

# No dignity in the dark: Perceptions of aid in Burkina Faso

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GROUND TRUTH  
SOLUTIONS

# Introduction

Political instability, proliferation of armed violence, and climate change are fuelling humanitarian crises in Burkina Faso where one of the key commitments of the Grand Bargain – that crisis-affected communities should have more say in the kind of aid they get and how they get it – is proving elusive. People in the West African nation [feel uninformed about available humanitarian assistance](#) and the [targeting process](#), resulting in compounding, adverse effects. [Tensions between aid recipients and those left out are rising, most think aid does not meet their basic needs, and people feel insecure because they don't know if they can access aid.](#)

[Ground Truth Solutions](#) (GTS) has been evaluating whether people feel their views influence humanitarian decision-making in Burkina Faso for the past two years. Building on baseline data [collected in 2020](#), we surveyed internally displaced people (IDPs) and non-displaced people across the six main regions for the humanitarian response (Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Est, Centre-Nord, Est, Nord, and Sahel) in August 2021. The results were presented and discussed in a community setting and during one-on-one qualitative interviews in Kaya and Ouahigouya in January 2022. This report combines our quantitative survey data with the qualitative feedback and recommendations from community discussions and one-on-one qualitative interviews to explore how IDPs and non-displaced people feel about the humanitarian assistance they have received. GTS also solicited feedback from humanitarian staff via an online survey in June and July of 2021. Their opinions are reflected in the right-hand column of this report.

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

Watch the community dialogues with affected people in [Kaya](#) and [Ouahigouya](#) to listen to their feedback and recommendations.

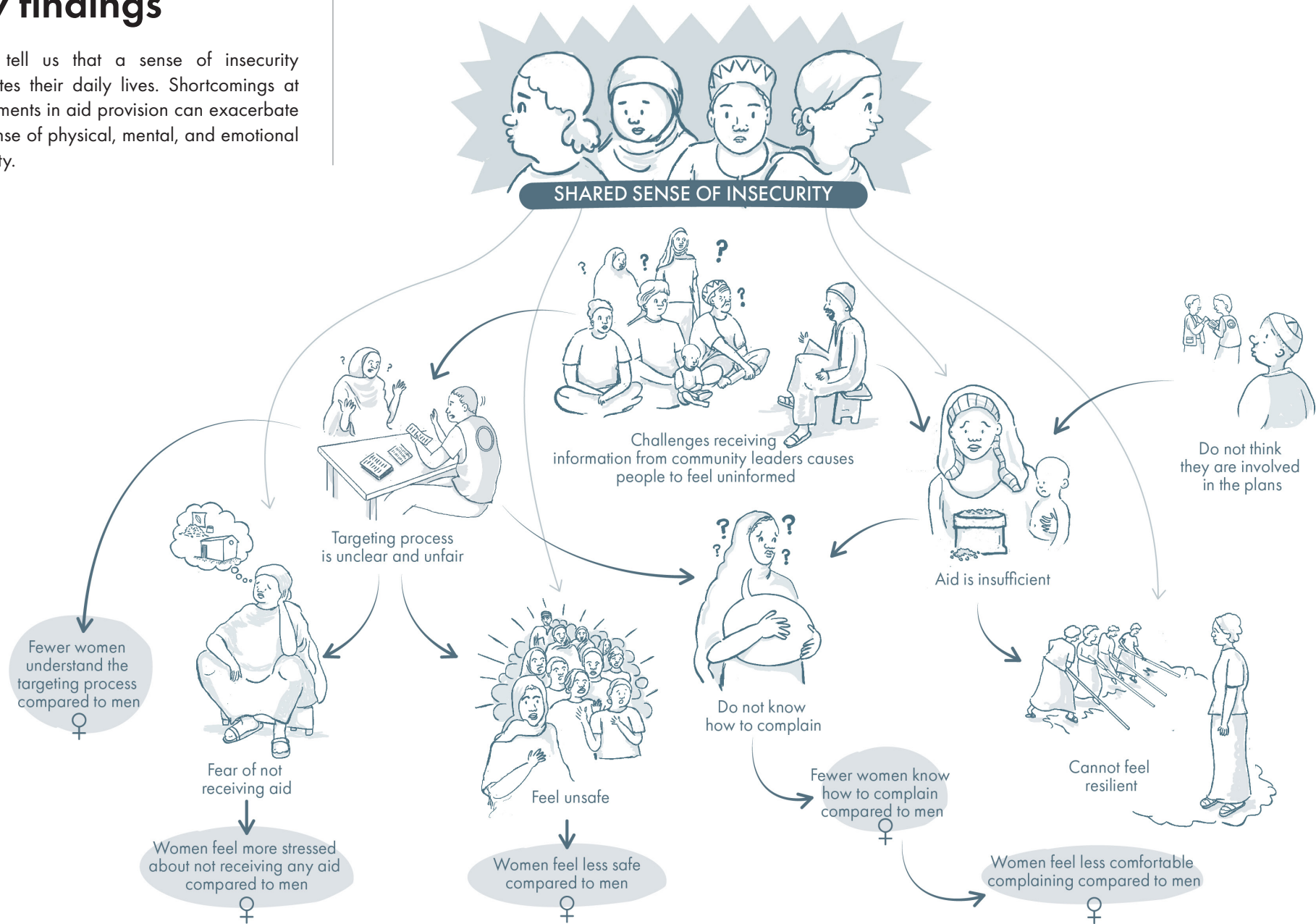
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# Key findings

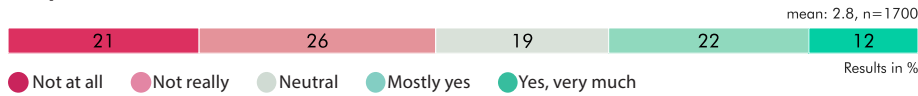
People tell us that a sense of insecurity permeates their daily lives. Shortcomings at key moments in aid provision can exacerbate their sense of physical, mental, and emotional insecurity.



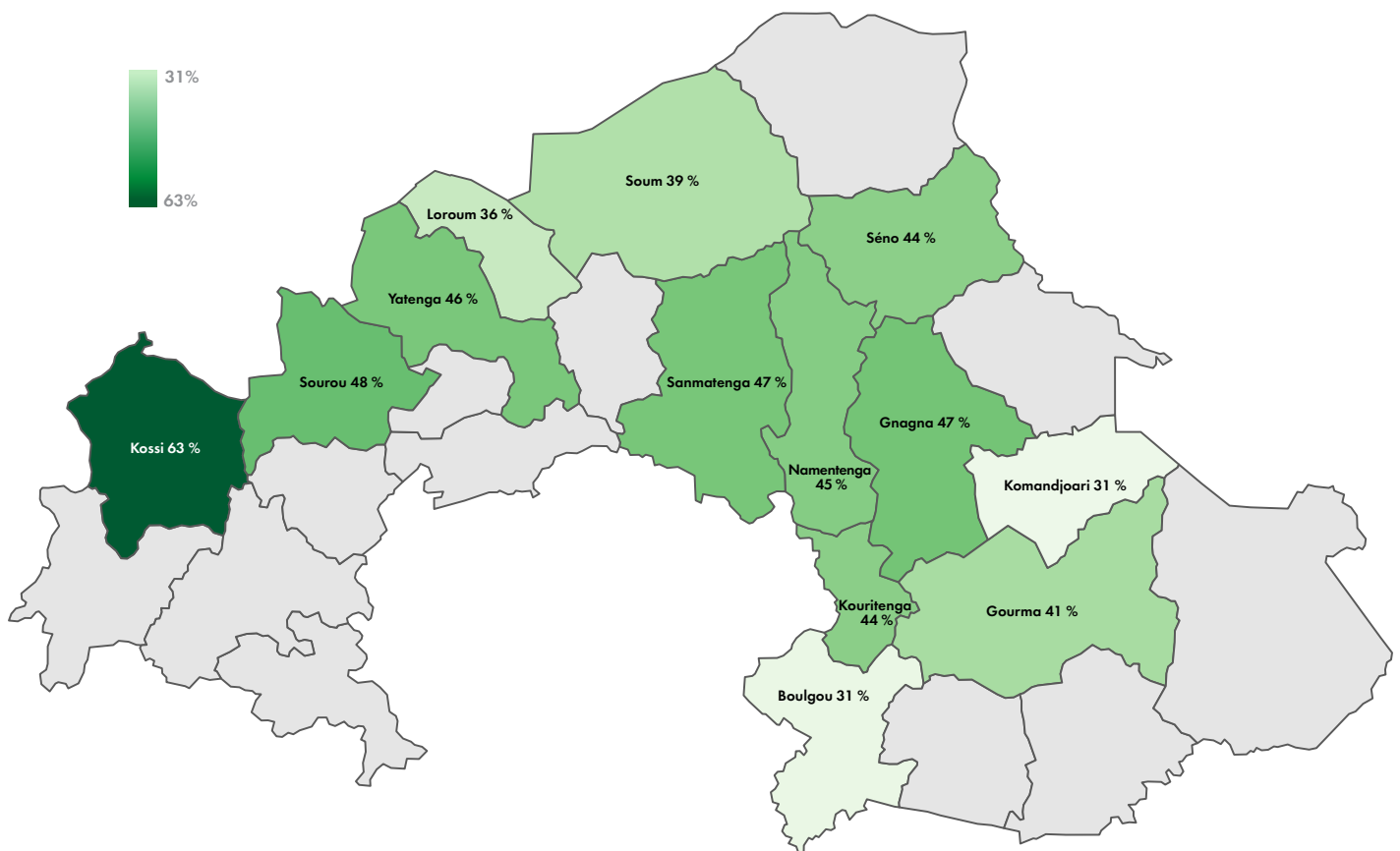
# Information protocols need a hard look

Only 34% of people interviewed feel informed about available aid. Most respondents [think the targeting process is unclear and unfair](#) and [aid is not meeting their basic needs](#).

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



Respondents living in Kossi feel much more informed (63%) than those in Komondjari (31%) and Boulgou (31%).

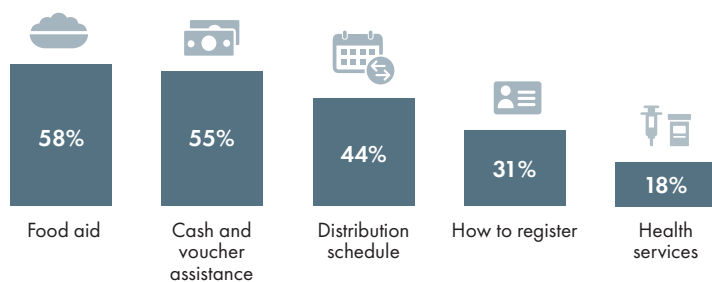


\*The map compares differences in perceptions by province. The least positive perceptions are represented as light green and most positive perceptions as dark green. Although dark green indicates people feel better informed relative to neighbouring provinces, it does not necessarily indicate that people are very well informed. The percentages indicate the average percentage of people who feel informed per province.



87% of aid providers interviewed (n=204) think their organisation provides affected people with the information they need.

## What information do you need? (n=787)



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


## How do you prefer to receive information? (n=1700)



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

In Kaya and Ouahigouya, aid recipients describe similar information-sharing processes: the Action Sociale (local government office) passes information about pending humanitarian programming to the Village Development Council (CVD), which in turn informs community leaders. Leaders in both communes then share information with their community via word of mouth or during community gatherings. Though people across all communes prefer to receive information from community leaders, they note that this is not without challenges:

1. Information is irregular and does not come on time. People acknowledge that **“the number of IDPs makes information-sharing very difficult,”** but more can be done to regularise communication. Respondents tell us that information about a distribution or service is sometimes shared only the day before. Others describe coming across information by chance: **“Information about humanitarian aid comes to us by word of mouth,”** says one male non-displaced person in Ouahigouya. **“In town, you often meet people leaving to receive aid, and you take advantage of it.”** Some report they only learn of a programme after the fact.
2. If people are absent when community leaders pass through their site, they miss out on information. Many explain they are absent because they are off searching for the goods they need since the existing [aid does not meet their needs](#), creating a vicious cycle of being uninformed, missing aid, searching for goods to survive, and remaining uninformed. People want assurances that they will get information and recommend that site managers inform the absentees when they return. Others suggest calling people on their cell phones. **“If we are away, we can be called directly to come back to the site,”** says one male IDP in Kaya.

 Affected people need more information on topics that humanitarians (n=204) report sharing regularly, indicating that organisations should evaluate the [challenges communities face in accessing information](#).

Top types of information provided, according to aid providers interviewed:

77% Complaint and feedback mechanisms

77% Distribution schedules

69% Food aid

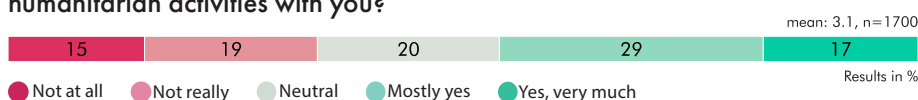
64% How to register

61% WASH services

Humanitarians (n=204) report using the information channels people prefer: **82%** share information directly with community/IDP leaders, and **74%** say humanitarians themselves provide information directly to the community. Since people still feel uninformed, this is a further case for aid providers to improve how information is shared via community leaders.

3. Too few are involved in information dissemination. People want the date of informational meetings to be shared in advance and want an open invite to attend these sessions. **“There must be more information officers. Stop limiting the number of IDPs for information meetings. Otherwise, the flow of information will be selective,”** says a female IDP in Kaya.
4. Many say community leaders are the problem. Less than half (46%) feel community leaders are sharing information about humanitarian programming. Some say community leaders share information only with the people they know, which tends to make people think that those who benefit from aid programming are those with connections. Whether favouritism is at play or not, **“the older IDPs have more connections, so more sources of information, compared to the new ones who have just arrived,”** explains a female non-displaced person in Ouahigouya. Aid providers should ensure that community leaders connect with newcomers upon their arrival to guarantee that new IDPs are informed of the communication channels in place. People also want community leaders to be better trained. **“Humanitarians should build the capacity of representatives or leaders to do their jobs properly. Information must reach everyone,”** explains one non-displaced woman in Ouahigouya. Others think penalties will incentivise better information sharing. **“There must be sanctions for irresponsible representatives,”** recommends a non-displaced man in Ouahigouya.

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



While hotlines might provide an alternative to using community leaders, preference for hotlines is low. Respondents living in Loroum (49%), Kouritenga (47%), Boulgou (40%), and Yatenga (40%) provinces show the highest interest in using hotlines for information.

## Information gaps lead to community tensions

Non-displaced people feel slightly less informed (32%) compared to IDPs (37%), a discrepancy triangulated with REACH data.<sup>1</sup> **“It is not all the time that the aid concerns all of us, often it is just the IDPs only. In this case, the information is directed to the IDPs who are the most numerous,”** said one female non-displaced person in Ouahigouya.

This sense that non-displaced people are a lower priority than IDP communities for information and assistance is commonplace among respondents, and they are right: the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2021 targeted 81% of all IDPs in need compared to 57% of all non-displaced communities in need.<sup>2</sup> If people are unaware of the targeting criteria for a given programme, they will think they are unjustly excluded. Only 36% of respondents believe aid goes to those who need it most and only 27% understand the selection process. One female IDP in Kaya said, **“I think non-displaced people should be informed because humanitarian aid often involves non-displaced people even if it mostly concerns IDPs.”**

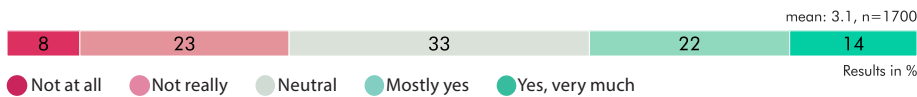


**91%** of aid providers interviewed (n=204) report that their organisation regularly and effectively works with community leaders while projects are being implemented.

<sup>1</sup> 49% of non-displaced persons reported knowledge of humanitarian assistance in the commune in the 12 months prior to the collection, compared to 92% of IDP households. REACH. 2021. [“Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment \(MSNA\) Dashboard 2021.”](#)

<sup>2</sup> OCHA. 2021. [“Humanitarian Response Plan.”](#)

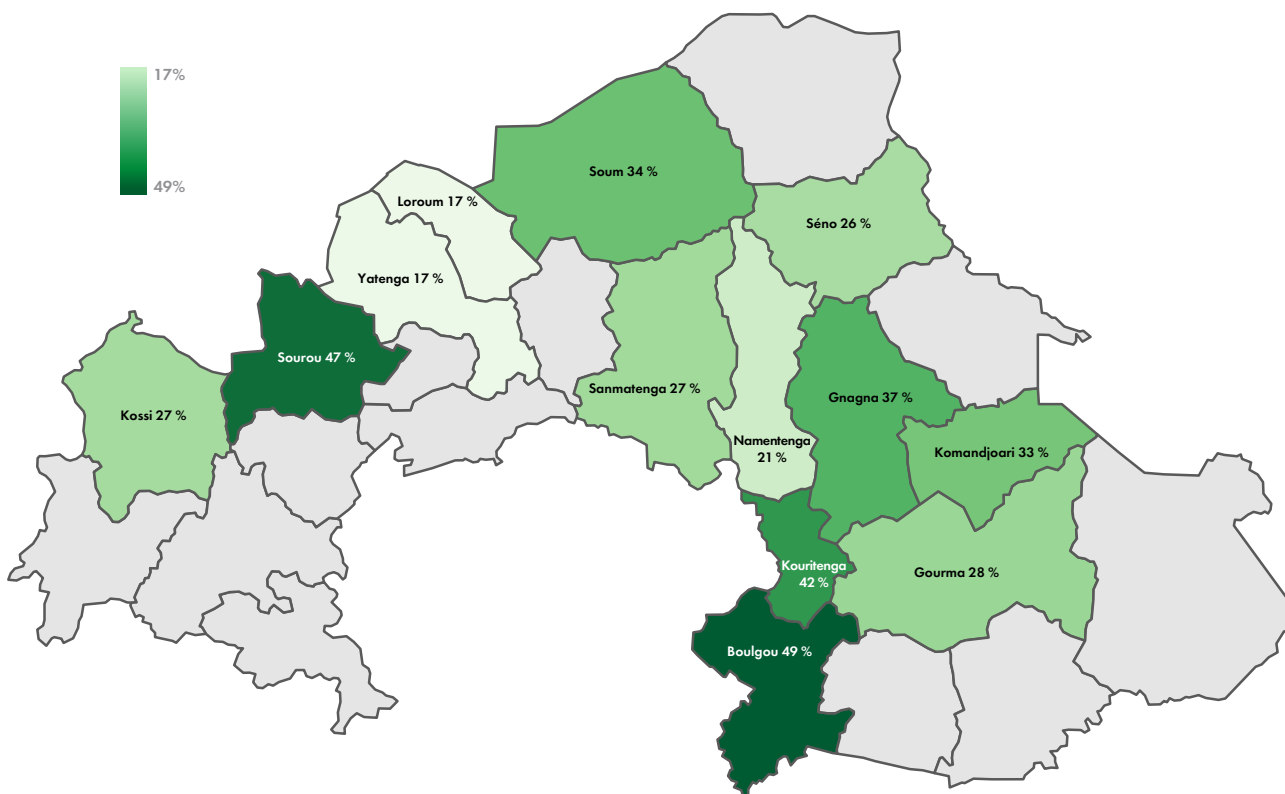
## Does aid go to those who need it most?



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



Respondents living in Boulgou (49%) and Sourou (47%) feel the most informed about how aid recipients are selected compared to those in other provinces, while people in Loroum (17%) and Yatenga (17%) feel the least informed.



\* The map compares differences in perceptions by province. The least positive perceptions are represented as light green and most positive perceptions as dark green. Although dark green indicates people feel better informed about targeting processes relative to neighbouring provinces, it does not necessarily indicate that people are very well informed about targeting processes. The percentages indicate the average percentage of people per province who understand aid targeting processes.



91% of aid providers interviewed (n=204) think the aid and services their organisation provides goes to those most in need. The 9% who feel aid is not reaching the most vulnerable, say unregistered people (7%), people living with a disability (5%), and newcomers (5%) are those left out of aid programming. Only 3% mention the elderly as a vulnerable group not benefitting from assistance.

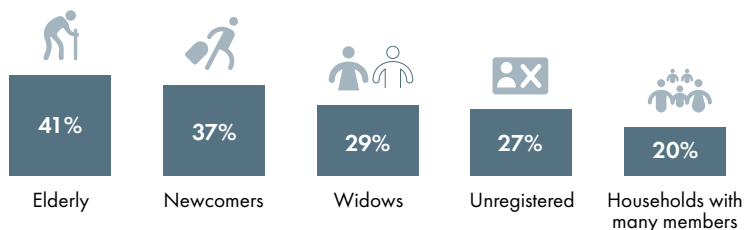
## ♀ WHAT WOMEN THINK

While women and men report similar levels of feeling informed about aid programming (35% and 37%, respectively), fewer women understand the targeting process (28%) compared to men (34%).

Qualitative interviews with women reveal that they feel information is unevenly shared. Women think men receive information first and more of it because they are the head of the family, which might be culturally accepted but still leaves women out. Some people know that female representatives exist for sharing information with women, but others don't. To have better access to information, a female IDP in Kaya recommends that **"leaders should support women to participate in the management of the community. Otherwise, women want to be involved, but they are dominated by men."**

Women also point out that they need to leave the site to find work and goods for their family. A female IDP in Kaya explains, **"Even if we spend the whole day giving information, women will not have access to the information."** Information-sharing protocols must take into consideration these specific challenges for women to access information.

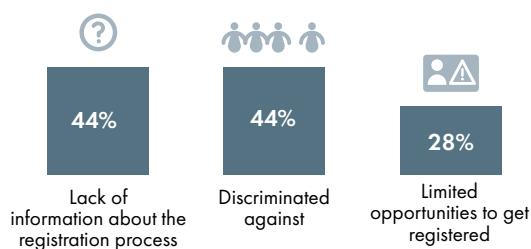
### Who is left out? (n=531)



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

Men, women, non-displaced people, and IDPs alike identify these five groups as most often left out of aid programming. The elderly are perceived to be poorly targeted for aid, and of the older persons who receive aid, only 23% think it meets their needs.

### Why are they left out? (n=531)



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



## Have you heard of tensions or disputes over humanitarian aid in the area?



Because respondents perceive the selection process to be untransparent and unfair, there are tensions related to the aid provided. **“It is not normal that some receive, and others do not. We all have the same problems,”** says one male IDP in Kaya.

Some respondents call on humanitarians to better involve IDP/community leaders in the targeting process. **“Leaders must identify the newcomers who are in need and do not know anyone to help them. The old ones know the village and can manage,”** explains a male non-displaced person in Kaya.

Others maintain that community leaders are to blame. **“The people in charge are not honest. They may even delete the names of some people so that they don’t get the aid. You are more afraid that someone will delete your name from a list. Women are afraid of this. That’s why we need dignified and honest representatives who care about their fellow people,”** explains one male non-displaced person in Ouahigouya.

Clear communication of targeting processes will mitigate perceptions that leaders make selective decisions about aid registration and aid provision. **“Humanitarians come, finish targeting, and then they give the names of people. You have to educate first before each targeting,”** says a male IDP in Ouahigouya. **“It is ignorance of the targeting process that leads to tension... The majority of the IDPs are illiterate, so trainings are needed so that they understand and do not blame the designated information-sharing leaders. These leaders are volunteers and have no benefits in relation to aid and this is very often misunderstood. No leader can sign up a family member. They organize. They facilitate. As a solution, I propose to educate the IDPs first, to explain the targeting process before acting. But this is not how it currently works,”** he adds.

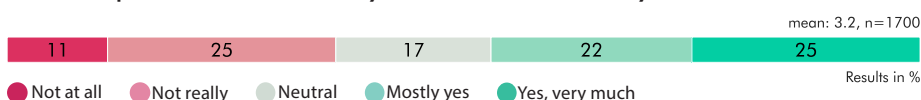
Humanitarians should also explain the constraints to aid programming; why assistance doesn’t target everyone, or only a subset of a given demographic group, and why aid has reduced or stagnated despite increasing numbers of people in need. **“Information is not only about aid programming. It’s also knowing why there is no aid,”** says a non-displaced man in Ouahigouya.

Reports of limited opportunities to register for aid, points to either unsystematic registrations or a lack of information sharing about registration events. In parallel with offering aid registrations, aid providers should facilitate opportunities for people to get identity cards.

## Aid is untimely and insufficient

Less than half of respondents (47%) think they receive aid when they need it most. Women (43%) are less likely to think aid comes on time than men (48%).

### Over the past six months, have you received aid when you need it?



**38%** of humanitarians interviewed (n=204) have heard of tensions or disputes over humanitarian aid. 20% believe the reason is related to the selection of beneficiaries and the distribution of aid; 13% think it is only related to how beneficiaries are selected; and 6% think the issue is only related to the distribution of aid. Tensions are thought to be between non-displaced people and IDPs (25%), recipients and non-recipients (21%), and within IDP communities (19%).

There are tensions **“because communities do not fully understand how beneficiaries are selected. Non-displaced communities are also frustrated that they are not receiving the majority of assistance.”** - female expatriate staff, shelter sector

**“Insufficient financial means to target all people who are actually in a situation of extreme vulnerability is the reason why there are tensions related to aid.”** – male expatriate staff, WASH, food security, nutrition, health, shelter, and protection sectors



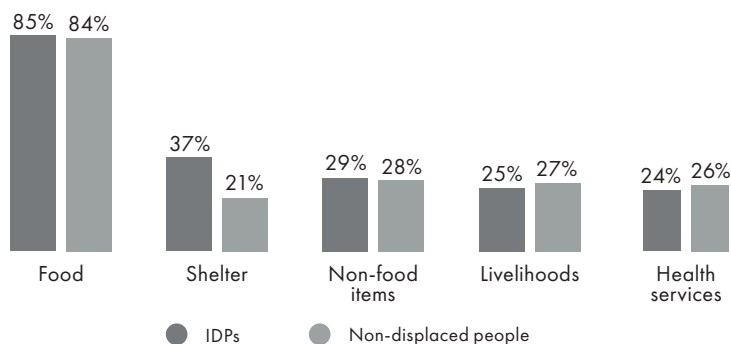
**70%** of humanitarians interviewed (n=204) think aid is provided in a timely manner.

Only 35% think the aid they receive covers their most important needs. Clear information-sharing and transparent targeting processes directly influence whether people see aid as relevant. Those who feel informed about available assistance,<sup>3</sup> and those who think aid goes to those who need it most,<sup>4</sup> are more likely to think aid is meeting their needs.

### Does the assistance you receive cover your most important needs?



### What are your unmet needs? (n=1243)



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

REACH data echoes these findings: households' priority needs include access to food (32% of non-displaced people, and 78% of IDPs); access to income-generating activities (25% of non-displaced people, and 7% of IDPs); health services (12% of non-displaced people); and secure shelters (4% of IDPs).<sup>5</sup>

Respondents explain that the assistance provided is insufficient either because the quantity provided was low to begin with or because communities are sharing aid with those who have yet to receive any. **“Humanitarians need to reconsider the assistance provided because our numbers have increased, and the quantity of aid is the same,”** recommends one male IDP in Ouahigouya. Because aid is insufficient, most seem to use whatever they receive. Those who report selling aid (9%) tell us that food (73%) is the top item they sell for cash which then is primarily used to buy different food (74%).

People know that humanitarian organisations' resources are tight but feel current aid provision could at least support each person once. **“With time we will find long-term solutions. I ask humanitarians to work so that each IDP benefits from aid and does not feel marginalised. We need to put in place a mechanism that will allow IDPs to be taken care of even just once. We must guarantee the minimum – that each IDP feels considered,”** shares a male IDP in Ouahigouya.

Host community members feel strained by the increasing number of people arriving in their area. A female community member in Kaya explains: **“We have shared [our fields] with the IDPs, which means that our yields are decreasing. Therefore, humanitarians should provide food.”** Affected communities think some [community leaders are prioritising those they know to receive aid to the detriment of others](#). This imbalance risks [escalating tensions](#) between these IDPs and non-displaced people or within status groups, as needs become more critical.

Beyond food aid, other basic needs remain. **“Water is a rare commodity here so I would like a water pump,”** states a female IDP in Ouahigouya. Shelter needs are only half addressed. **“Currently, we have housing problems for the new IDPs, many sleep under the stars. The Action Sociale has done the targeting but nothing... The**



**73%** of aid providers interviewed (n=204) think the assistance their organisations provide meet people's most important needs.

Affected people's top unmet needs, according to humanitarians interviewed (n=204):

**69%** Livelihood support

**61%** WASH

**59%** Education

**58%** Food

**58%** Psychological support

Shelter (56%), protection services (53%), health services (47%), and non-food items (44%) are also mentioned frequently. Yet the urgent need for food aid is not emphasised as strongly among humanitarian respondents as it is by the affected community.

<sup>3</sup> Pearson's coefficient: 0.34.

<sup>4</sup> Pearson's coefficient: 0.30.

<sup>5</sup> REACH. December 2021. [“MSNA 2021 Bulletin.”](#)

problem is not limited to the donation of the shelter. If you are given a shelter and you don't have land to set up, what do you do?" asks a male IDP in Ouahigouya. Those who do have shelters are concerned about the quality. "Once, one of the children at the site was injured when the wind blew down a tent," says a male IDP in Kaya.

## Participation opportunities out of reach

Including people's opinions in programming is key to ensuring aid helps them. Those who feel their opinions are taken into consideration are more likely to think the assistance they receive meets their basic needs.<sup>6</sup> Of the 38% who reported being consulted by humanitarians, just over half think aid providers listened to what they had to say. Fewer IDPs (47%) compared to non-displaced people (56%) feel that their own opinions are considered.

### Were you consulted about the humanitarian aid programming in your region?



### Do you think your opinions about the assistance you receive are taken into consideration by aid workers?



Given that respondents' preferred aid modality varies depending on specific need – with many favouring a combination of cash and in-kind assistance – it's crucial that communities be included in project inception phases to ensure that the risks and benefits of programming choices are properly evaluated.

Since food is the most pressing need, many emphasised that in-kind aid is most effective. "There is a famine, and we need to live," says one male non-displaced person in Kaya. Others recognise that in-kind aid is the only way to meet shelter needs and obtain the agricultural tools required to start earning a living. People also identify benefits of in-kind aid:

1. Everyone in the household benefits – "If it is cash, the man will not show his wife, and the wife will not give to the children. But if it's food, everyone will eat," shares a female IDP in Ouahigouya.
2. No associated cost – "In-kind assistance is better than cash. You get more for it. I received a toilet, but I didn't have to worry about the cost," explains a male non-displaced person in Kaya.

Respondents report that cash assistance causes price inflation in local markets, reducing people's purchasing power. Others explain that cash is harder to share with their community and could lead to interfamilial tensions. "Cash brings problems. Imagine a woman who receives her money, and her husband takes it away from her. She cannot be happy," explains a female IDP in Kaya. Many note that, like in-kind assistance, the cash they've received has been insufficient to meet their needs.



When asked if their organisations regularly involved affected communities at each stage in the project, most humanitarians interviewed (n=204) report including communities during project implementation (76%) and evaluation phases (71%). Fewer humanitarians think affected people are involved at the project design phase (41%).

74% of humanitarians interviewed think they have enough information about aid recipients' preferences to make informed decisions.

81% say their organisations take corrective measures based on the feedback they receive from affected communities when implementing projects.

<sup>6</sup> Pearson's coefficient: 0.36.

Those who do prefer cash, entirely or as a supplement to in-kind aid, explain that cash lets them choose how to meet their needs, a view [echoed by respondents in other humanitarian crises](#). “Very often, there are problems that arise and require money. Food is good, but it doesn’t solve all the problems,” shares one female IDP in Kaya. [People also strongly emphasise the need for cash to help them earn a living and address their long-term needs](#).


## Unknown and under-used complaint mechanisms

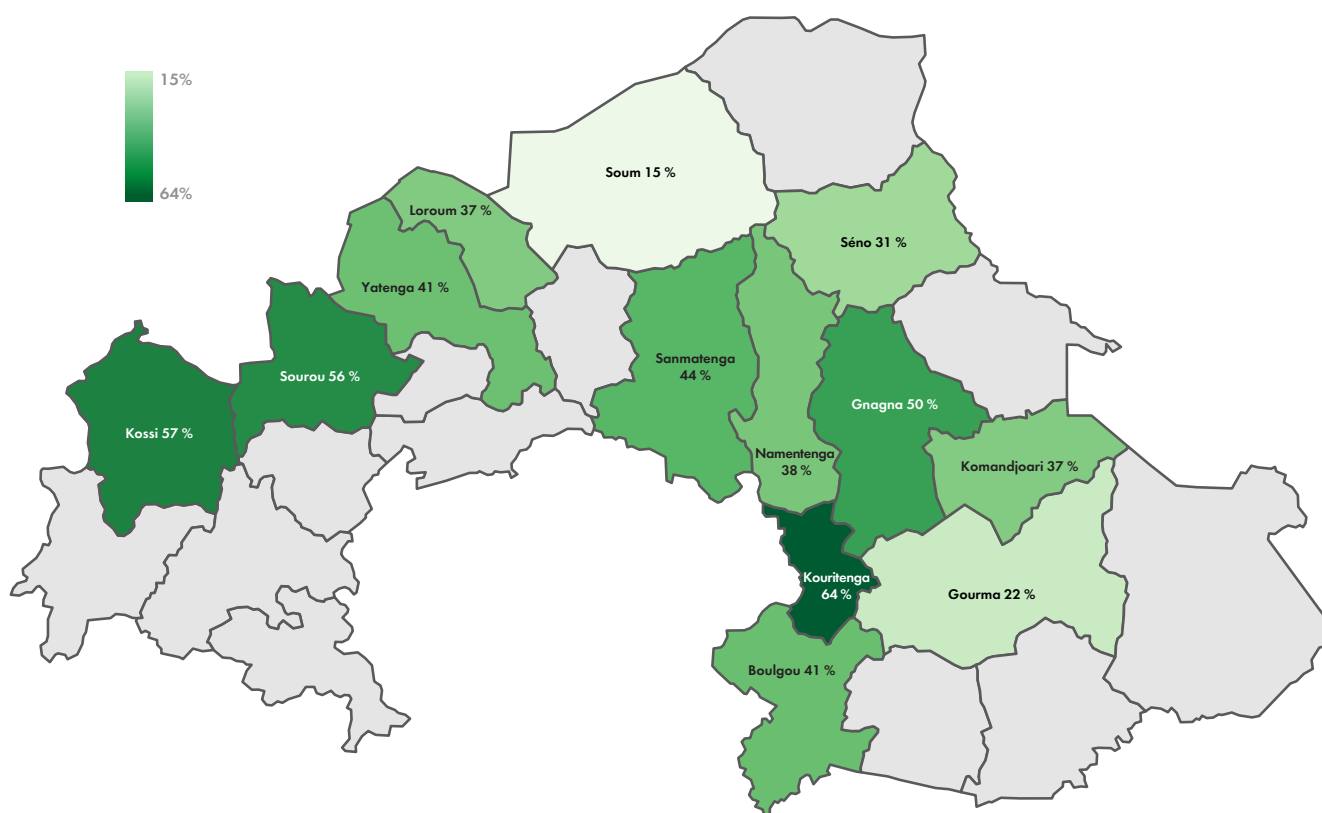
People say they want to complain about aid. But only 38% know how. REACH’s survey also found that awareness of complaint mechanisms remains low.<sup>7</sup> Again, improved information-sharing is needed. “We count on trainings to help us learn how to complain about aid,” explains a non-displaced woman in Kaya.

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



While the average knowledge of complaint mechanisms is low, awareness is higher in Kouritenga (64%), Kossi (57%), and Sourou (56%), among others.


 74% of aid providers interviewed (n=204) think affected people know how to lodge complaints about humanitarian aid.



\*The map compares differences in perceptions by province. Least positive perceptions are represented as light green and most positive perceptions as dark green. Although dark green indicates people are more knowledgeable about how to complain relative to neighbouring provinces, it does not necessarily indicate that people are very well informed about how to complain. The percentages indicate the average percentage of people per province who know how to complain about humanitarian aid.

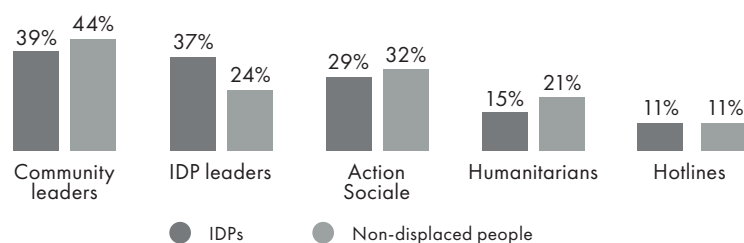
<sup>7</sup> 15% of non-displaced households versus 39% of IDP households reported knowledge of the existence of complaints and feedback mechanisms. REACH. December 2021. [“MSNA 2021 Bulletin.”](#)

People tell us they prefer to complain about aid to their community leaders – this is how they normally resolve community issues. Yet with 62% feeling uninformed about complaint mechanisms, there is a need for clarity on how humanitarian will receive and respond to complaints via community leaders. Respondents also want to be involved in setting up these protocols. **“I suggest that we choose someone from our community who can represent us. This would facilitate access to information related to the complaint process,”** says a female IDP in Kaya. Others highlight that setting up such systems is not a one-and-done job, but humanitarians need to provide constant support to these representatives. **“If our leaders are helped in their tasks, it will benefit us because they will be quick to listen to us and pass along our complaints. Often, they don’t even have phone credit to call the Action Sociale,”** explains a male IDP in Kaya.

 Top types of complaint mechanisms implemented, according to aid providers interviewed:

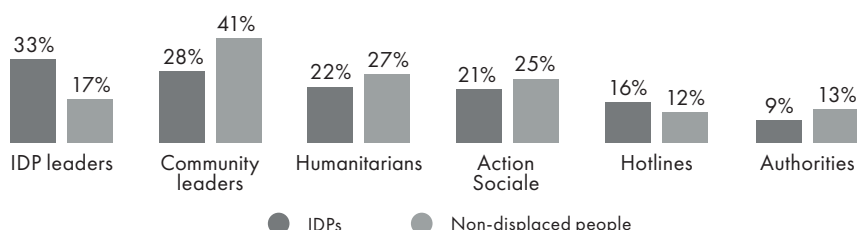
- 64% Hotlines
- 57% Community/IDP leaders
- 55% Humanitarians
- 51% Site management committees
- 40% Local authorities

### What complaint mechanisms do you know? (n=740)



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

### How would you prefer to make any complaints you have? (n=1700)

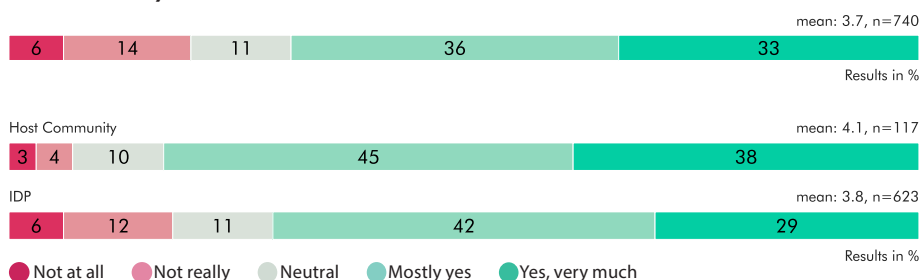


\*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Hotlines are popular among aid providers, but they might not be the best choice if communities prefer to go directly to IDP/community leaders to submit their complaints. Most qualitative interview respondents in Ouahigouya note that a hotline exists in their locality, but there are mixed views on its effectiveness. **“We call without it being picked up. That happens normally. However, we are told that the hotline is functional 24 hours a day,”** said one male IDP.

IDPs feel less comfortable complaining (71%) using the complaint mechanisms they know compared to non-displaced people (83%), though, on average, people feel comfortable doing so (69%).

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



Thirty-nine percent of women know how to complain compared to 48% of men. Women emphasise that not knowing how to complain comes down to being less informed about aid programming overall. **“It is true, we are ignored. It is always like that, the woman is in the background,”** said a female IDP in Kaya.

Those who know how to submit complaints explain that they can go to a community leader who will share their concern with the local CVD.

Sixty-eight percent of women feel comfortable complaining compared to 77% of men. We found that if women do not have a female representative, they are uncomfortable sharing their complaints with male leaders in their community. If they do have a female representative, she still must submit the complaint to a man at the CVD/Action Sociale. This might explain why only 26% of women say they have previously submitted a complaint compared to 40% of men. Of those who have, fewer women report receiving a response to their complaint (62%) compared to men (68%).

Of those who know how to lodge complaints, 34% have submitted one. Most (70%) have received a response. Those who have received a response are more likely to feel that their opinions are taken into consideration by aid providers, affirming that being accountable to affected communities is not only about having processes and systems in place – it’s about acting on feedback.<sup>8</sup> **“What is the use of a complaint that you send and the people who are supposed to answer do not answer...,”** said one male non-displaced person in Ouahigouya.


Some people also raised protection concerns during our interviews. Respondents who said they had previously received a response to a complaint were more likely to want to be put in contact with a protection focal point to share their case of mistreatment, harassment, or abuse.<sup>9</sup> People are more likely to submit feedback when they trust real action will be taken.

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



**Have you received a response to your suggestion or complaint?**



 **96%** of humanitarian aid providers interviewed (n=204) think affected people will receive a response if they submit a complaint.

<sup>8</sup> Pearson’s correlation coefficient: 0.41.

<sup>9</sup> Pearson’s correlation coefficient: 0.38.

# Uncertainty breeds insecurity

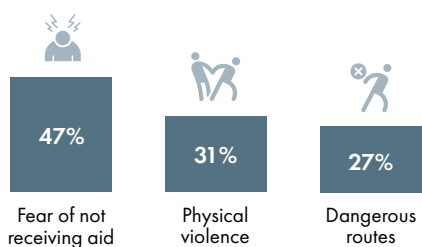
People’s perception of their security involves their sense of physical safety, ability to meet their needs, as well as their psychological well-being.

Most respondents report feeling safe traveling to get aid (80%) and at aid distribution sites (79%).

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

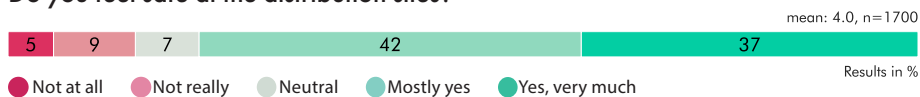


## Why don't you feel safe when you're on your way to get humanitarian aid or when returning home? (n=354)

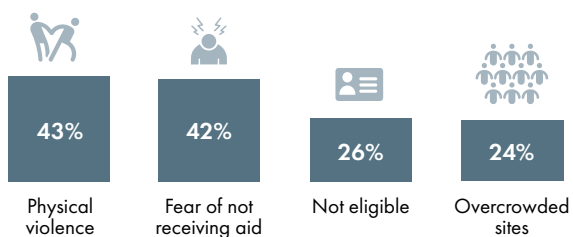


\*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

## Do you feel safe at the distribution sites?



## Why don't you feel safe at distribution sites? (n=376)



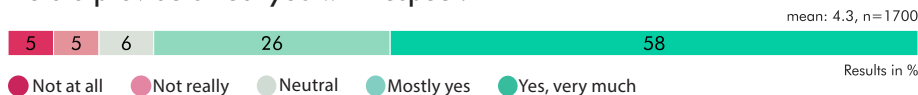
\*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

Communities must be consulted in the selection of distribution sites to ensure they are accessible to all. **“I cross a big pond to get here, so it would be better if distribution sites could be closer to home,”** shares a non-displaced woman in Bilanga. People want assurances that they can safely travel to receive humanitarian assistance. **“Secure the route with law enforcement presence,”** recommends a female IDP in Bilanga.



At aid sites, people call for a stronger security presence to maintain a safe environment. **“Securing the distribution site with security forces will allow us to have a clear heart and peacefully take our food and return home in joy,”** says a female IDP in Kossouka. Others recommend increasing the number of humanitarian personnel at the site – who should wear vests to clearly identify themselves – to ensure order. **“I would like humanitarians to be present at distributions and ask the IDPs to calm down so that the sharing can be fair and peaceful,”** says a female IDP in Ouahigouya. Those who feel safe at aid distribution sites are more likely to feel respected by aid providers.

### Do aid providers treat you with respect?



Disorganised distributions can make attending them a high-risk proposition for some. When standing in a large mass of people, respondents fear they could be a prime target for an armed attack. Aid recipients call for humanitarians to better organise distributions into smaller groups (some suggest by gender, by site/neighbourhood, or by village of origin) and to only call those who are eligible to the distribution. This will avoid large crowds, reduce the risk of physical violence, and make the process more efficient.

Another concern is that if distributions are poorly managed, people risk walking home at night. **“I would like the staff to release us from the distribution site at a certain time so that we can return early, for example at 16:00. Otherwise, you are held up until late in the evening, and they come and tell you to go home and come back tomorrow,”** says a male IDP in Ouahigouya. **“Now in the night it’s difficult for us. We are afraid,”** he adds. Others suggest that humanitarians could just organise [monetary transfers](#), avoiding overcrowding concerns and simplifying things.

Many people would prefer aid distributed individually and discretely to each household where they live so they can avoid large crowds and dangerous routes. **“To avoid insecurity on the way, it is better that the distribution is done at the home of the beneficiaries,”** shares a male IDP in Fada N’Gourma.

The stress of not receiving aid manifests as a crucial security concern for communities and is a further reason for [humanitarians to urgently improve communication about who is eligible for assistance](#). **“Contact only the people you are sure will receive aid instead of reassuring everyone and then telling them to go home with nothing. This is difficult to digest,”** says one female IDP in Titao. Respondents recommend that [aid providers explain the selection criteria](#), then make the beneficiary lists publicly available, so people know who is eligible. Many would prefer if humanitarians phoned them to inform them of an upcoming distribution, which might be key for those who are illiterate and cannot read publicly available lists.

Fifty-two percent of respondents report feeling safe where they live. **“The newcomers feel a bit safer than they did before they came here. They have found a relative calm,”** explains a male non-displaced person in Ouahigouya. But fear of a terrorist attack permeates people’s lives. **“I am always in constant fear because we do not have the armed forces [Defense and Security Forces (FDS)] on our side, and we are in empty reserves as far as the eye can see. At night it is dark. There is no light. I fear a surprise attack by terrorists without receiving any help because I have already seen how they proceed,”** says one male IDP in Kaya. Others feel increasingly insecure as the number of IDPs in their community swells. **“The older IDPs are afraid of life here...They know that the site is no longer as safe as it was in the beginning,”** shares a male non-displaced person in Ouahigouya.



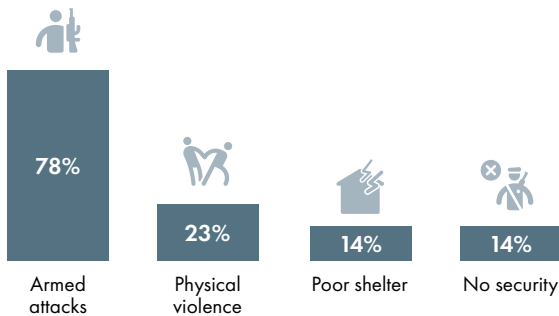
**83%** of humanitarians interviewed (n=204) think their organisation’s staff understand the behaviour standards expected and **98%** know how to report cases of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment by humanitarian workers.



## Do you feel safe where you live?



## Why do you feel unsafe where you live? (n=926)



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

People want improved security, noting the need for the deployment or augmentation of security forces near where they live. Others call for increased government intervention to end attacks in their regions. **“Real security requires pushing the terrorists away from our villages and lands so that we can go back and continue our agriculture,”** explains a man in Ouahigouya.


Many respondents shared experiences of severe trauma, and 78% think their community is in need of psychological support. Newly arrived IDPs are in the most vulnerable condition. **“Even the sound of a motorcycle is enough to make them run away,”** explains a female IDP in Kaya. Suggestions for how to humanitarianism can support people’s psychological well-being include providing health centers, creating forums for people to speak to psychologists, and organising activities such as film screenings, to help people **“escape and forget their problems.”**

## Given the current context, do you think you or your community is in need of psychological support?




### ♀ WHAT WOMEN THINK

Women report feeling less safe than men during their daily life (43% compared to 48%), on their way to get aid (74% compared to 82%), and at aid distribution sites (75% compared to 80%). While both men and women report similar levels of living in constant fear of an armed attack, a larger percentage of women report fearing they will not receive aid (54%) compared to men (38%), meaning poor communication about who will receive assistance places an added burden of insecurity on women.

 78% of humanitarianism interviewed (n=204) feel safe in their work environment and accommodation if they work away from home. Those aid providers who do not feel safe are those working in areas of high insecurity and echo affected people’s fears of an attack.

**“I am in an area office located in a region with a strong security challenge with recurring attacks. I am really scared, and I do not know what day I too will be among the victims of an attack.”** – male, national staff

 21% of aid providers interviewed (n=204) report facing stress beyond their limits over the past three months, and 59% think they have enough opportunities to talk about the challenges of their profession. 90% know how to make suggestions or complaints to their organisation.

# Life-saving aid is not enough

When [aid does not meet people's basic needs](#), they cannot think about their futures. "We should not even talk about shocks. We should ask ourselves if the current assistance can even allow people to stay on the site," explains a male IDP in Ouahigouya. Thirty-eight percent of respondents think the humanitarian assistance they receive today prepares them to cope with a new shock, and the same percentage think the aid they receive enables them to plan for their future.

## Do you think that the assistance you receive today strengthens your ability to cope with difficulties, should a new shock occur tomorrow?



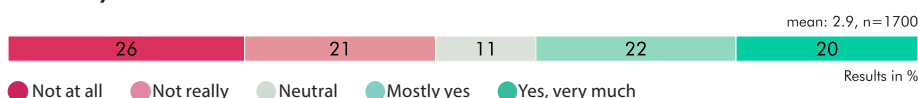
## Do you think that aid allows you to better consider or plan for your future?



With increasing insecurity and more Burkinabè fleeing their homes, humanitarians are focused on saving lives and providing short-term solutions. Yet the root causes of people's strife – terrorism and chronic vulnerability to climatic variance – are not short-term issues. It is short-sighted for governments, donors, and humanitarians to manage new influxes of people as though life-saving assistance is the only priority. The humanitarian response in Burkina Faso has submitted consecutive appeals for funding since 2013, growing sharply since 2019, but short-term emergency assistance is failing to enable people to stand on their own.<sup>10</sup> Humanitarian assistance must meet people's immediate needs, while preparing them for the long term. A male IDP in Ouahigouya put it simply, "I would ask the humanitarians to teach us to fish instead of giving us fish every day. Simply help us with jobs and small trades. That will help us to face new shocks." Response coordination knows this and aims to shift towards operationalising the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus in 2022, with a specific focus on developing the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework that should connect urgent response plans to sustainable development programmes.<sup>11</sup>

Only 42% think they can make a living working in the local economy. IDPs feel less confident they can earn a living (37%) compared to non-displaced people (47%), though both groups' outlooks are very negative.

## Can you and your immediate family make a living working in the local economy?



68% of humanitarians interviewed (n=204) think the assistance their organisation provides today strengthens aid recipients' abilities to deal with a potential new shock tomorrow.

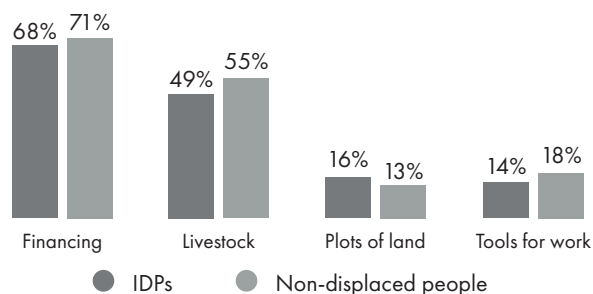
55% of humanitarians interviewed (n=204) think the assistance their organisation provides enables aid recipients to plan for their future.

Strengthening people's long-term resilience requires coordination between humanitarian and development actors, yet only 47% of aid providers interviewed think there is effective cooperation between these two sectors. While there is much talk of localising aid, 90% of humanitarians interviewed think there is insufficient support for local and national humanitarian organisations in Burkina Faso. Aid providers think these organisations need more training (81%), organisational (76%), and financial support (75%).

<sup>10</sup> OCHA. 2022. "Burkina Faso: Part Two Inter-Agency Appeals."

<sup>11</sup> OCHA. 2022. "Operationalizing the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus Through Basic Social Services and Durable Solutions."

## What do you think you need to make a living? (n=1048)



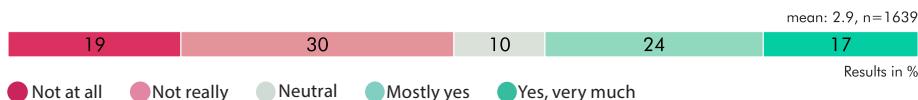
\*Percentages do not total 100% because respondents could choose multiple options.

They ask for job training, specifically in soap fabrication, hairdressing, weaving/sewing, agriculture, small business, carpentry, and farming/breeding. A male IDP in Ouahigouya explains, "Many of us were traders, farmers, herders. We can make products to sell and many other things if we benefit from training. Humanitarian aid would then supplement what we earn from our activities."

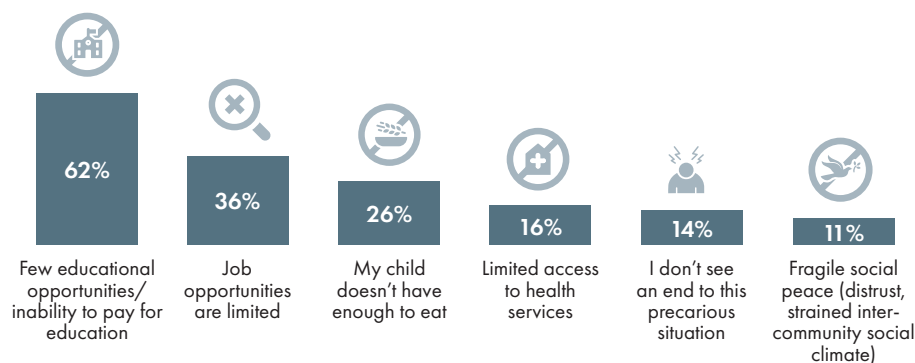
Livelihood programmes, specifically focused on agriculture and farming, should also consider the long-term impacts to the community and environment. "I want to protect our land... If one day the IDPs leave, let the degradation of the land be mitigated," says a non-displaced man in Kaya.

Forty-one percent of respondents who are parents or guardians feel optimistic about their children's prospects. IDPs feel less positive (43%) than non-displaced people (51%). Parents need assurances that the basics will be covered for their kids. "We want clothes, shoes, food, and money for the children's schooling," says a female IDP in Ouahigouya.

## Are you optimistic about your child's/ children's future?



## What are your main concerns about the future of your child or children? (n=918)



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



The top types of assistance or regulatory changes that best contribute to the well-being of affected populations, according to humanitarians (n=204):

77% Specialised training

69% Financing

64% Livestock

63% Plots of land

61% Tools for work

# Recommendations from crisis-affected people

The following recommendations combine direct suggestions from respondents with the GTS team's analysis of affected people's feedback. Acting on these recommendations requires collaboration at all levels of the response.

Click the recommendation to jump to a related quote or finding.

## INFORMATION-SHARING

### Frequency

- Regularise how often information is shared and in what format. People need to know when to expect information from community leaders and when to attend community meetings.
- Plan timelines so information can be shared with communities multiple days in advance of the planned registration, distribution, or service.

### Channels

- Engage with diverse community leaders from different demographics (e.g., men/women, IDPs/non-displaced people, persons with disabilities, young people, and older persons) to ensure information is shared broadly and prevent communities from perceiving information-sharing to be biased. These leaders should be appointed by the communities they represent, not humanitarians. Invite this larger, more diverse group of leaders to all information sharing events.
- Oversee that community leaders connect with newcomers upon their arrival to ensure they are aware of the communication channels in place and have access to relevant information regarding available aid.
- Implement regular capacity-building workshops for community leaders to discuss effective communication skills. Workshops should determine effective communication protocols to reach the given target population, address absenteeism and how to share information with those who leave the site, and cultural dynamics where women typically receive information through their husbands.
- Implement systems that encourage community leaders to be accountable for sharing information with their assigned communities so communities can complain, and leaders can be penalised or replaced if they are deemed to poorly conduct their information-sharing tasks.

### Targeting process information

- Communicate what type of demographic is targeted for a given programme, how targeting processes are conducted (e.g. how the lists of affected people were or will be compiled) and explain that further information will only be directed to the selected aid recipients – all before sharing the finalised aid recipient list.
- Explain the constraints: why aid programming doesn't target everyone, or only a subset of a given demographic group, and why assistance has reduced or has yet to increase despite increasing numbers of people in need.

### Distribution information

- Communicate distribution schedules. Minimise changes to the schedule whenever possible and communicate delayed or altered plans.

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

### Registrations

- Facilitate regular identity card registrations.

### Aid distribution site selection

- Consult communities to determine the best location for aid distributions and services.
- Move distribution sites closer to where people live to reduce their travel distances.
- Increase the number of distribution sites per target area/ community to avoid overcrowded distributions.<sup>12</sup>
- Ensure the routes to get to the distribution sites are repaired and secured by security officials.

### Aid distribution protocol

- Eliminate people's fear that they will be ineligible for aid or aid will run out by notifying only those targeted. Call each recipient who owns a phone and is the target for an upcoming distribution (this is key for those who are illiterate and cannot read publicly available lists).
- Better organize distributions by sub-groups (some suggest by gender, by site, or by village of origin) that will avoid masses at distribution sites and inhibit violence between groups.
- Stop distributions before dusk so people can return home safely.
- Increase cash and voucher assistance programming as a solution to overcrowding concerns and simplifying the overall distribution process.
- Aid workers must wear vests to clearly identify themselves.

### Site security

- Deploy or augment security forces around the places where they live.
- Increase government support to end the attacks in their regions.

### Psychological support

- Ensure communities have access to psychologists, health centres, and community activities (such as film screenings) that provide them with support to process trauma cases.
- Train staff, especially those in contact with new arrivals, on psychological first aid and other best practices when working with traumatized communities.

<sup>12</sup> This recommendation is a compromise to community recommendations to provide them with transportation or provide aid door-to-door, which might be logistically challenging.

## PARTICIPATION

- Involve diverse community leaders representing different demographics (e.g., men/women, IDPs/non-displaced people, persons with disabilities, young people, and older persons) during the project inception phase, and at project mid-and endpoints.
- Consult with this diverse group of community leaders about the types of assistance people need, the preferred modality of assistance, and the desired frequency of aid provision. The aid provided should reflect the preferences of those affected, especially if the quantity is limited because of financial or logistical constraints.
- Implement systems to register IDPs who have yet to receive any assistance to mitigate unintentionally leaving people out of programming, especially newcomers who are missed and later not eligible for urgent assistance for the newest batch of arrivals.

## COMPLAINT MECHANISMS

- Facilitate trainings on how aid recipients can submit complaints and how they will receive a response, especially when community-based systems are in place.
- Allow women to select their own representatives to be responsible for transmitting complaints and responses between female aid recipients and humanitarians.
- Ensure at least one female staff is hired by the local government Action Sociale/ Village Development Council (CVD), so she can accept complaints from female representatives.
- Provide community leaders with phone credits so they can contact the relevant authorities to submit complaints.

## IMMEDIATE AND LONG-TERM NEEDS

- Review and/or reallocate programme budgets based on the types, quantity, and frequency of food aid communities need to address the pressing demand for more sufficient food distributions.
- Conduct a risk analysis, particularly an analysis of community dynamics prior to introducing cash assistance.
- Provide shelters made of quality material and allocate space for them to be set up.
- Advocate for affected people to access financing, livestock, plots of land, and tools for work.
- Provide specialised training on soap fabrication, hairdressing, weaving/sewing, agriculture, small business, carpentry, and farming/breeding – and support job creation.
- Provide monetary assistance for families who want to send their children to school.

# Quantitative survey methodology: affected populations

## SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

All respondents were at least 18 years old and had received humanitarian assistance in the last six months.

The six regions for this study – Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre-Est, Centre-Nord, Est, Nord and Sahel – were selected because they are the main regions targeted for humanitarian assistance in Burkina Faso. Three communes per region were randomly selected using a probability proportional to size sampling, based on publicly available data on internally displaced people by the National Council for Emergency Relief and Rehabilitation (CONASUR).

The sample aimed to survey 85% displaced people and 15% non-displaced people in each region, with a final division of 84% IDP and 16% non-displaced community. This is based on numbers of people in need from REACH's 2020 Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA), combined with survey data from REACH indicating that 80% of displaced people and 10% of non-displaced people interviewed had received assistance in the past 12 months.<sup>13</sup> The sample framework is based on this data rather than on the number of people targeted for assistance as outlined in the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) because during past data collections, the actual breakdowns of displaced people and non-displaced people receiving aid did not appear to follow the HRP targeting schema.

An equal division of men and women were targeted, with a final division of 51% women and 49% men.

The sampling process for displaced people involved local authorities in each commune helping the data collection teams to determine the total number of sites or neighbourhoods where displaced people were concentrated. Eight displaced people were selected in each site or neighbourhood to start the snowball methodology (hereafter referred to as "seeds"). Community leaders supported the data collection team to identify seeds who fit the respondent criteria (at least 18 years old and had received humanitarian assistance in the last six months). An equal number of female and male seeds were selected in each site/neighbourhood, and each seed came from a different village of origin. This seed selection process aimed to ensure equal representation across the final sample.

To further reduce potential sampling bias, the seeds themselves were not interviewed due to concerns that they were selected by community leaders. All seeds were asked in turn to recommend one or two participants who were not members of their household, who were the same gender, and who fit the respondent criteria. These recommended individuals made up the final respondent group.

For non-displaced people, recommendations from displaced people and from community leaders were used to identify individuals for the survey.



Recommendations from displaced people: Eight non-displaced people were recommended by displaced people interviewed. To randomise the seeds, the fifth and fifteenth displaced person interviewed by each enumerator was asked to recommend a non-displaced person to be surveyed.

Recommendations from community leaders: Seven non-displaced people were recommended by community leaders such as village chiefs, pastors, imams, priests, members of the Village Development Council (CVD), youth leaders, women leaders, and local officials.

## Sample of people affected by crises

1,700 respondents

### Gender

-  51% Women (860)
-  49% Men (840)

### Status

- 84% Internally displaced persons (IDPs) (1,435)
- 16% Non-displaced persons (265)

### Region\*

- 19% Boucle du Mouhoun (315)
- 18% Est (305)
- 17% Centre-Est (283)
- 17% Centre-Nord (283)
- 17% Nord (286)
- 13% Sahel (228)

### Province

- 5% Boulgou (85)
- 6% Gnagna (109)
- 6% Gourma (95)
- 6% Komondjari (101)
- 12% Kossi (207)
- 12% Kouritenga (198)
- 5% Loroum (84)
- 6% Namentenga (104)
- 11% Sanmatenga (179)
- 7% Seno (125)
- 6% Soum (103)
- 6% Sourou (108)
- 12% Yatenga (202)

### Age

- 35% Age 18-35 (595)
- 53% Age 36-60 (905)
- 12% Age 61 and older (200)

### Disability

- 15% People living with a disability (254)

\*The size of the final sample varied by region but was not intentional.

<sup>13</sup> REACH. February 2021. "Multi-Sector Needs Assessment".

## REPRESENTATIVITY

The communes were selected using probability proportional to size sampling, meaning each individual had an equal probability of appearing in the final sample at this stage. Due to practicalities on the ground (see “Limitations”), a random sampling approach was not possible at the commune level and the snowball sampling approach detailed above was employed. While we cannot rule out potential sampling bias due to the snowball sampling approach, several steps were taken to reduce sampling bias at the commune level, thus data in this report can be considered an accurate representation of people’s views in this region.

## LIMITATIONS

It was originally foreseen to use government lists of registered displaced people provided by CONASUR, to randomly select individuals for the survey. These lists were acquired in July 2021 and were up to date as of April 2021. A random sample was selected using these lists. In case people were unable to be found, the data collection team was equipped with a list of randomly selected replacements.

Unfortunately, most displaced people on our original and replacement lists could not be located – despite the support of CONASUR agents and the Minister of Humanitarian Action – or did not fit the survey criteria. Many phone numbers were no longer in service, some displaced people had returned to their home villages, others had moved to another location to grow crops, and still others had never received humanitarian assistance or had not received aid within the past six months. Since locating people randomly selected from the sampling frame was unsuccessful, a snowball approach was used after the first day of data collection to select displaced people for the survey. This mixture of methodologies only impacted the following communes: Djibasso in Boucle du Mouhoun; Bittou in Centre-Est; Barsalogo in Centre-Nord; Fada N’Gourma in Est; Ouahigouya in Nord; and Dori in Sahel. In all other communes, snowball sampling was used exclusively.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The questions were developed to gather aid recipients’ perceptions of the humanitarian response based on five key themes: aid targeting, information sharing and communication, quality of aid, prospects for resilience, and safety and complaint mechanisms.

Three online questionnaire development workshops were facilitated virtually in mid-March 2021, providing humanitarians with the opportunity to discuss their priorities for this perception questionnaire. The questionnaire was shared with humanitarians for their feedback and validation in April 2021.

## DATA COLLECTION TEAM

Data collection was conducted by the service provider, [Innovative Hub for Research in Africa \(IHfRA\)](#), headquartered in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Data collection across the six regions occurred from 19-30 August 2021.

## LANGUAGES

The questionnaire was drafted in French and translated into Mooré, Fulfulde, Dioula, and Goulmatchema, the predominant local languages spoken in the six regions surveyed.

A two-way translation approach was used: One translator translated the survey from French into a local language, then a different translator translated the local language back into French. Any discrepancies in the French translation were discussed and the two translators worked together to find the best version. The translated versions were coded into the survey tool to ensure that all enumerators used the same question phrasing in the local languages.



## QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Recipients' perceptions were assessed using a Likert scale of 1–5 (1: very negative perceptions; 5: very positive). Mean scores were 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.

Overall survey results are weighted based on the number of IDPs in each commune according to the data provided by CONASUR. Breakdowns by gender, status, and province presented in the report are not weighted.

# Qualitative interview methodology: affected populations

## SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

Preliminary results from the quantitative study were presented to communities living in Kaya and Ouahigouya on 11 and 14 January 2022, respectively. People gathered to watch a film – “La rue n’est pas le paradis” by Guy Désiré Yameogo – and then discussed the quantitative findings as a community. Approximately 300 people participated in the activity in Kaya and 500 in Ouahigouya. Participants were filmed during this activity.

The next morning, six people from each commune were individually interviewed using a semi-structured interview format to delve deeper into the feedback and gather their recommendations for aid providers. Interviews were filmed.

	Woman		Man	
	Displaced person	Non-displaced person	Displaced person	Non-displaced person
Kaya	2	1	2	1
Ouahigouya	2	1	2	1

## LIMITATIONS

There was an unintended three-month gap between the qualitative and quantitative activities due to authorisation delays. This meant the quantitative survey results might not have accurately reflected what people were experiencing in aid programming later on, during the qualitative interviews.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

The questions were developed to dive deeper into the following themes, with a specific look at the challenges faced by women and non-displaced people:

### Information-sharing

- Understand how information is currently shared.
- Clarify how people want to receive information.
- Understand why people prefer to receive information from community leaders, but only half of them think that community leaders share information with them.

- Gather recommendations on how humanitarians should improve the way they share information.

### **Targeting process**

- Understand the tensions involved in selecting beneficiaries.
- Understand how the community wants humanitarians to decide who gets aid and who does not, when all community members are likely to need some type of aid.
- Understand how people want their communities to be involved and consulted in the planning and implementation of humanitarian programs.

### **Complaint mechanisms**

- Understand whether people think humanitarians use the complaint mechanisms they prefer or whether humanitarians need to adapt the complaint mechanisms to their preferences.
- Gather their recommendations on how humanitarians can make the complaint process easy and accessible.

### **Safety and security**

- Gather recommendations on how to better support those who feel unsafe and fearful of physical violence and armed attacks.
- Gather recommendations on how to better support the psychological well-being of those affected.

### **Aid quality and durable solutions**

- Understand whether assistance is meeting people's most important needs. Why or why not?
- Understand what type of aid they prefer and why.
- Understand how communities feel that assistance can help them feel resilient.
- Understand how communities want humanitarians to support their children.

## **DATA COLLECTION TEAM**

This activity was facilitated by [Fama Films](#), a Burkina Faso-based production company specialising in participatory media.

## **LANGUAGES**

The questionnaire was drafted in French and translated orally into the relevant local language.

## **QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS**

Transcriptions from the films of the group discussion and individual interviews were analysed using MaxQDA.

# Quantitative interview methodology: aid providers

## SAMPLING METHODOLOGY

For the online humanitarian staff survey, a link to a KoBo Toolbox survey was shared with humanitarian partners across Burkina Faso for staff members to complete between June and July 2021.

## LIMITATIONS

While our team aimed to share the survey link broadly, only those with the link and who chose to respond completed the survey, which could lead to selectivity bias.

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Questions posed to humanitarians aligned with questions posed to affected communities so their views could be compared.

## LANGUAGES

The questionnaire was available in French and English.

## Sample of humanitarian personnel

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204 respondents

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### Gender

 67% Men (137)

 33% Women (67)

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### Status

- 78% National staff (159)
  - 22% Expatriate staff (45)
- 

### Type of organization

- 68% International NGO (139)
  - 16% UN agency (32)
  - 9% National NGO (18)
  - 7% Other (Red Cross, government bodies, donors) (15)
- 

### Level

- 68% National (138)
  - 32% Regional (66)
- 

### Regional assignment

- 61% Centre-Nord (40)
  - 24% Sahel (16)
  - 11% Nord (7)
  - 9% Boucle du Mouhoun (6)
  - 8% Est (5)
  - 3% Other (2)
  - 2% Centre-Est (1)
- 

### Type of assistance provided

- 76% In-kind (155)
- 74% Technical training (151)
- 71% Monetary assistance (145)
- 36% Coupons (73)



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