our traditional leaders, our religious leaders, and representatives of various groups. It is very important to consult us and these groups of people in order to listen to their relevant needs and to update things before the implementation of programmes. Involving aid recipients from the beginning of the humanitarian programmes is compulsory, in our opinion” – Male host community member in Oundouma



“Humanitarian actors should consult with refugees and listen to their needs before setting the objectives of humanitarian programmes and implementing humanitarian activities” – Male refugee in Bourgouma

“We need representatives per group of people (as it used to be), such as youth leader, leader of older persons, female leader, male leader, and community leaders. The leaders of each category must be appointed to participate in all the meetings and activities in the camp so that each community feels involved and satisfied” – Female refugee in Oundouma



“We would like our community leaders, along with women’s representatives, to carry our voices” – Female refugee in Bourgouma

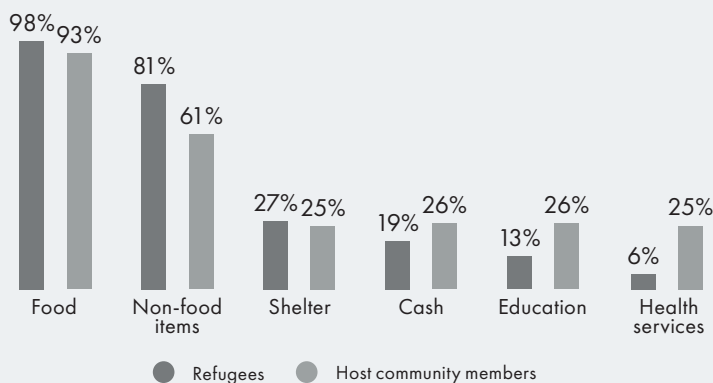
3. “We are starving” – aid does not meet people’s needs

Only 9% of people interviewed think aid meets their most important needs.

Does the assistance you receive cover your most important needs?



What are your unmet needs? (n=244)



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

People's negative opinions are tied to three key factors:

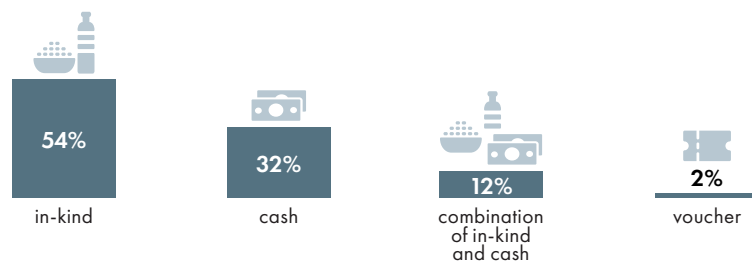
1. Quantity

Focus group participants feel that "aid is insufficient or even non-existent." Food is particularly lacking. "For example, for a household of five people, you are given five kilograms of rice for a period of three months, but food is the most important need at the moment. So how can we say that the aid covers our most important needs?" stated a male host community member in Bourgouma.

2. Type of aid provided

Over half of the aid recipients interviewed want in-kind aid distributions and about one-third prefer cash assistance. Most humanitarians surveyed indicate that their organisations provide in-kind assistance.

How would you prefer to receive aid?



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

All focus group participants prefer in-kind aid for their food and non-food needs. Many people feared they would misuse cash assistance. A female refugee in Oundouma explained, "We want aid to be in-kind because with cash we risk mismanaging it and doing other things that don't make sense. We risk losing the money." Others emphasised that cash assistance could lead to intra-family tensions. "We prefer that you give us [aid] in-kind because money creates problems in the family; especially us women, we will have all the problems in the world with our husbands," said one female host community member in Oundouma. In some villages, cash assistance would not help because there are few places to buy goods. A female refugee in Bourgouma noted, "We are in an area where there is no market and no stores, so we prefer to receive food aid in kind. Money can't help us."

Still, the goods people receive might not be what they need. When asked to comment on non-food aid, many people say aid providers do not listen to their preferences. "Non-food aid is not in line with our essential needs because aid providers do not take into account our views from the beginning of programme planning," said a male host community member in Oundouma.

Survey respondents who prefer cash highlight that monetary assistance allows them to "cover their needs themselves" and provides them with "financial autonomy." They also hope the cash will cover their food needs, compared to insufficient quantities of food assistance they have received so far.

3. Timing

Untimely aid forces people to take what they can get. Only 8% think humanitarian assistance was available to them when they needed it. Refugees are particularly discontented with aid timeliness, as only 6% think assistance comes when they need it, compared to 13% of host community members. When aid is not on time, people are more likely to feel it does not meet their basic needs.



Half of the humanitarians interviewed (n=18) think in-kind aid best helps affected people in Chari-Baguirmi. Most said their organisations provide in-kind assistance. A female aid provider noted access constraints as her main reason: "These people are in the camps a little way from the markets. In-kind goods make it easier on them." A male aid provider thought in-kind was most efficient "because it is used directly for the real need of the household."

Humanitarians then noted cash, a combination of in-kind and cash, and vouchers in depreciating order of preference. In favour of cash, one female aid provider explained that "the money will allow them to acquire what they need and think about saving to become autonomous."

Do you receive humanitarian aid and services when you need them?



The UNHCR noted in early September 2021 that food aid was planned for a period of 15 days.⁸ Distributions seemed to have decreased during October and November when we spoke to communities. **“Food is a basic need, but for the past few months there has been nothing and we are starving,”** said one female refugee in Ngama Kotoko.

Focus group participants do not think humanitarian aid aligns with people’s needs. A female refugee in Oundouma said, **“Many humanitarian actors intervene to help people at their will, so we are obliged to accept their programmes no matter when the aid arrives.”** A male refugee in Oundouma shared a similar sentiment: **“Humanitarians have their own agenda and our urgent needs do not coincide with their agenda.”**

However, all humanitarians interviewed think the aid they provide is timely and that they keep to delivery timelines. It is likely that aid recipients’ discontent with the timing of aid provision could be mitigated by better communication: [82% of aid recipients say they need information about the aid distribution schedule.](#)

Humanitarians should explain any schedule changes, expected or unexpected, reasons for delays, and the new timing of the distribution. During focus group discussions, male and female host community members and refugees in Oundouma and Bourgouma felt the authorities are to blame. **“It is the Cameroonian authorities who are allegedly responsible for the delays and irregularities in the provision of aid to force the refugees to return to Cameroon. The authorities asked the refugees to return to Cameroon, but they refused. So this is a way to make their life unbearable here [in Chad] and to go back to Cameroon,”** explained a female host community member in Bourgouma.

Others cite humanitarians’ lack of organisation as a reason for untimely aid. **“It is possible that the humanitarian actors have not properly stocked up on aid items and that all this requires organisation at their level, so this may cause a delay at the moment when we are in need,”** said a female host community member in Oundouma.

Humanitarians should consult communities about distribution plans: those who feel their opinions are considered by aid providers are more likely to think aid is timely.⁹

Although people feel aid does not suit their needs, most seem to use whatever they receive. Selling aid goods for cash (common in many responses) may not help in an environment with few marketplaces. Those who do report selling aid (21%) tell us that buckets (47%), soap (30%), and food (26%) are the top items they sell, and they primarily use the new cash to buy food (93%), wood (23%), and clothes (21%).

Do you sell goods received from humanitarian organisations to better cover your basic needs?



All humanitarians (n=18) think their organisation’s goods and services arrive when people need them most and that their organisations meet the timelines they set for aid delivery.

Few humanitarians (n=18) think people sell the aid goods they receive.

⁸ UNHCR. September 2021. [“Situation Report #1 on the emergency of new refugees from Cameroon”](#).

⁹ Pearson’s correlation coefficient: 0.3.

R3. What communities want

“Improve food and other non-food aid by increasing the quantities” – Male host community member in Bourgouma

“Reinforce the medical equipment, emergency kits, and medicines provided” – Female host community member in Bourgouma

“Respect the aid distribution dates. Food aid should be distributed every 15 days” – Male host community member in Oundouma

“

“Increase the amount of assistance so that aid recipients can be self-sufficient in food.

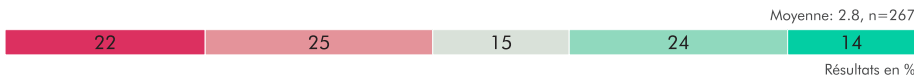
Male aid worker



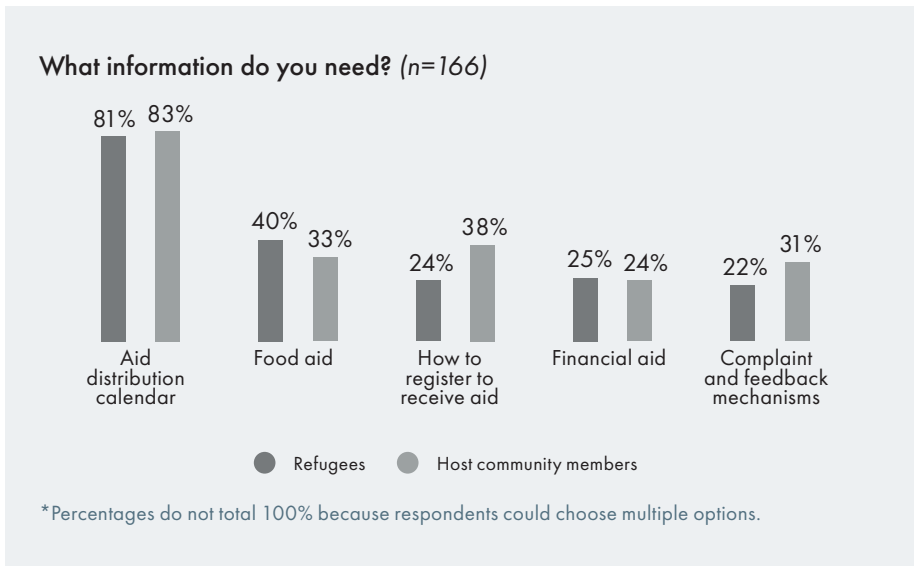
4. Information does not reach communities

Fewer than half of the aid recipients interviewed feel informed about available humanitarian assistance and services.

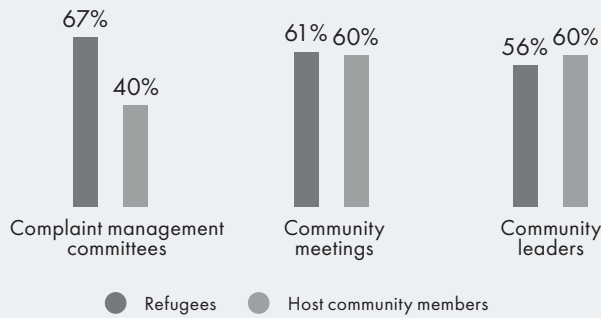
Do you feel informed about the humanitarian aid and services available?



People report that humanitarians sometimes begin activities without informing them. “Humanitarians can come without notifying us, and sometimes people are not at home,” explains one female host community member in Bourgouma.



How do you prefer to receive information? (n=267)



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.



Almost all humanitarians (n=18) note that their organisations rely on community leaders to effectively share information. However, it is unclear how frequently aid providers engage with community leaders because few report using them as a key information channel. Most humanitarians report using community meetings to share information.

Most focus group discussions confirmed that humanitarians use community leaders, one of their preferred communication channels, to share information. **“Humanitarians use our leaders to pass on information and our leaders inform us afterwards,”** said male host community members in Bourgouma. **“This is our community’s preferred information channel, and they use it.”**

But this does not mean it is working well. People are split on whether their leaders share information with a broad enough range of community members. Male refugees in Oundouma think community leaders are to blame: **“Humanitarians often share information with our leaders, but sometimes our leaders do not share it with the community. Our leaders always share information by affinity.”** For this reason, [participants encourage humanitarians to regularly engage with a diversity of community representatives to ensure information is shared broadly](#), not just with a specific group of connected people.

Do you think that community leaders share important information about humanitarian activities with you?



R4. What communities want

“Each group of people must have representatives because there is really an asymmetry of information sharing. The representative of each group will be designated at a meeting to assist all the activities and exchanges with the humanitarians so that each community feels involved and satisfied” – Female refugee in Oundouma

“We women want women to represent us and in case of anything it is she who is in charge of informing us. We need a representative specifically for women to pass on information and this person must go door-to-door to inform us” – Female refugee in Bourgouma

“Humanitarians and our leaders must organise community meetings to pass on information” – Female refugee in Ngama Kotoko

“We need a public announcer to get the message out to everyone” – Female refugee in Oundouma

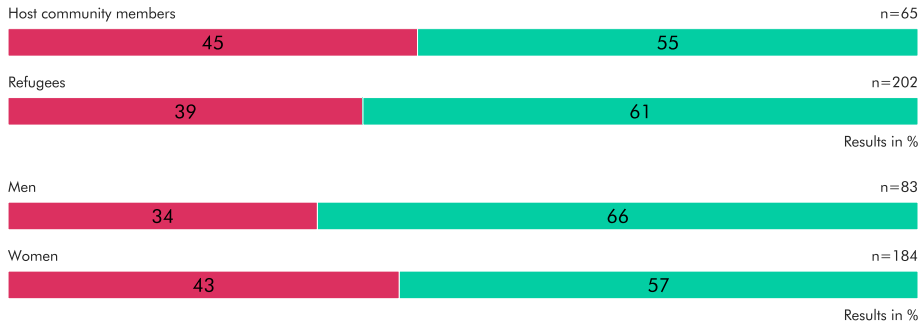
“Designate a skilled young person to partner with our leader (the chief) to share information” – Female host community member in Oundouma



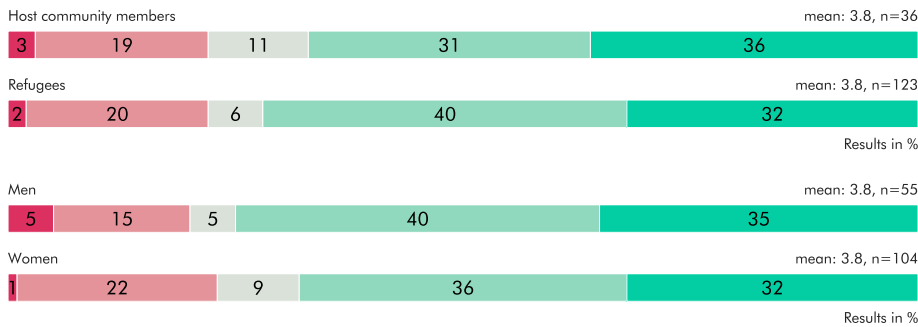
5. Access to complaint mechanisms is unequal

Over half of aid recipients know how to complain about the assistance they receive, and most feel comfortable doing so. But host communities and women are less knowledgeable and less at ease using these mechanisms.

Do you know how to submit suggestions or complaints about humanitarian services to aid providers?



Do you feel comfortable making a complaint or suggestion using any of the mechanisms you know?



When asked why host communities feel less informed about available complaint mechanisms, some people explained they have no need to complain because they are from the locality and will manage their issues internally. Others said they are informed of complaint and feedback mechanisms, but because they are “not in as much need as refugees,” they “remain patient” and “do not wish to complain.”

All focus group participants emphasised that they normally resolve community issues by discussing problems within their household or through mediation from community leaders. **“Most of the time we would like to complain and discuss things that concern our community with each other in the family or with our community leader,”** explained a female host community member in Oundouma. Focus group participants all agree that humanitarians respect this cultural norm and defer to community leaders to help address concerns about aid. A female refugee in Bourgouma noted, **“in case of problems, aid providers refer to our leaders to find solutions according to our way of doing things.”**

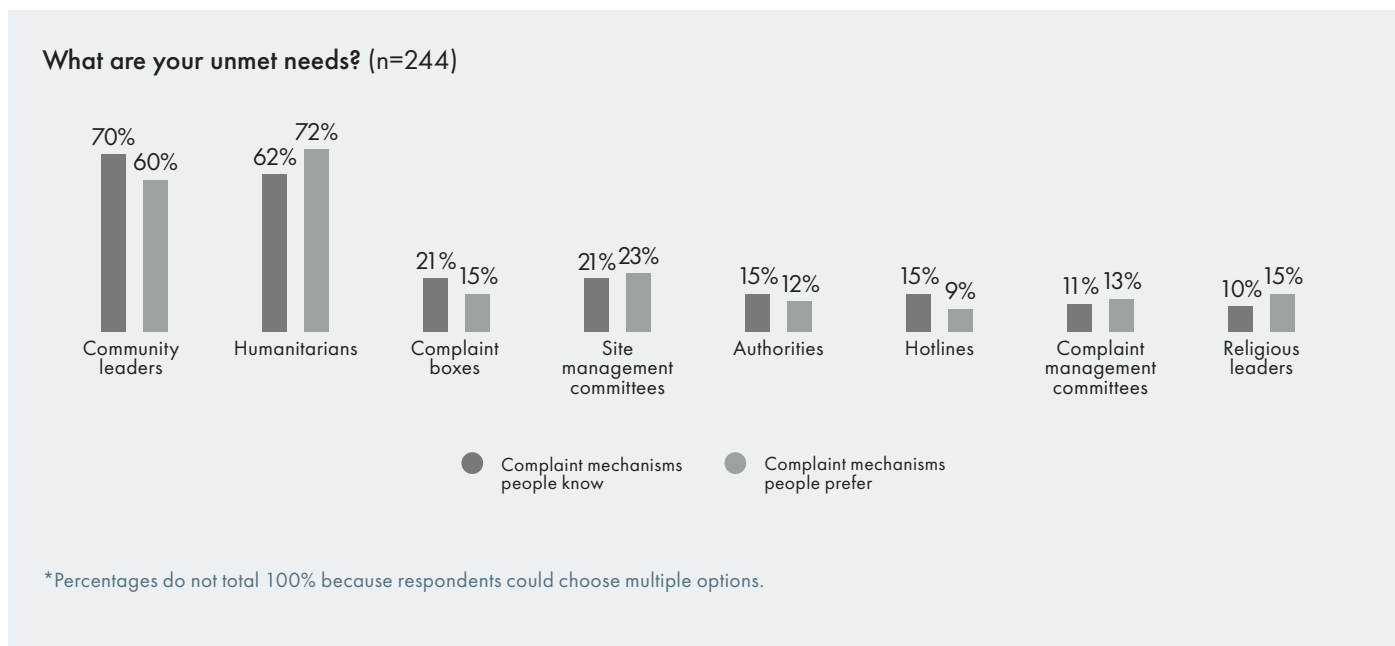
This underlines that humanitarians should engage with community leaders who represent a diversity of demographics (e.g., men/women, refugee/host community members, persons with disabilities, young people, and older persons) because some groups might not currently have a channel to reach humanitarians. Many focus group participants [called for a distinct women’s committee to support women to complain, coupled with training for women on how to submit complaints](#). Some women and men disagreed strongly, noting that [it is not culturally acceptable for women to submit complaints through any channel](#).



Most humanitarians (n=18) think affected people know how to make complaints and suggestions to humanitarian actors. All think their organisations informed affected people about the complaints and feedback management mechanisms in their communities.

Most aid providers interviewed think that the complaint or suggestion mechanisms put in place by their organisation ensures the safety and security of the person submitting the complaint or suggestion (including women and people living with disabilities).

Direct engagement with humanitarians and community leaders are the top two ways all groups know of and prefer to use to complain.

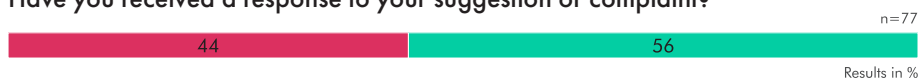


Less than half of those who know how to complain have provided feedback before, and just over half of those have received a response. [Aid providers must explain how complaints provided to community leaders will reach humanitarians, and when and how people should expect a response.](#)

Have you submitted a suggestion or a complaint to humanitarian aid providers before?



Have you received a response to your suggestion or complaint?



Humanitarians (n=18) report that community leaders, complaint boxes, and face-to-face conversations with humanitarians are the main complaint or suggestion mechanisms their organisation has in Chari-Baguirmi.

R5. What communities want

Focus group participants do not agree on whether humanitarians should support women to submit complaints.

“There is a need to set up a complaint management committee for women in the community, coordinated by an outspoken woman, to enable them to complain” – Female host community member in Oundouma

“Establish a dedicated women’s team to raise awareness, provide advice, and guidance” – Female refugee in Ngama Kotoko

“Women do not want to complain to preserve peace and social cohabitation, because complaining can create divisions within the community. Complaining too much to the humanitarians could ruin our community’s image. Women prefer to solve their problems or discuss their concerns among themselves. We do not need complaint mechanisms or representation for any problem” – Female host community member in Bourgouma

“There is no point in setting up mechanisms for women. Our customs and habits do not allow women to complain without telling men. The Oundouma people do not want any problems, which is why they do not care about [complaint mechanisms]. Even if there is a problem, we try to find a solution internally. We are a community and that is why we should not complain about what will divide us later. [Improving complaint mechanisms] is not important to us” – Male host community member in Oundouma



6. People are more concerned about missing aid than personal safety

Most people feel safe during their daily life. Humanitarians agree, although refugees feel more unsafe during their daily lives (18%) than host community members (11%). Of the few people who feel unsafe (n=44), there are stark differences in why each group feels unsafe. Refugees feel most unsafe because of poorly constructed shelters (35%), no lighting where they live (35%), and verbal abuse (30%). Host community members’ primary concern is the absence of security where they live (57%).

Do you feel safe where you live?



Do you feel safe on your way to collect goods, money, or humanitarian services and when returning home?



Do you feel safe at the distribution sites?



Most humanitarians (n=18) think people’s locations are safe.

For those who feel unsafe traveling to receive aid, the fear of not receiving aid is the primary concern for both host community members (69%) and refugees (68%). This is another reason for humanitarians to urgently improve communication about who is eligible for assistance because people's uncertainty about receiving aid manifests as a crucial security concern.

Host communities' secondary concerns are kidnappings on the route (38%), followed by theft (31%) and dangerous routes (31%). Refugees' secondary concerns are theft (46%) and physical violence (32%).

Refugees feel unsafe at aid distribution points due to theft (37%), verbal abuse (37%), and fear that the distribution will run out before they can receive any goods (35%). Host community members' primary reason for feeling unsafe at aid sites is the distribution will end before they receive goods (50%), followed by not receiving information about the aid distribution (42%), verbal abuse (25%), and theft (25%).

Aid recipients' interactions with humanitarians tend to be positive: 83% feel respected by aid providers.

Do aid providers treat you with respect?



R6. What communities want

"I want a military presence at our site to avoid and prevent harassment or physical violence" – Female refugee in Bourgouma

"We want the humanitarians to provide us with security guards... There is always complicity between the security agents and the host community" – Male refugee in Oundouma

"Public lighting for refugees would help us feel safer" – Female refugee in Ngama Kotoko

"Ensure road safety by providing security guards and improving the road" – Male host community member in Oundouma

"Provide us with a secure means of transport to get to the aid distribution sites" – Female refugee in Oundouma

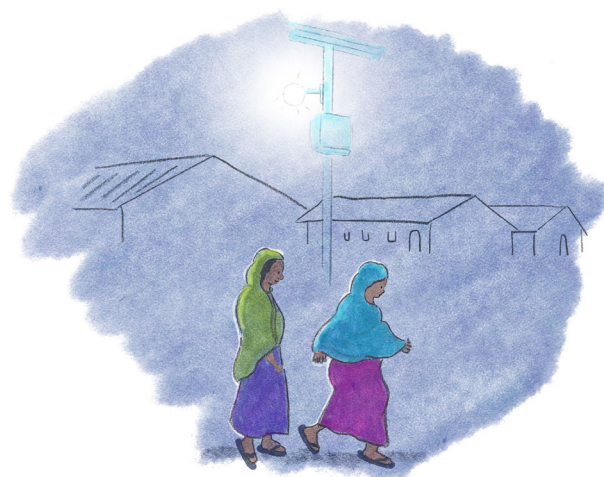
"We need the police to prevent disorder at aid distributions and to be able to take aid goods back safely" – Female refugee in Bourgouma

"To avoid misconduct, humanitarian workers should delegate people among us [refugees], as well as employ humanitarian security workers to conduct proper distributions" – Male refugee in Ngama Kotoko

"Conduct distributions by groups and ensure people queue at the assistance site" – Female refugee in Oundouma.

"We want the food to be shared door to door to avoid disorder" – Female refugee in Oundouma

"Let these organisations come and take care of the distribution themselves. Those who have been delegated to do this work discriminate against us refugees every time" – Male refugee in Oundouma

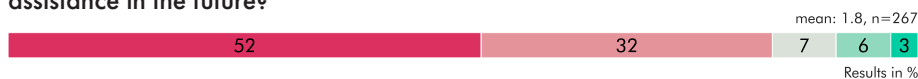


7. Humanitarians risk building a culture of aid reliance

Only 9% of aid recipients think their assistance helps them live without aid in the future. Host community members are slightly more positive (14%) that aid supports their long-term resilience than refugees (7%). This is probably because refugees experience more dire conditions, having recently fled from Cameroon, although both groups' outlooks are very negative.

This is not simply because the focus is on immediate aid. Those who feel aid does not meet their needs now are more likely to also think aid will not help them live without assistance in the future.¹⁰ For this affected community, the adverse impact of [irregular aid distributions](#) and [insufficient quantities of food and non-food items](#) is more severe because people [prefer and rely on in-kind aid](#). When the in-kind aid people need does not arrive on time and is lacking, aid programming fixes people in a state of insecurity, inhibiting them from imagining a future when they are not reliant on aid.

Do you feel that the assistance you have received is helping you to live without assistance in the future?



Given that the situation in Chari-Baguirmi is considered an urgent crisis, humanitarians are focused on “saving lives” and providing a short-term solution. However, renewed violence in Cameroon this December demonstrates that people will not return home soon, regardless of how determined the Chadian and Cameroonian governments are to coordinate repatriation. Humanitarians should stop managing this crisis as if it will end soon, especially given that the root cause of climate change is so daunting.

It is short-sighted for governments, donors, and humanitarians to manage new influxes of people as though life-saving assistance is the only priority. Chad has seen 10 years of humanitarian programming in which repetitive, short-term emergency assistance has failed to enable people to stand on their own. Most humanitarians noted that collaboration between humanitarian and development actors is effective. With some actors working across both sectors, now is the time for governments, donors, and humanitarians to seek, fund, and implement projects that support affected people’s long-term futures.

Long-term programming should prioritise local, community-led organisations to lead the implementation of projects that focus on long-term solutions for affected people. However, few humanitarians think local organisations are supported. They believe that increased funding, capacity-building, and organisational support for local organisations would strengthen these organisations’ programming and push forward the localisation agenda in Chad.



Most humanitarians (n=18) think their organisation’s short-term assistance improves the living conditions of communities affected by the crisis. Most aid providers also think there is effective cooperation between humanitarian and development actors, but few feel there is sufficient support for local and national organisations in Chari-Baguirmi. Humanitarians suggest additional financial support, capacity-building, and organisational support for these local and national organisations.



Local partners need to coordinate to avoid duplication and local NGOs should be prioritised for funding

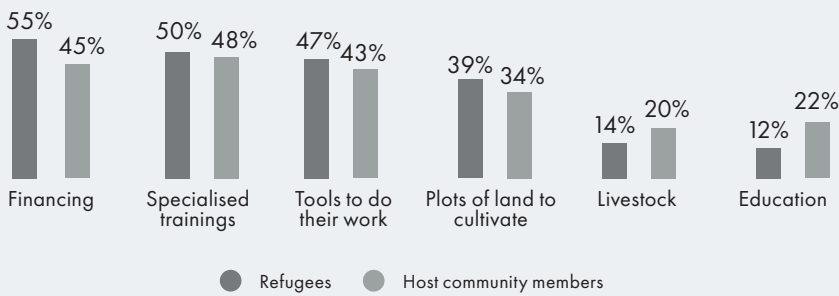
Male humanitarian

¹⁰ Pearson’s correlation coefficient: 0.39.



Humanitarians (n=18) think specialised training, financing, and tools would best empower affected people in Chari-Baguirmi. Some aid providers also note that land for cultivation, education, and livestock are important for long-term resilience.

What would help you become independent (live without aid in the future)? (n=267)



*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Refugees and host community members share similar views on their needs for self-reliance. Slightly more refugees than host community members need access to financing opportunities to meet their long-term needs. This is probably because refugees need funds to invest in physical capital to pursue long-term income-generating activities. Given respondents' concerns of managing cash assistance, such financing programmes should include robust financial management training to ensure communities feel well-prepared to manage these new funds. Programming should also evaluate how such financing might impact household dynamics and determine the best approaches to mitigate adverse effects.

R7. What communities want

"We need working tools that can enable us to do fishing and agriculture activities" – Male refugee in Bourgouma

"We need access to cultivable spaces" – Female refugee in Oundouma

"The ability to be breeders can help us to live without aid" – Female refugee in Bourgouma

"We need training for small trades such as sewing" – Female refugee in Ngama Kotoko.

All focus group participants, regardless of gender, status, and village noted the same need for training. Male refugees and male host community members would also like training on how to become drivers.

"To better respond to our long-term needs, we need education for our children" – Male refugee in Oundouma

"Create a market in our locality to allow us to trade" – Male host community member in Bourgouma.

Male host community members in Bourgouma also want access to public transportation.

"We need financing to do business" – Female refugees in Bourgouma



8. Aid providers feel positive about their work conditions

Most humanitarians interviewed (n=18) would recommend working or volunteering for their organisation. Most think their organisation feels responsible for the well-being of its employees. All aid providers think they can do their job efficiently, and few report dealing with stress beyond their limits in the past three months. Most say they have enough opportunities to talk about the challenges of their profession.

All humanitarians think their organisation's staff understand expected behaviour standards. They all say they know how to report cases of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment by humanitarian workers, and most humanitarians interviewed would feel comfortable reporting a humanitarian if such cases occurred.

Humanitarians' positive perceptions of their work provide a sound foundation for organisations to focus on strengthening their skills to better listen to affected people and act on their feedback.

Sample of humanitarian personnel

18 respondents

Gender



12 Men (67%)



6 Women (33%)

Status

18 National staff (100%)

Type of organisation

10 national NGOs (56%)

8 international NGOs (44%)

Methodology

		HOST COMMUNITY MEMBERS	REFUGEES
GENDER	Male	33 (51%)	50 (25%)
	Female	32 (49%)	152 (74%)
AGE	18–35	36 (55%)	109 (54%)
	36–60	23 (36%)	83 (41%)
	61 and older	6 (9%)	10 (5%)
VILLAGE	Oundouma	37 (57%)	123 (61%)
	Bourgouma	13 (20%)	31 (15%)
	Ngama Kotoko	7 (11%)	30 (15%)
	Tchidam Borno	5 (8%)	10 (5%)
	Ngama Sara	3 (4%)	8 (4%)

Questionnaire

Survey questions were developed by Ground Truth Solutions in collaboration with OCHA Chad and were widely shared with key stakeholders, including UN agencies and international and national NGOs. The questions include Likert-scale responses (answers score from 1 to 5), as well as binary and multiple-choice responses.

The questionnaire for affected communities was written in French and then orally translated into Chadian Arabic and Musgum. Humanitarian personnel were interviewed in French.

Sample framework

The five villages surveyed were those with the highest number of registered refugees according to the UNHCR’s mid-September report.¹¹ Data collection aimed to survey 85% refugees and 15% host community members. However, our final distribution is 76% refugees and 24% host community members. At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to reconfirm their consent for GTS to use their responses. The non-consent answers at the end of the survey impacted the final distribution of refugees and host community members. We aimed to interview 74% women and 26% men to align with the UNHCR data on registered adults.¹² Our final distribution is 69% female and 31% male, due to non-consent responses at the end of our survey. All respondents were 18 years of age or older and all had been recipients of humanitarian assistance within the previous six months.

For the humanitarian staff phone survey, we called humanitarian personnel working in the Chari-Baguirmi province. Out of the 27 names and phone numbers provided, 18 humanitarian staff responded. This survey of humanitarians suffers from selection bias as many aid providers declined to participate.

Data collection

Locally recruited enumerators, trained by Ground Truth Solutions, conducted face-to-face interviews (respecting COVID-19 precautionary measures) with affected people in October 2021. Enumerators surveyed every third household at each village to ensure a random sample.

Data collection supervisors returned to Bourgouma, Oundouma, and Ngama Kotoko in November 2021 to share the preliminary findings from the initial survey. Nine focus group discussions were held:

VILLAGE	GROUP	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Oundouma	Female refugees	14
	Male refugees	10
	Female host community members	17
	Male host community members	16
Bourgouma	Female refugees	24
	Male refugees	9
	Male host community members	15
	Male host community members	15
Ngama Kotoko	Female refugees	16

The objective of the humanitarian staff survey was to speak to frontline workers in Chari-Baguirmi. Effective Solutions, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), and the Chad Red Cross (CRT) were contacted to provide telephone numbers of their frontline humanitarian personnel working in this province. However, only phone numbers were provided because these frontline workers do not always have regular internet access. Enumerators called each person listed in November 2021. Those who did not respond to the survey (9 out of 27) were either unavailable at the times enumerators called, were never able to be reached, or declined to participate.

Quantitative data analysis

Recipients' perceptions are assessed using a Likert scale of 1–5 (1: very negative perceptions; 5: very positive). Mean scores are then calculated for each data collection cycle. Mean scores below 2.5 indicate negative perceptions; the closer to 1, the more negative the feedback. Mean scores above 2.5 indicate positive perceptions; the closer to 5, the more positive the feedback.

This report explores the difference in perception between demographic groups when it is relevant to report.

Weighted data did not significantly impact the results, so this analysis uses raw, non-weighted data.

¹¹ UNHCR. September 2021. "[Rapport de situation sur l'urgence des nouveaux arrivants camerounais](#)".

¹² Ibid.

Limitations

Our team did not have access to all the organisations working on the frontline of the response in Chari-Baguirmi, so we could not contact all staff to participate in our survey. Participation was also voluntary. Given the low number of respondents to the staff survey, data from humanitarians can only be read as anecdotal, not as representative of the views of all humanitarians in Chari-Baguirmi.

For a French version of this report, click [here](#).

Authors

Elise Shea
Analyst

Please contact Serge Madjou
(serge@groundtruthsolutions.org)
and Carine Nzeuyang
(carine@groundtruthsolutions.org)
for more information.

Illustrations by
Trilce Garcia Cosavalente



Contact Carine Nzeuyang: carine@groundtruthsolutions.org

Join us at groundtruthsolutions.org