

# To increase trust, first improve communication

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May 2021 • Chad

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GROUND TRUTH  
SOLUTIONS



CHS Alliance

# Introduction

To meet the needs of vulnerable people in Chad, where protracted humanitarian crises persist amid economic, political, and environmental instability, we must first listen to them. Eastern Chad has hosted Sudanese refugees since 2003, while refugees and returnees from the Central African Republic (CAR) have been steadily fleeing to the south. Boko Haram's attacks in the Lac province terrorise inhabitants, disrupt livelihoods, and have displaced thousands of people. For three years, decreasing food production has left many food-insecure.<sup>1</sup> Last year's rainy season brought Chad's heaviest rainfall in 30 years, causing further displacement and death.<sup>2</sup> Climate shocks are particularly severe in eastern Chad's Sahelian zone, exacerbating the dual pressures of chronic food insecurity and a large community of refugees. People were being pushed to the brink, even before government measures to reduce the spread of [COVID-19](#) began hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance.<sup>3</sup>

[Ground Truth Solutions \(GTS\)](#) – in partnership with the [Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance \(CHS\)](#) and with funding from the [Swedish Agency for International Development Cooperation \(SIDA\)](#) – supports humanitarian actors to include the views of affected communities in their decision-making. Since 2018, GTS has conducted five rounds of face-to-face surveys with aid recipients in the Logone Oriental, Lac, and Ouaddaï provinces and analysed their perceptions. For this fifth round (conducted between November 2020 – March 2021), we expanded to Moyen Chari and Wadi Fira. The survey results were shared with community leaders in Lac, Logone Oriental and Wadi Fira (March 2021), whose recommendations are integrated into this report.<sup>4</sup> We also solicited online feedback from humanitarian staff in February 2021.

Project funded by:



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<sup>1</sup> "[Chad Situation Report](#)," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), accessed 3 March 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "[West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot](#)," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), accessed 3 March 2021.

<sup>3</sup> "[COVID-19: having a significant impact on social life and the national economy](#)," UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), accessed 3 March 2021.

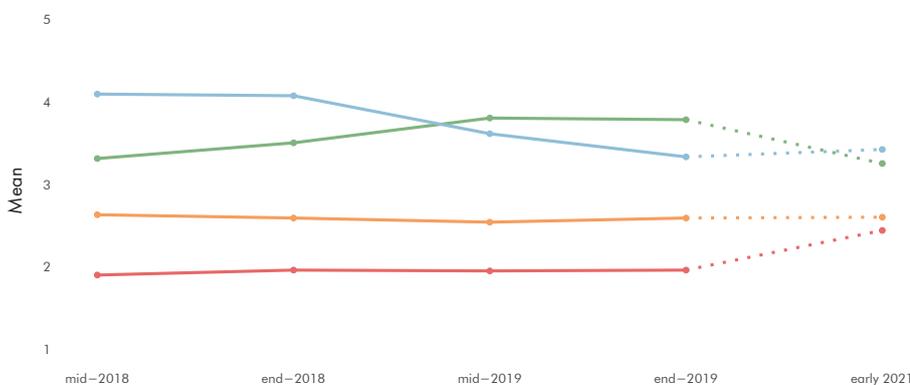
<sup>4</sup> Our team will also return to Ouaddaï and Moyen Chari to share the results with community leaders in these provinces after the publication of this report.

# Key findings

- Overall, respondents now feel less informed about available humanitarian services than in 2019.
- People do not think that aid goes to those who need it most. This has not changed over time.
- Respondents feel less comfortable reporting cases of mistreatment than in 2018.
- Communities feel more optimistic that humanitarian personnel take their opinions into account than in previous cycles, though responses remain very negative.

The graph below shows the mean scores per question over time.<sup>5</sup> The trend line shows how the answers to the questions have changed since 2018 and includes data from Logone Oriental, Lac and Ouaddaï. The additional dotted line connecting rounds four and five indicates the change between those two rounds when perception data from Moyen Chari and Wadi Fira is included.

## Changes in perceptions over five data collection rounds



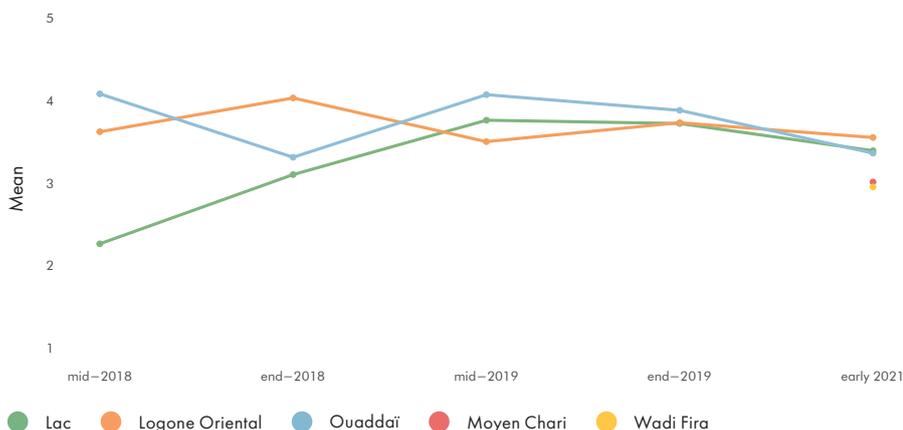
- Do you think people in your community feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid providers?
- Do you feel informed about the humanitarian aid and services available?
- Does aid go to those who need it most?
- Do you think your opinions about the aid you receive are taken into consideration by aid providers?

<sup>5</sup> 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.

# People need more information

Just over half of the people interviewed feel informed about the aid and services available to them. Previous progress on this topic seems to have been undone by [COVID-19](#), as government measures and restrictions prevented the face-to-face communication that affected communities prefer: information directly from community leaders (52%), community meetings (52%), management committees (34%), and public announcers (27%).

## Respondents who feel informed about the aid available by province



People living with a disability feel less informed (43%) than those who say they do not live with one (54%). Challenges to accessing information are exacerbated when the pandemic makes it hard for anyone to meet in groups but half of respondents living with a disability say they prefer receiving information during community meetings (54%). Arrangements should be made (eg. COVID-19-safe household visits, assistance to reach the meeting sites, assistance at meeting sites, COVID-19-safe meetings, and targeted information) to ensure more people can participate. Humanitarian staff should also evaluate whether their communication formats are well adapted to reach a broad range of community members, especially those with special needs.

Just over half (56%) of respondents think that community leaders share information about humanitarian aid with their communities, and those who think this are more likely to feel better informed in general.<sup>6</sup> This provides a good case for working more closely with trusted community leaders, but not all leaders in all areas are viewed equally. Some respondents (27%) do not trust leaders to regularly share information with them.



## Humanitarian staff feedback

Do you think that humanitarian actors in your organisation are providing affected people with the information they need? (n=102)

**82%** Yes

**12%** Neutral

**4%** No

Humanitarian staff feel more positive than affected communities that their organisations provide affected people with the information they need.

The information channels that humanitarian staff (n=102) report using are generally the ones that affected people prefer.

**92%** Community leaders

**88%** Community meetings

**76%** Management committees

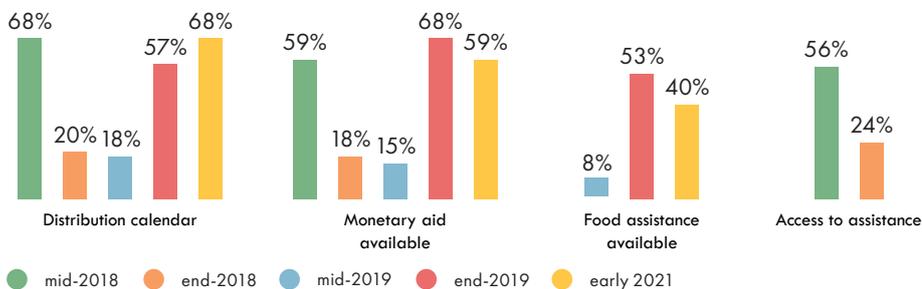
Less than half (48%) of humanitarian staff report using public announcers as an information channel. Public announcers are the preferred information channel in Logone Oriental (70%).

<sup>6</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficient: 0.31.

# Information gaps have stayed the same

People still need more information on the timing and availability of aid, especially monetary assistance and food aid. This has remained the same over five data collection cycles.

## What information do you need?<sup>7</sup>



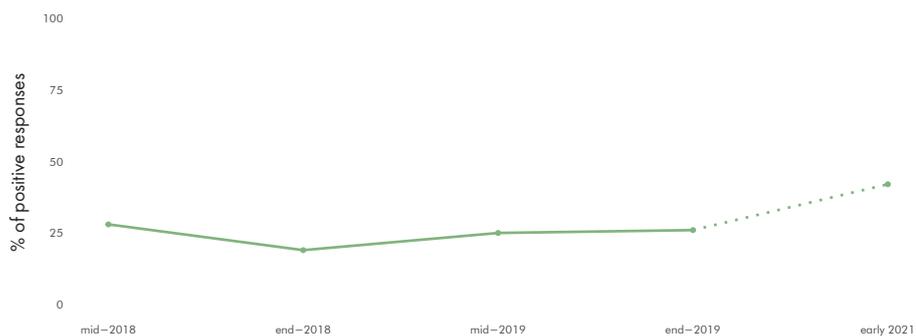
# 'Everyone in need' – people do not understand why some get aid while others do not

Although knowledge of the targeting process is low, there has been improvement since previous data collection cycles.

## Do you know how humanitarian organisations decide who receives assistance and who does not?<sup>8</sup>



## Changes in knowledge of targeting process<sup>9</sup>



Many respondents feel that everyone in their community is [in need of humanitarian assistance](#), which might be the reason for these low scores, round after round. This is understandably difficult for aid providers operating with limited funds. But more communication with communities, before aid programming begins, about the targeting processes and the reasoning behind why groups are selected to receive services might help. In 2018, refugees in Ouaddai protested after humanitarian organisations implemented a new needs categorisation and distribution process. Community leaders in Logone Oriental say that there is only one organisation (UNHCR) that creates a recipient list for those living in and out of camps, but there is a sense that those who are absent when the lists are created do not have the right to assistance, so the few people present at the time are the ones who receive assistance.



## Humanitarian staff feedback

What information is generally shared with affected communities? (n=102)

- 74% Complaint mechanisms
- 74% Timing of distributions
- 66% Health services availability
- 64% Food assistance availability
- 54% Education services

Only 33% report that [information about monetary assistance](#) is shared with affected communities, although 61% say that their organisations provide monetary assistance.



We are all vulnerable so aid must be given to everyone.

Male refugee, Bredjin, Ouaddai



We asked that they increase the amount of assistance as our household sizes increase over time. But nothing has changed so far. We also believe that our assistance is diverted for the benefit of others.

Community leader, Bol, Lac

<sup>7</sup> Results from the fifth round of data collection. The answer option "access to assistance" was only an option in 2018. Between 2019 - 2021, the answer options were updated and "food assistance available" was added. These percentages indicate the most frequent answers to the question. Since respondents sometimes gave more than one answer, the sum of the percentages for each data collection phase is not equal to 100%.

<sup>8</sup> Results from the fifth round of data collection.

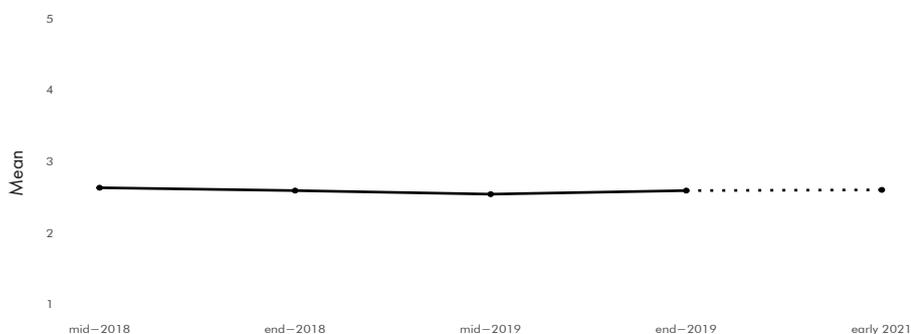
<sup>9</sup> During the first four phases of data collection, respondents' responses were recorded on a Likert scale (1- Not at all, 2- Not really, 3- In between, 4- Somewhat yes, 5- Absolutely). For this fifth phase of data collection, the question was replaced with a binary response option, where respondents could only answer "yes" or "no." To create this time series graph, we combined the positive responses given (Likert scale responses ranging from 4-5) during each phase of data collection for the first four phases so that we could compare them to the data from the fifth phase. In addition, Moyen Chari and Wadi Fira were added for phase five, thereby expanding the geographic coverage and size of the overall sample. The dotted line indicates that the data from the fifth series are not directly comparable due to these two changes in methodology.

Humanitarians should evaluate, at organisational and collective levels, how they are communicating their targeting process to affected communities and where it is missing the mark.

### Does aid go to those who need it most?<sup>10</sup>



### Changes in perceptions of aid going to those who need it most<sup>11</sup>



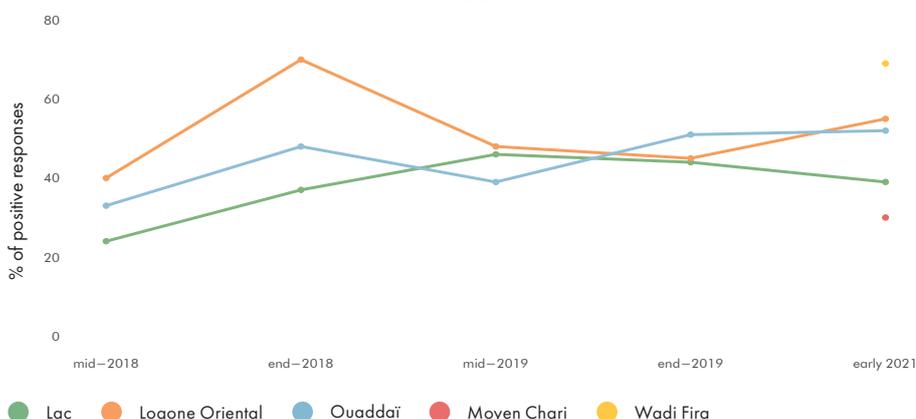
When asked to identify which groups of people are in most need, respondents point out that older people (69%), widows (44%), and female-headed households (33%) are largely left out of aid programming. They believe these groups are excluded because of discriminatory decision-making (43%) and a lack of information sharing (37%).

## Knowledge of complaint mechanisms varies from province to province

Half (49%) of the respondents said they know how to submit suggestions or complaints. Knowledge has varied over time and continues to differ between provinces, having increased in Logone Oriental and Ouaddai, but fallen in Lac. Baseline data show high awareness in Wadi Fira (69%) and very little in Moyen Chari (30%).

Although refugees feel the least informed about available aid and services, they are the most informed about complaint mechanisms (57%) compared to host community members (48%), internally displaced persons (IDPs) (43%), and returnees (36%). It is likely that complaint mechanisms are more operational in refugee camps than in other locations.

### Respondents who know how to submit suggestions or complaints, by province



### Humanitarian staff feedback

90% of humanitarian personnel surveyed (n=102) think the aid their organisations provide reaches those with the greatest need. Those who think aid could be distributed more fairly identify unregistered people as the group most in need of assistance.



A major lack of resources means that aid is spread thin, with large numbers of people not receiving assistance. New arrivals are prioritised, so long-term displaced may suffer, as well as those where access is not possible.

*Humanitarian staff*



We ask that the new arrivals are taken care of because we are obliged to share the little that we have with them.

*Community leader, Baga Sola, Lac*



Our communities are tired of submitting requests for an increase in the amount of aid. Nothing changes.

*Community leader, Baga Sola, Lac*



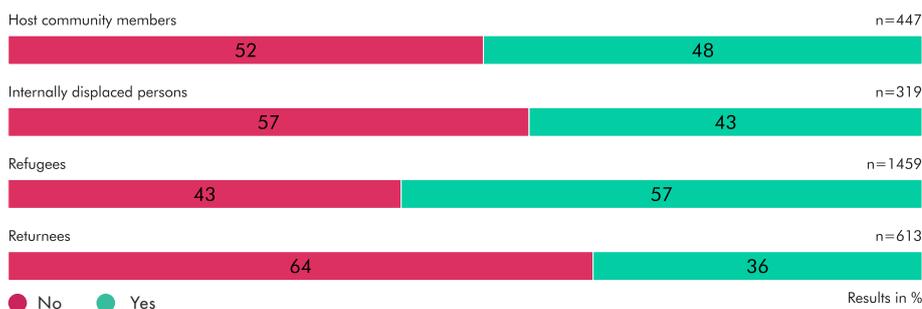
I cannot submit a complaint without having problems.

*Female refugee, Belom, Moyen Chari*

<sup>10</sup> Results from the fifth round of data collection.

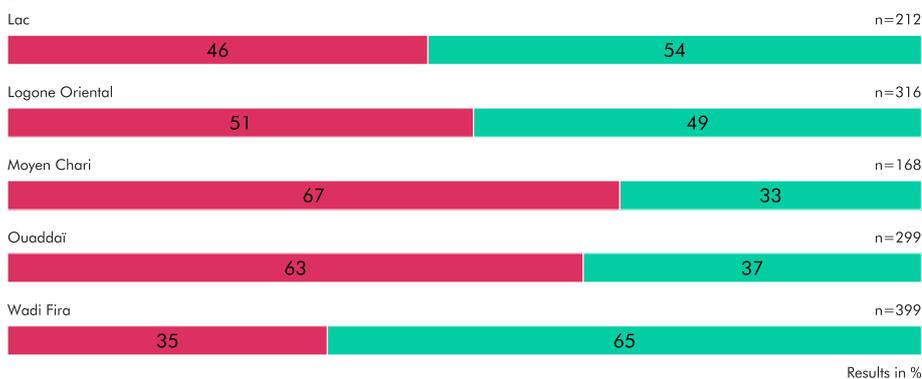
<sup>11</sup> Moyen Chari and Wadi Fira were added for phase five, thereby expanding the geographic coverage and size of the overall sample. The dotted line indicates that the data from the fifth series are not directly comparable due to these two changes in methodology.

## Respondents who know how to submit suggestions or complaints, by population group<sup>12</sup>

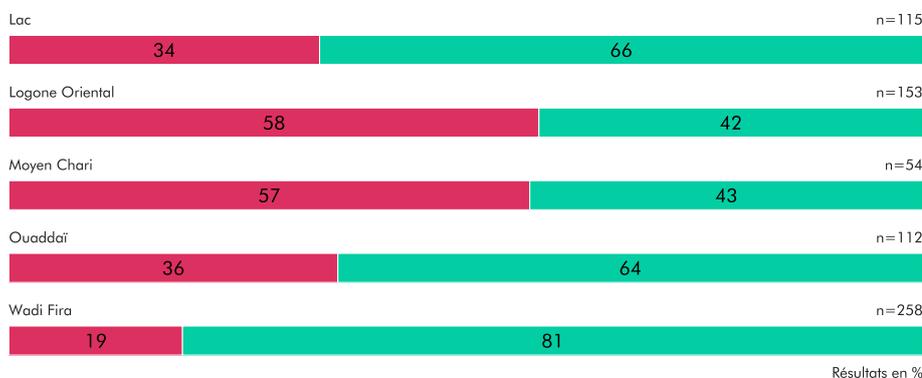


Wadi Fira is the province where most people know about (69%), use (65%) and report the highest response rate from (81%) complaint mechanisms. By contrast, just over half of respondents in Logone Oriental are familiar with complaint mechanisms, and just under half use them. Around 40% of respondents in Logone Oriental feel that their complaints garner a response. Communities in Lac now report lower knowledge of complaint mechanisms than in previous cycles. Among respondents who know of them, more than half use them (54%). However, in discussions with community leaders in Lac, they note that they never receive responses to their complaints, which discourages people from continuing to use the mechanisms. 58% of those who told us they had submitted a complaint had received a response. While this indicator has almost reached the target set by the HCT (60%), humanitarian standards suggest that all complainants should receive a timely response. Those in Liwa and Bol (Lac) say that that submitting complaints might just bring them more problems.

## Respondents who have submitted a suggestion or complaint to humanitarians, by province<sup>13</sup>



## Respondents who received a response to their suggestion or complaint, by province<sup>14</sup>



## Humanitarian staff feedback

**73%** of humanitarian personnel (n=102) think that their organisations regularly collect feedback from affected communities.

**78%** of humanitarian personnel (n=102) think that affected people know how to submit suggestions or complaints to their organisation.



People do not want to know about complaint mechanisms because it will not improve anything apart from exposing them to other risks, such as a cut-off of assistance.

*Community leader, Liwa, Lac*



Our communities no longer trust judicial institutions and complaints mechanisms. They are waiting for justice to be served, but they also think this is a losing battle.

*Community leader, Danamadja, Logone Oriental*



## Humanitarian staff feedback

**94%** of humanitarian staff (n=102) think that affected people would receive a response if they submitted a suggestion or complaint to their organisation.

<sup>12</sup> Results from the fifth round of data collection.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

In general, respondents prefer to submit complaints through the same channels they want to use to receive information.

**Preferred ways to submit suggestions or complaints (n=2845) :**

	<b>54%</b> In person with community leaders
	<b>46%</b> In person with humanitarian staff
	<b>29%</b> Community meetings
	<b>18%</b> Complaint management committees

**Preferred information channels (n=2845) :**

	<b>52%</b> Community leaders
	<b>52%</b> Community meetings
	<b>34%</b> Management committees
	<b>27%</b> Public announcers

When asked which groups they would trust to handle their suggestions or complaints, respondents overwhelmingly say humanitarian organisations (82%). Only 27% trust complaint management committees, which are the primary mechanisms in place according to humanitarian staff. People think the committees lack training, are not transparent, and rarely provide responses to complaints.

To improve complaint mechanisms, community leaders suggest humanitarians:

- Support communities to set up functioning complaint management committees that include local community members, refugees, international humanitarian staff and NGO managers to ensure transparency because some community leaders feel national staff do not fairly assess their complaints.
- Train committee members and incentivise them to systematically analyse complaints and provide responses.
- Designate clear offices for the committees so people know where to find them.
- Teach communities how complaints should be processed.
- Involve community leaders in all decisions.
- Provide community leaders with conflict resolution training to improve their work.
- Continue to survey communities as a means to evaluate humanitarian work.
- Set up a legal system to sanction an entire NGO if it operates poorly.



**Humanitarian staff feedback**

The primary complaint mechanisms that exist in Chad, according to humanitarian staff interviewed (n=102):

- 62%** Complaint management committees
- 52%** Hotlines
- 50%** Complaint boxes

The complaint mechanisms that affected people prefer are less frequently in place, according to the humanitarian personnel interviewed (n=102):

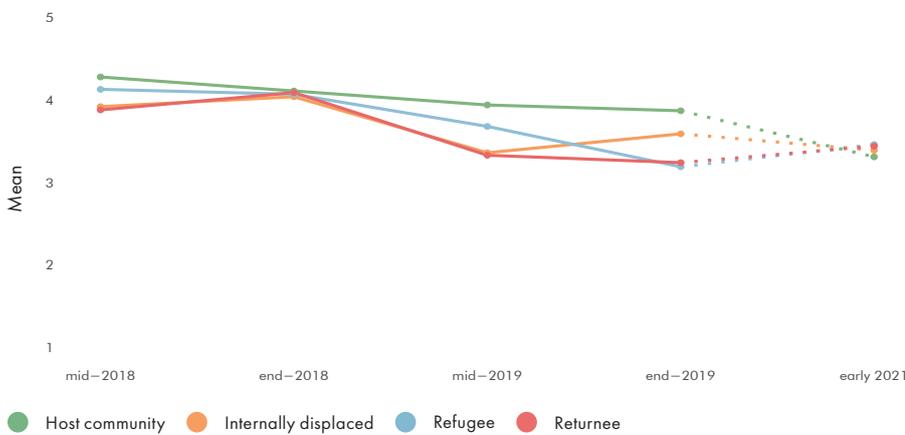
- 44%** Community meetings
- 38%** In person with humanitarians
- 33%** In person with community leaders

# Level of comfort reporting sensitive complaints is mixed, but overall too low

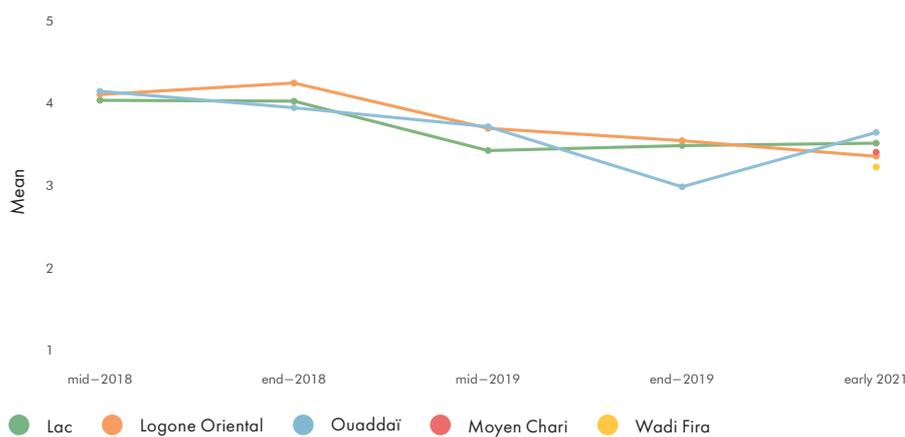
In general, there has been a gradual decline in confidence when it comes to reporting cases of abuse or mistreatment by humanitarians, something that should be addressed as a matter of urgency. More men (59%) than women (54%) report comfort in reporting.<sup>15</sup>

Though all status groups feel similarly this round, refugees and returnees feel more comfortable reporting abuse since the third data collection round. Host communities and IDPs feel less comfortable than in previous rounds. Their assistance is declining more quickly than for refugee communities, so host communities and IDPs might feel uneasy reporting cases of abuse when their aid status is already precarious – fear of missing aid is a [common barrier to reporting](#).

## Respondents who feel comfortable reporting cases of abuse or mistreatment by humanitarian staff, by population group



## Respondents who feel comfortable reporting cases of abuse or mistreatment by humanitarian staff, by province



“

If we denounce a humanitarian, they will never be punished, so what is the use? ... A humanitarian cannot have a relationship with a refugee, but there are those who have had children with members of our community and gone unpunished. Stop condoning impunity. No one is above the law.

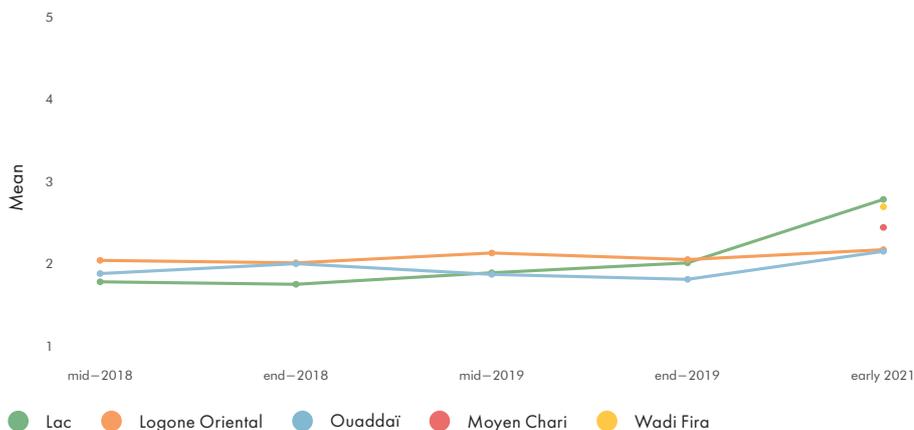
*Community leader, Dosseye, Logone Oriental*

<sup>15</sup> Women are more at risk of abuse and exploitation in humanitarian crises, are more vulnerable to gender-based violence, and thus are more likely to require access to a complaints mechanism. Humanitarians should pay special attention to [improving access for women](#).

# People feel respected when they feel heard

Only 19% of respondents think their opinions are considered by humanitarians. Although negative, it's important to note that this result is an improvement compared to previous cycles.

## Respondents who think their opinions are taken into consideration when humanitarians make decisions about aid, by province



One quarter of respondents know of a hotline that they can call if they have a question or complaint.<sup>16</sup> Host communities are the least informed about hotlines (15%) compared to IDPs (18%), refugees (22%), and returnees (34%). Of those aware of a hotline, 21% had called one and only 44% of those were satisfied with the answer they received. Those who felt satisfied with the response they had received were more likely to feel respected by humanitarian staff.<sup>17</sup> Ensuring communities feel heard is key to fostering respectful relationships.



## Humanitarian staff feedback

Affected people's negative feedback on how well their opinions are taken into consideration stands in stark contrast to the positive responses provided by humanitarian personnel.

**76%** of humanitarian staff (n = 102) think that they have the necessary information on affected communities' preferences to adapt their projects based on these people's changing needs.

When asked if their organisations regularly involved affected communities at each stage in the project, humanitarians (n=102) are less positive: **44%** think affected people are involved at the project inception phase; **71%** think they are involved during project implementation; and **68%** think they are involved during the evaluation phase.

**83%** of humanitarian staff (n=102) think their organisations implement corrective measures, based on the feedback they receive from affected communities, when implementing projects.



There are no results and the NGOs only do as they see fit. Nothing can be done outside of their activity plans. We think it is useless to go to the coordination meetings because our points of view are never considered. There is no improvement in the camps, the situation is getting worse.

*Community leader, Dosseye, Logone Oriental*



Consult refugees first. Projects designed in an office will never work in the camps.

*Community leader, Dosseye, Logone Oriental*

<sup>16</sup> Our questionnaire did not specify which hotline. We sought to determine if respondents knew of any existing hotline.

<sup>17</sup> Pearson's correlation coefficient: 0.45.

# Methodology

## Questionnaire

The survey questions for affected communities and humanitarian personnel were developed by Ground Truth Solutions in collaboration with the CHS Alliance and OCHA Chad, our partners in the project, and were widely shared with key stakeholders in the humanitarian response, including UN agencies and international and national NGOs. The questions include Likert scale responses (where answers correspond to a score from 1 to 5), as well as binary and multiple-choice responses.

The questionnaire for affected communities was written in French and then translated orally into the following languages during the census sessions, based on the linguistic composition of each province: Arabic, Chadian Arabic, Kanembou, Bouduman, Assangori, Massalite, Ngama, Foulbé, Sango, Kaba, Tama, Zaghawa, and other local languages in Chad. The questionnaire for humanitarian personnel was made available in French and English.

Three main indicators form the basis of this report's analysis and each is linked to a Core Humanitarian Standard commitment related to information (commitment 4), relevance (commitment 1), complaint mechanisms (commitment 5), and participation (commitment 4). The questions are as follows:

### CHS Commitment

-  Do you feel informed about the humanitarian aid and services available?
-  Does aid go to those who need it most?
-  Do you think people in your community feel able to report instances of abuse or mistreatment by aid providers?
-  Do you think your opinions about the aid you receive are taken into consideration by aid providers?

### Sample framework

A total of 2,845 people were interviewed in this fifth round, across five provinces: Lac (541), Ouaddaï (575), Logone Oriental (573), Moyen Chari (572), and Wadi Fira (584). These provinces and the corresponding sites per province were selected based on the number of people affected by crises, the number of humanitarian actors present, and our enumerator team's ability to access the crisis-affected population based on security risks and logistics. Due to security concerns, the sample framework was modified for Wadi Fira and did not include the department of Kobé (Iriba). The sample in Wadi Fira was also based on the number of food insecure people living in the province to ensure that we calculated a sample representative of the people in need.

Province	Host community	Refugees	Internally displaced	Returnees	Total
Lac	71	75	317	78	541
Logone Oriental	127	204		242	573
Ouaddaï		575			575
Moyen Chari	78	197	2	295	572
Wadi Fira	173	411			584
<b>Total</b>	<b>449</b>	<b>1462</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>2845</b>

## Sample of people affected by crises

2845 respondents

### Province

- 584 in Wadi Fira
- 575 in Ouaddaï
- 573 in Logone Oriental
- 572 in Moyen Chari
- 541 in Lac

Our sampling frame included 550 people per province. The size of the final sample varied by province but was not intentional.

### Gender

-  1729 women (61%)
-  1116 men (39%)

### Population group

-  1462 refugees (51%)
-  615 returnees (22%)
-  449 host community members (16%)
-  319 internally displaced persons (11%)

### Age groups

- 1332 people ages 18-35 (47%)
- 1239 people ages 36-60 (44%)
- 274 people ages 61 and older (9%)

### Handicap

-  515 people living with a disability (18%)

### Recipients of cash and voucher assistance

-  1525 Recipients of cash and voucher assistance (54%)

The sample is stratified in proportion to the size of the affected populations in each camp, site, or village, by status (refugees, IDPs, returnees, host community). Within each stratum, respondents were randomly selected by interviewing one eligible person every three households to cover each camp, site, or village.

All respondents were 18 years of age or older and all were recipients of humanitarian assistance.

For the online humanitarian staff survey, we targeted humanitarian personnel working at both national and provincial levels, holding a range of positions, and national or expatriate staff. In total, 102 humanitarian staff responded, which includes local staff as well as national coordination staff based in N'Djamena.

### Data collection

Locally recruited enumerators, trained by Ground Truth Solutions, conducted face-to-face interviews (respecting COVID-19 precautionary measures) with affected people between November 2020–March 2021. Within a given site, enumerators surveyed every third household to ensure randomisation of the sample.

For the online humanitarian staff survey, a link to a KoBo Toolbox survey was shared with humanitarian partners across Chad for staff members to complete during February 2021.

### Weighting

Data from affected people and overall mean values presented were weighted based on province (administrative level 1) population figures. For multiple choice questions, the maximum margin of error at the 95% confidence interval lies at (+/-) 12 percentage points, and between (+/-) 2 and 6 percentage points for the binary questions. Margins of error for breakdowns by province, status, and gender are larger than for the overall weighted means. Data points that did not contain the respondent's province were not considered for the weighted analysis.

### Disaggregation

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

### Limitations

A series of logistical challenges and security concerns impeded our team's ability to survey communities in the Iriba region in Wadi Fira, where we had anticipated surveying refugees in Touloum, Amnabak, and Iridimi. Our survey in Wadi Fira consequently only included respondents located in Guereda, thus the results from this province are not representative of people in need throughout Wadi Fira.

You can find more results from this survey in our reports on [needs](#) and [COVID-19](#) or check out [all of our reports on Chad here](#).

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

## Sample of humanitarian personnel

102 respondents

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### Gender



80 men (78%)



21 women (21%)

1 do not wish to answer (1%)

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### Status

73 national staff (72%)

29 expatriate staff (28%)

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### Type of organisation

62 staff from international NGOs (61%)

35 staff from UN agencies (34%)

5 staff from national NGOs (5%)

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### Intervention level

65 province (64%)

37 national (36%)

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### Province

26 in Lac (25%)

18 in Wadi Fira (18%)

15 in Ouaddai (15%)

5 Other (5%)

1 in Logone Oriental (1%)

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