



World Food  
Programme



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



# JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSION FOR NIGERIAN REFUGEES IN FAR NORTH REGION IN CAMEROON 2022

Data collection: October – November 2021  
Report published: September 2022

## Acknowledgements

The 2021 Joint Assessment Mission (JAM) for Nigerian refugees in and around Minawao settlement in the Far North region of Cameroon was conducted jointly by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) with the support and coordination of the UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub. The JAM could not have been prepared without the commitment and support of national and international staff from these two agencies and the Hub:

The JAM Team included:

**WFP Cameroon:** Anaïs Dalbai (Head of the Research, Assessment, and Monitoring Unit), Francis Njilie (VAM Officer), Christian Nguemba (Senior Research, Assessment & Monitoring Associate), Christian Nzeyimana (Head of Office, Maroua), Bassirou Mouhamadou (Program Policy Officer), Sylvia Ngwa (Programme Policy Officer), Azeufouet Alain Simplicite (M&E Associate), Parfait Tchongang (Programme Associate).

**UNHCR Cameroon:** Jean Bosco Rushatsi (Senior Operations Coordinator), Amayel Sow (CBI Officer), Lydie Saffi Ilunga (Protection Officer), Jean-Luc Kramo (Information Management Associate) Claudric Nguena de Kalambak (Information Management Associate), Georges Comlan Dagbelou (Head of SubOffice a.i.), Mamadou Saliou Diallo (Programme Officer), Mahmadou Ben Bello (Community-Based Protection Associate), Ruffine Ruth Ebene Zobo (Field Associate Livelihood), Adja Zara Maïna (Field Assistant), Joseph Beyongolo (Senior Field Associate), Gertrude Désirée Etobe (Community-based Protection Associate), Francois Abiyngoma (Senior Assessment Officer), Ghislaine Ada Ngaska (Senior Health Officer).

**UNHCR/WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub:** Elizabeth Siebenmann (Country Coordinator), Cinzia Papavero (Senior Targeting Advisor), Yingci Sun (Assessment Officer), Homaira Sikandary (Senior Programme Officer), Federica Esu (Data Analyst), Guillermo Rodriguez (Data Analyst & Assessment Officer), Lisa Biederlack (Report writer).

Special acknowledgements go to the enumerators for their support during the data collection exercise. The team also expresses its gratitude to WFP and UNHCR Management for the guidance received throughout the process and expresses thanks to the refugee households in and around Minawao settlement who welcomed the survey team, facilitated the process and provided valuable information.

The World Food Programme (WFP) is the leading humanitarian organization saving lives and changing lives, delivering food assistance in emergencies and working with communities to improve nutrition and build resilience.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is the global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

The UNHCR/WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub is an inter-agency team of UNHCR and WFP staff that provides technical support to both organizations at the country, regional and global level.

Cover photo/UNHCR.

# Acronyms

<b>AAP</b>	Accountability to Affected People
<b>CARI</b>	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security
<b>CFA</b>	Central African Franc
<b>ECMEN</b>	Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FES</b>	Food Expenditure Share
<b>FCS</b>	Food Consumption Score
<b>FFA</b>	Food Assistance for Asset Creation
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GDT</b>	Global Distribution Tool
<b>KI</b>	Key Informant
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>HH</b>	Household
<b>JAM</b>	Joint UNHCR/WFP Assessment Mission
<b>MEB</b>	Minimum Expenditure Basket
<b>NFI</b>	Non Food Items
<b>OAU</b>	Organisation of African Unity
<b>rCSI</b>	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Country context.....	9
Assistance to date .....	9
Objectives of JAM 2021 .....	9
Methodology and limitations.....	10
<b>Identification of refugee needs in Minawao settlement and in the host community</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Demographics .....	11
Protection and accountability to affected populations .....	12
Access to basic services.....	14
Livelihoods and income sources .....	16
Livelihood challenges and coping strategies .....	18
Economic capacities.....	21
Asset ownership .....	21
Household food and non-food expenditures.....	21
Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) .....	23
Debts and savings .....	24
Household food security.....	25
Household food access.....	25
Household food consumption.....	26
Food-based coping strategies and reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI).....	27
<b>Vulnerability analysis</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Overall vulnerability in October/November 2021 .....	29
Categorization of vulnerable groups .....	30
<b>Conclusions</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Recommendations</b> .....	<b>33</b>
<b>Annex</b> .....	<b>34</b>

# Table of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Demographic characteristics and special needs of refugee household .....	11
<b>Figure 2:</b> Educational level of household heads.....	12
<b>Figure 3:</b> Complaints and feedback mechanisms mostly used (% HHs) .....	13
<b>Figure 4:</b> Main source to seek treatment for sick children .....	14
<b>Figure 5:</b> Sources of drinking water .....	15
<b>Figure 6:</b> Predominant types of shelter.....	16
<b>Figure 7:</b> Primary livelihood / income source.....	16
<b>Figure 8:</b> Secondary livelihood / income source .....	17
<b>Figure 9:</b> Primary shocks/difficulties affecting households between July – September 2021.....	18
<b>Figure 10:</b> Severity of livelihood coping strategies adopted.....	19
<b>Figure 11:</b> Most prominent livelihood coping strategies adopted.....	20
<b>Figure 12:</b> Household ownership of productive and non-productive assets .....	21
<b>Figure 13:</b> Monthly food expenditure share.....	22
<b>Figure 14:</b> Average composition of monthly household expenditures in Minawao settlement and host community (CFA) .....	22
<b>Figure 15:</b> Economic capacity to meet essential needs among refugee and host community households .....	24
<b>Figure 16:</b> Reason why households incurred debts during the 3 months preceding the survey.....	24
<b>Figure 17:</b> Average debt among households with debts (CFA).....	25
<b>Figure 18:</b> Receipt of assistance between April and September 2021 .....	25
<b>Figure 19:</b> Main sources for staples during 7 days preceding the survey.....	25
<b>Figure 20:</b> Household food consumption .....	26
<b>Figure 21:</b> Consumption of nutrient-rich food items (average number of days per week)27	
<b>Figure 22:</b> Adoption of food-related coping strategies .....	28
<b>Figure 23:</b> Overall vulnerability among refugee households in October/November 2021 .....	29

## Table of Tables

Table 1: Average monthly food and overall expenditures.....	23
Table 2: Vulnerability Classification Framework .....	28
Table 3: Refugee household profiles.....	30

## Table of Boxes

Box 1: Refugee context in Cameroon.....	8
Box 2: The COVID-19 pandemic context .....	9
Box 3: Gender and protection risks.....	14
Box 4: Agriculture and Nigerian refugees in the Far North of Cameroon .....	18
Box 5: Food Consumption Score - Nutrition (FCS – N) Quality Analysis.....	27

# Executive Summary

## Key findings

- **Overall, almost half of Nigerian refugee households in Minawao settlement and in the host community of the Far North are highly vulnerable.** They do not have the economic capacities to meet their essential needs, have poor consumption patterns and demonstrate low livelihood resilience to cope with resource shortages or any potential shocks. Comparatively speaking, highly vulnerable refugee households tend to have more members with an average of six, half of whom typically female. With many children below 18 and 5 years highly vulnerable refugee households are characterized by a high dependency ratio of 2.4, thereby lacking adult, able-bodied members to help earn sufficient income to support all household members. Refugee households residing in Minawao settlement are more likely to be highly vulnerable (49 percent) than those living in the host community (40 percent). The share of least vulnerable households is minimal in both locations, but particularly low in the settlement (2 percent).
- **While access to basic services is more favourable in Minawao settlement than in the areas in its vicinity, households residing in the host community have relatively better livelihood opportunities, especially within the agricultural sector.** Refugee households living in the host community are predominately involved in agricultural production with up to 60 percent drawing an income from it. In the settlement, on the other hand, the range of primary income sources varies with about 21 percent of refugee households engaged in casual labour, 20 percent depending on assistance and merely 13 percent engaged in agricultural production.
- **Against the background of high vulnerability levels, more than half of refugee households resort to negative livelihood coping strategies to meet essential needs.** About 52 percent of refugee households in the settlement and up to 68 percent in the host community adopted at least one livelihood coping strategy to make ends meet in the 30 days preceding the survey. Refugee households from the host community were more likely to opt for crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies compared to those in Minawao which undermine household resilience most. They include the *selling of last female animals, begging and withdrawing children from school.*
- **The economic capacity to meet essential needs using available resources at household level is greatly limited among the Nigerian refugee population.** Despite the assistance they receive, up to 70 percent of refugee households in Minawao settlement are unable to meet their essential food needs on their own, which compares to about 61 percent of refugee households that live in the host community. More households in the host community are able to cover their food and non-food essential needs by themselves (27 percent) than in the settlement (14 percent).
- **While all refugee households – regardless of their location – spend about 64 percent of their monthly household expenditures on food on average, actual expenditures differ substantially between the two groups.** The average food expenditure per capita of refugee households in the host community is double the amount households in the settlement spend on food. Yet, largest shares of non-food expenditures are used to repay debts and refugee households in the host community are more likely to be indebted (54 percent) than those in the settlement (43 percent). In addition, their average amounts of debts accumulated is double the average amount of households residing in Minawao. This could either be an indication of greater economic capacity, or else may be a first sign of vulnerability as households' resilience levels are likely to be compromised with gradually increasing debts. More research is needed in this regard.
- **Despite being assisted with in-kind food assistance refugee, households in the settlement are less likely to have acceptable food consumption patterns (28 percent) than households living in the host**

**community (52 percent).** About 72 percent of households in the settlement continue having poor or borderline food consumption which compares to 48 percent among households in the host community. Also, the diets consumed by refugee households in the host community are – on average – of better nutritious quality. During the 7 days preceding the survey, households in the settlement resort to the same food-related coping strategies that households in the host community opt for in order to make ends meet. The two most prominent measures for both groups include *relying on less preferred/expensive food and limiting portion sizes at meal times.*

- **Market dependency to source food, which is prevalent in both groups of refugee households, comes with risks linked to price fluctuations and potential economic shocks in the future.** While refugee households in the settlement receive in-kind food assistance and up to half of those living in the host community grow their own staples, half of the Nigerian refugee population – even more than half in the settlement (55 percent) – purchase staples in the market. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, households have been confronted with dramatic price increases of food and fertilizer which are lingering on due to continuing global supply chain disruptions. Against the background of Cameroon’s structural reliance on imports of wheat and fertilizer from Russia, the economic situation of the country is expected to worsen due to the

ongoing war in Ukraine<sup>1</sup>. The implications will trickle down to the household level and further undermine already compromised resilience capacities. Already at the time of the survey, at the end of 2021, high costs of living were identified to be the number one challenge preventing Nigerian refugee households from successfully pursuing their livelihoods.

- **While no major safety or security concerns were raised during the survey, the Nigerian population is clearly exposed to very real and wide-ranging protection risks, while the use of complaints and feedback mechanisms is minimal.** The demographic composition of the Nigerian refugee population - with half of the settlement’s population being women, 54,100 children, 29 percent having specific needs and 2 percent of child heads of households<sup>2</sup> - coupled with the implications of living in an area marred by conflict, make the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), almost unsurmountable tasks. Difficulties in adapting to their new environment were the second most frequently mentioned difficulty that refugee households are confronted with. And it appears that the highly important two-way communication loop between beneficiaries and the operating agencies is in great need of improvement, given that merely 13 percent of households in the settlement were found to have used feedback mechanisms to raise questions, provide feedback, share concerns and complaints in the past.

<sup>1</sup> FEWSnet, Cameroon, Food Security Outlook Update, April 2022

<sup>2</sup> UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response, Nigeria Situation, 2019-2020

# Introduction

## Country context

Cameroon is currently hosting a total of 485,729 refugees and asylum seekers<sup>34</sup>. About 116,623 are living in the Far North region of the country, the majority of whom have been fleeing violence linked to Boko Haram in neighbouring Nigeria since 2014. The Far North region is one of the poorest regions in the country<sup>5</sup>, marred by structural underdevelopment, recurring climatic shocks and ongoing insecurities. Minawao is one of ten settlements in the country and is situated in the Far North's department of Mayo-Tsanaga. The settlement is currently providing refuge to over 60,000 Nigerian refugees. The remainder of 57,000 Nigerians reside in host villages in surrounding border areas.

Security conditions within the Far North Region of Cameroon remain volatile, as sporadic attacks by Non-State-Armed Groups (NSAGs) continue to occur, including killings, kidnappings, sexual and gender-based violence, pillaging and the burning of villages<sup>6</sup>. Criminality is on the rise in nearly all regions along the Nigerian border. Insecurity continues to have the most adverse effects on civilian populations and administrative structures in a number of departments, including Mayo-Tsanaga where Minawao settlement is situated. Additionally, poverty and inequality are widespread in this region of the country<sup>7</sup>, where the presence of refugees further increases the pressure on already limited natural resources and basic socio-economic infrastructure.

After an official registration in Cameroon, refugees decide whether to live in Minawao settlement or in the host community. Regardless of their decision they are provided with a package of assistance, including legal support, access to social services, etc. Within the settlement, refugees receive humanitarian assistance and livelihood

support with the view to increase self-reliance. Refugees who opt to live in the host community predominately rely on their own resources.

### Box 1: Refugee context in Cameroon

Cameroon is a signatory of the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Refugee Convention. These commitments have been translated into national law with a progressive legal framework: refugees enjoy prima facie status and are allowed to work, move freely and reside within Cameroon's borders. Cameroon is also a signatory of the Global Compact on Refugees and in addition is committed to integrating refugees into its socio-economic planning mechanisms in the same way as nationals<sup>8</sup>.

However, the law is not applied in its entirety: refugees are issued refugee identification cards once biometrically registered, however they do not guarantee their right to free movement. While in principle refugees have the right to access education and health services, many cannot due to lack of required resources, as well as lack of or greatly underdeveloped infrastructures in the area.

The Government leads the coordination of the Nigerian refugee response in Cameroon at national level. At the regional level government entities lead sectors with UN agency as co-leads. UNHCR chairs a Multisectoral Operations Team that brings together all sector leads and co-leads, as well as key partners operating in the region to give strategic and operational guidance.

<sup>3</sup> For the purpose of this report, "asylum seekers" are included in the term "refugee" and will no longer be listed separately.

<sup>4</sup> UNHCR, Cameroon, Fact Sheet March 2022

<sup>5</sup> WFP, Cameroon, Annual Country Report 2021

<sup>6</sup> UNHCR Regional Refugee Response Plan, Nigeria Situation 2019-2020

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> As stated in the ongoing National Post-Document for Growth and Employment Strategy formulation process for the next ten years, as well as the Humanitarian Development Peace nexus (UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response Plan, Nigeria Situation, 2019-2020). Source: UNHCR Regional Refugee Response Plan, Nigeria Situation 2019-2020

## Assistance to date

### **Protection, services and durable solutions:**

UNHCR's main activities targeted at Nigerian refugees in the Far North of Cameroon include protection (including registration, protection monitoring, education), community mobilization, shelter and NFI assistance, health, water and sanitation and durable solutions.

Voluntary repatriation to the country of origin, resettlement to a third country and local integration in the country of asylum are the three durable solutions sought by UNHCR Cameroon to sustainably assist refugees to live their lives in dignity and peace. However, given continuing insecurities in refugees' countries/regions of origin, local integration is - de facto - the most appropriate and feasible durable solution.

**Food assistance:** Based on its Country Strategic Plan 2018-2022, WFP has been providing unconditional in-kind food assistance to vulnerable refugees in close coordination and collaboration with UNHCR and Public Concern. The 66,000 Nigerian refugees in Minawao settlement are being assisted with in-kind food baskets provided on a monthly basis with the objective to cover basic food and nutrition needs. Due to ongoing funding constraints, food assistance has seen a drastic reduction since 2021, with the monthly in-kind food ration covering 70 percent of a standard food basket providing 2,100 kcal per person per day.

**Prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition:** Through the Blanket Supplementary Feeding Platform, WFP is providing nutritional assistance to 6,460 children in Minawao settlement. This activity is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and Plan International.

**Livelihood and resilience programmes:** The conditional Food Assistance for Asset Creation (FFA) programme by WFP aims to address short-term hunger among vulnerable populations (including refugees) in the Far North region and to create more resilient livelihoods through the creation and rehabilitation of community assets (including gardens, ponds, wells, irrigation canals, and feeder roads, among others).

### **Box 2: The COVID-19 pandemic context**

The health crisis linked to the global COVID 19 pandemic, which hit Cameroon in March 2020, weakened the situation of already vulnerable households in the country, including the Nigerian refugee population in the Far North region. Measures taken by the Government in response to the pandemic led to market restrictions and negatively impacted the sources of income of households. While the number of new COVID-19 cases have been on a decreasing trend, lingering COVID-19 restrictions continue to disrupt global supply chains and maintain high import costs, keeping the domestic supply in Cameroon of imported and processed staple foods below average and prices at record high levels<sup>9</sup>.

## Objectives of JAM 2021

Against the background of dramatic funding constraints for humanitarian assistance programmes, UNHCR and WFP Cameroon have requested support from the Joint UNHCR/WFP Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub to conduct an assessment to understand the needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of Nigerian refugees. The results of the assessment will aim to inform strategic and programmatic recommendations for the refugee response, and assess the feasibility and appropriateness of a joint targeting approach/strategy for the provision of essential needs assistance.

Due to the unavailability of updated and reliable data sources on Minawao's refugee population, a Joint Assessment Mission was therefore implemented which pursued the following objectives:

- To collect up-to-date information on the refugees' capacities to meet their **essential needs**, their **livelihood opportunities and challenges**, as well as any related **protection concerns**, ensuring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is factored in and gender considerations are prioritised;
- To understand the current **food security**

<sup>9</sup> FEWSnet, Cameroon, Food Security Outlook Update, April 2022

**and nutrition situation** of refugees living in Minawao settlement and in the local host communities;

- To describe the **vulnerability characteristics** of refugee households in Minawao settlement and in the host community to **inform targeting and strategic directions** of both agencies.

## Methodology and limitations

The survey was designed to generate statistically representative findings for the refugee population residing in Minawao settlement and the refugee population living among the local host population in the settlement's vicinity.

A secondary analysis preceded and guided the primary data collection exercise. Primary data was collected through a structured household questionnaire, key informant (KI) interviews and focus group discussions (FGD)<sup>10</sup>. The data collection exercise took place between 30th October and 14th November 2021. Subsequent analyses were based on the triangulation of both, qualitative and quantitative data.

The samples were drawn to collect household data representative for Nigerian refugees living within and outside Minawao settlement. A random sampling methodology was used with a 95 percent confidence level, and 2 to 5 percent margin of error and a 15 percent non-response rate factored in. A random sample of 607 refugee households residing in the settlement and a sample of 435 refugee households living in the host community were drawn. The latter was drawn based on cluster sampling. No corrective weights were used in this analysis.

## Limitations

The communication between the technical team and the group of enumerators during the data collection exercise was at times sporadic, but frequent quality checks helped to address questions, including uncertainties about items in the questionnaire, the correct recording of answers, etc.

---

<sup>10</sup> KIs with government partners, NGOs, community representatives, other UN agencies; FGDs with female household heads, livelihood project participants, people with specific protection needs, young girls and boys, and unaccompanied minors.

# Identification of refugee needs in Minawao settlement and in the host community

## Demographics

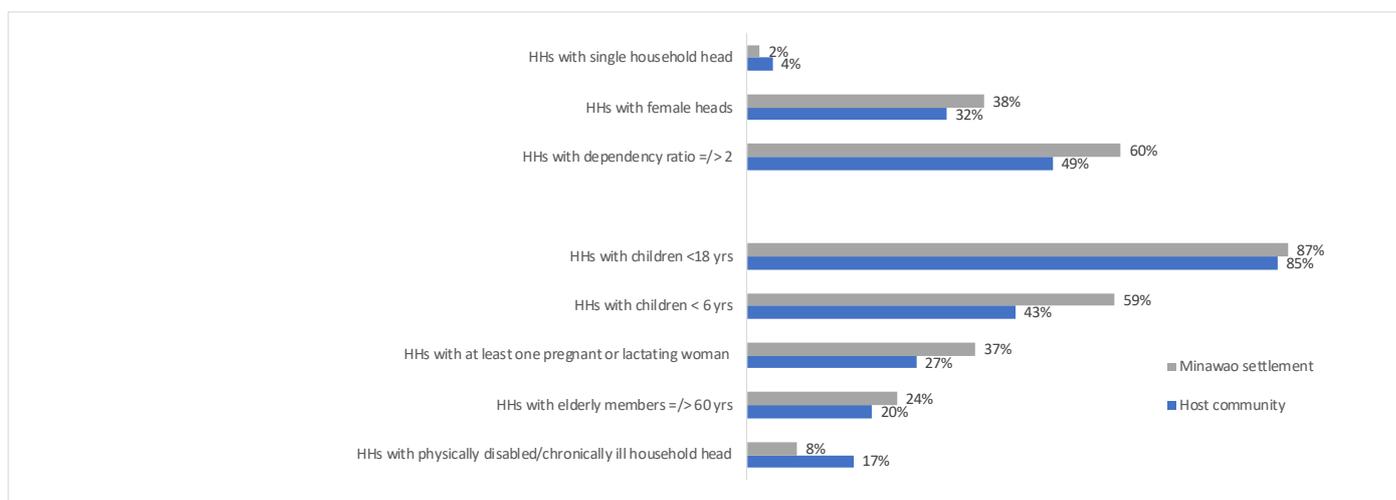
**Household composition:** The average refugee household size in the settlement stands at 6 members, compared to 5 members in the host community. The refugee population in both the settlement and the host community is young with more than half of households having children below the age of 6 and more than 80 percent having children below the age of 18 years. Particularly refugee households in the settlement are more likely to have younger household members below 6 years of age (59 percent), compared to those living in the host community (43 percent).

This finding matches the higher share of refugee households in the settlement that have at least one pregnant and lactating woman (37 percent) which compares to 27 percent of those living in the host community. Having household members that are physically disabled and/or chronically ill is equally common in both groups of households affecting about 5 percent overall. However, physical disability and chronic illness affect a significantly larger share of household heads in the host community (17 percent) than household heads in the settlement (8 percent). Elderly household members (60 years or above) are slightly more common among households in the settlement (24 percent) than among refugee households in the host community (20 percent).

**Dependency ratio<sup>11</sup>:** About 60 percent of refugee households in the settlement and 49 percent in the host community have a dependency ratio of 2 or above, meaning that in every household, for every able-bodied, working-age adult between 18 to 59 years, there are at least two non-working members. The non-working members are unable to engage in productive work because of their age or any disabling health or physical conditions. The average dependency ratio for the entire Nigerian refugee population stands at 2.10 which compares to 2.29 among refugees in Minawao settlement and 1.9 among those refugees residing in host communities.

**Sex and marital status of household heads:** Female headed refugee households are slightly more common in the settlement (38 percent) than in the host community (32 percent). Overall, monogamous marriages are most common at 61 percent. Polygamy is slightly more common among refugee household heads in the settlement (19 percent) than among household heads in the host community (15 percent). Being widowed is also slightly more prevalent among household heads in the settlement (17 percent) compared to those in the host community (12 percent). The share of divorced and single household heads is relatively low overall at 4 percent and 3 percent respectively.

**Figure 1: Demographic characteristics and special needs of refugee household**



Source: JAM 2021

**Ethnicity:** Refugee households in the settlement and the host community are composed of entirely different ethnic groups: While the Kanuri dominate in Minawao, followed by the Glavda and the Mafa, more than half of refugees living among the host communities are Arab, preceding the Kanuri.

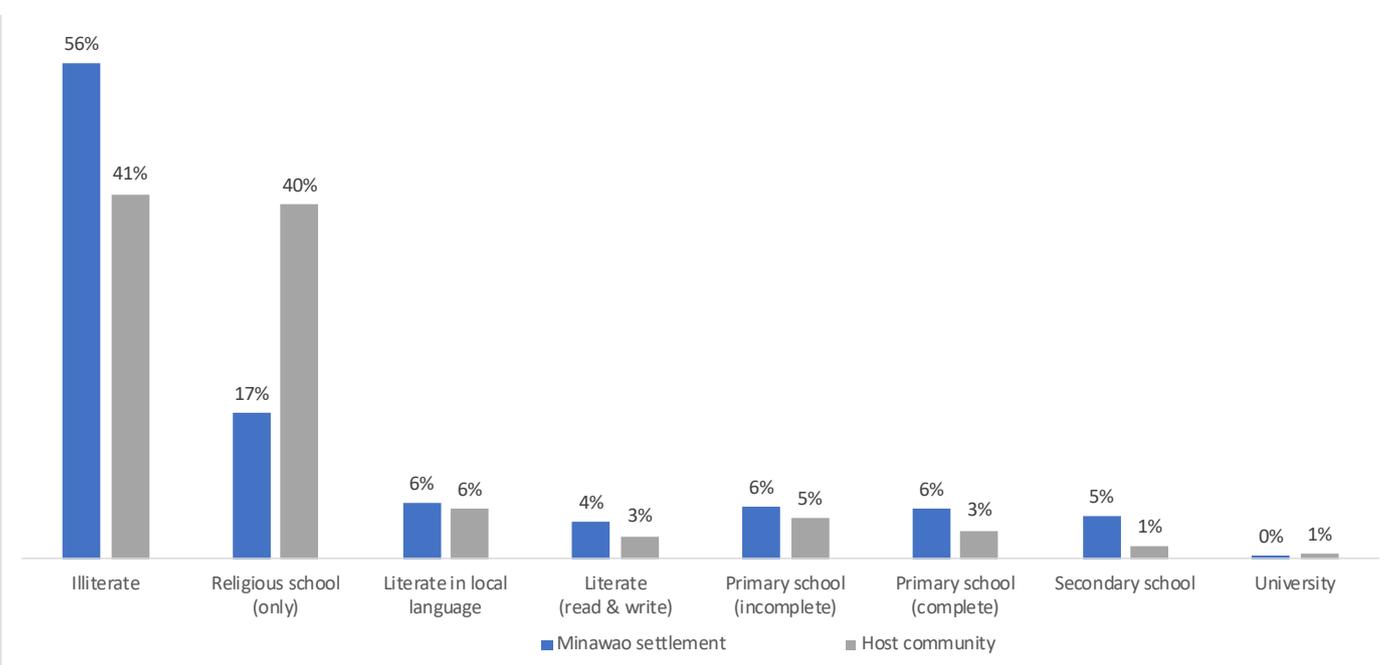
**Education of household heads**

Illiteracy is common overall affecting more than half of household heads in the settlement (56 percent) and about 41 percent of those in the host community. The large majority of household heads in both groups only received religious education, with 40 percent of them in host community and 17 percent in the settlement.

**Protection and accountability to affected populations**

**Social cohesion and safety:** In addition to providing legal and physical protection, minimizing the threat of violence and ensuring a peaceful coexistence between local residents and the refugee population is the joint responsibility of the Government and the implementing agencies. This is particularly relevant in an environment characterized by poverty and inequality, highly limited access to natural resources and socio-economic opportunities and ongoing socio-political tensions and economic crises, all combined leaving the security situation in the Far North ever more volatile.

**Figure 2: Educational level of household heads**



Source: JAM 2021

The share of refugee households with children (6 – 14 years) who regularly attended school during 2021 – the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic - was significantly higher in the settlement population (75 percent) than in the host community (45 percent). In fact, up to 11 percent of refugee households in the host community identified the withdrawal of their children from school as one of the livelihood coping strategies they adopted during the 30 days preceding the survey, which compares to 4 percent of households living in the settlement. According to FGD participants, limited resources at household level and the lack of teachers were frequently mentioned reasons for children not to attend school.

Nigerian refugees in the Far North were asked a series of questions relating to their relationship with their Cameroonian host population: the findings were positive, especially among those refugees who are residing side by side with the local community.

About 83 percent of refugees residing in the settlement and almost all who live within the host community (97 percent) do not have a problem working with Cameroonians. Also at a social level, attitudes are amicable/peaceful: the large majority of refugees agree to family members having Cameroonian friends, especially those already residing within the local population (97 percent), and most are open for their (future) children to have a Cameroonian spouse. Most refugee

households feel supported by their Cameroonian neighbours and they do not feel discriminated against in terms of prices applied by shopkeepers or house owners. Eight out of ten households in both, the settlement and host community, generally feel comfortable living there as long as there is no possibility to return home.

The large majority of refugee households speak the local language, while that share is naturally significantly larger among those residing among the local population (82 percent), than among those living in the settlement (60 percent). Overall, however - regardless of the location - nine out of ten refugee households indicated to feel safe in their community, as well as when dealing with their Cameroonian neighbours. In fact, incidences of conflict over the 12 months preceding the survey appear to have been seldom: about 3 percent of all households – predominately among those living in the host community - had experienced conflict or tensions, the main cause for which related to access to natural resources, including agricultural land, water and wood. According to many FGD refugee participants, the solution to ensuring peaceful coexistence between refugees and the local population is by engaging both groups in joint trading activities and consistent awareness raising.

### Information sharing and feedback mechanisms:

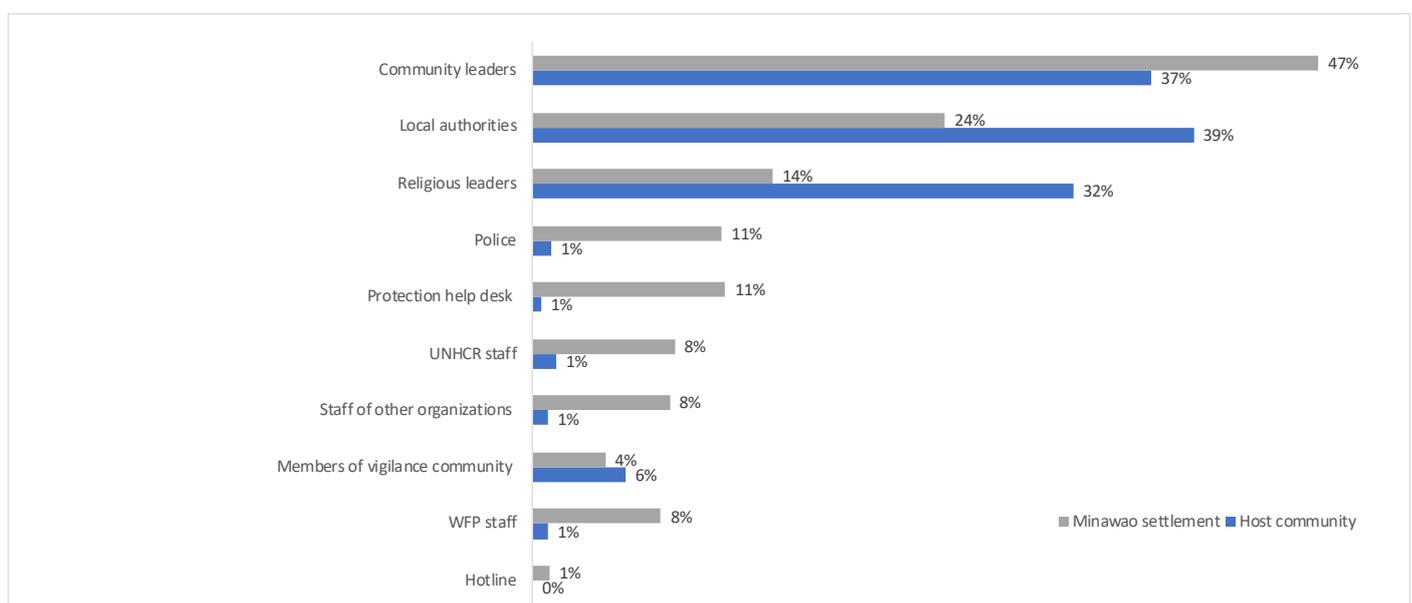
Information sharing and feedback mechanisms are essential to ensure accountability through two-way communication channels between

beneficiaries and the humanitarian community. They need to be in place and be accessible to all in order to ensure relevant assistance-related information is disseminated to enable community members to make informed decisions and for beneficiaries to make their voices heard and be properly supported.

According to FGD and KII discussions, communication between the refugee population and implementing agencies allegedly lacks coordination between its partners and actors involved, creating gaps, as well as overlaps. The use of feedback and complaints mechanisms was found to be very low: merely 13 percent of households residing in the settlement and 20 percent of host community households indicated to have used them before. In fact, merely a low share of refugee households - 39 percent in the settlement and 30 percent in the host community - deemed that such mechanisms are actually accessible to all, regardless of age and gender. Based on FGDs with female participants only, women tend to be unaware of where to go to address their concerns and provide feedback.

The three most frequently mentioned channels the majority of all households chose to provide feedback and place complaints include community leaders, local authorities and religious leaders. Additional mechanisms refugee households in the settlement would use for this purpose include the police, the protection help desk, and staff from UNHCR, WFP and other organisations.

**Figure 3: Complaints and feedback mechanisms mostly used (% HHs)**



Source: JAM 2021

While the use of complaints and feedback mechanisms is low, the large majority of those who did make use of them, indicated to have received feedback and confirmed to have been satisfied with it.

In the settlement more than half of refugee households thought they receive sufficient information on the assistance provided by WFP and UNHCR, however less than 20 percent of households in the host community (10 to 15 percent) considered themselves sufficiently informed.

### Box 3: Gender and protection risks

Ongoing insecurities in the Far North of Cameroon further increase vulnerability levels and protection risks the refugee population in Minawao settlement is already exposed to on the grounds of its demographic composition: half of the settlement’s population are women, 54,100 are children of whom 48 percent of school-

age, 29 percent have specific needs and two percent are child heads of households<sup>12</sup>.

The persistence of harmful cultural practices combined with the limitations of the judicial system impede the protection of women and children. The risk of ensuing impunity of perpetrators and the complicity of traditional leaders pose serious protection concerns. Thus, the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), early or forced marriage, family separation, exploitation and child labour, remain major challenges. New cases of early marriage and rape of women and girls on their way to their farms or while fetching water, are regularly reported and recorded<sup>12</sup>. The JAM found that about 10 percent of households in both the settlement and the host community indicated to know a household that would – as a means to cope with a lack of access to food - agree to marry off a child.

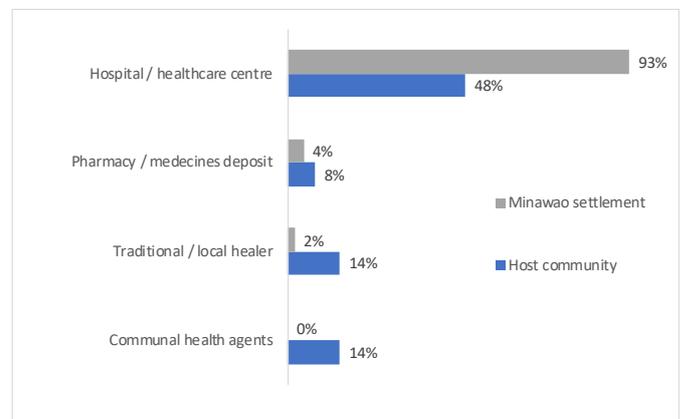
## Access to basic services

**Health:** About one-quarter of all refugee households had children under 6 years who were sick during the 30 days preceding the survey.

Malaria was the most commonly contracted among refugee households in both the settlement and the host community. The second most common disease was diarrhea, followed by prolonged fever which tended to be slightly more prevalent among refugee children in the settlement (7 percent) than among refugee children in the host community (4 percent). Persistent cough was the fourth most common disease among both groups of children.

While almost all refugee households with sick children in the settlement sought treatment for their sick children in a hospital or healthcare centre (93 percent), followed by a pharmacy (4 percent), refugee households in the host community accessed a range of different sources: less than half of them went to a hospital or healthcare centre (48 percent), about 14 percent were supported by a traditional/local healer, followed by communal health agents (14 percent) and the pharmacy (8 percent). While in principle refugees have free access to primary healthcare, this finding may be a reflection of the poor and insufficient health infrastructure available in the area outside the settlement.

Figure 4: Main source to seek treatment for sick children



Source: JAM 2021

**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:** UNHCR’s longer-term water standard requires 95 percent of households to collect their drinking water from protected water sources<sup>14</sup>. The generally long distance to water points is particularly challenging for the elderly who cannot fall back on any community mechanism that supports them.

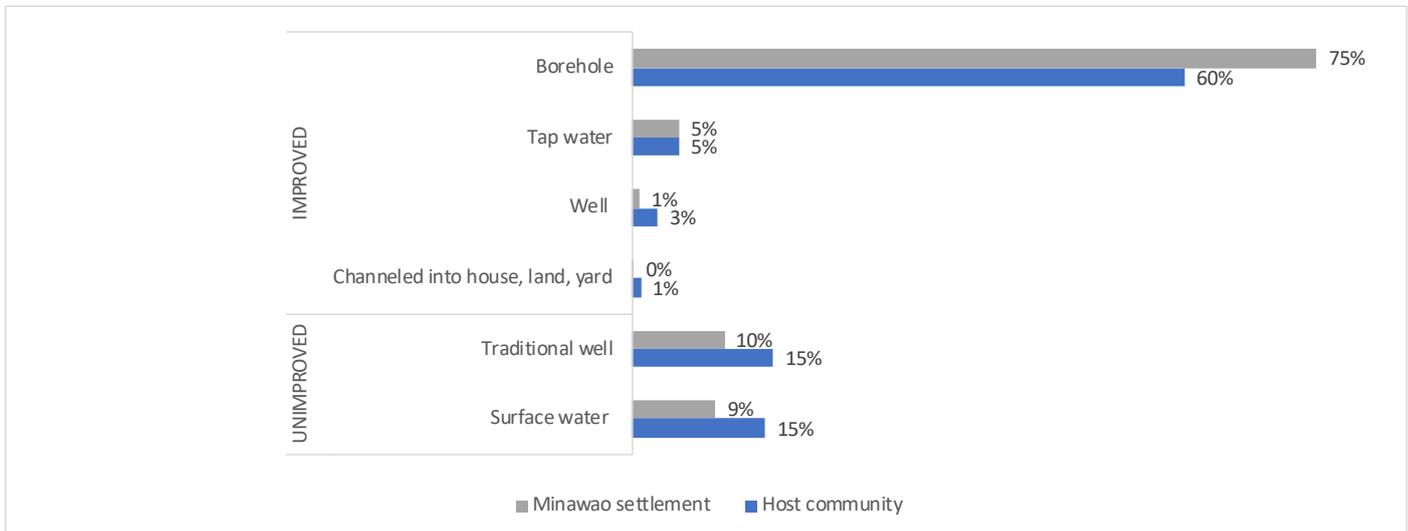
While the large majority of refugee households makes use of improved sources for drinking

<sup>12</sup> UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response, Nigeria Situation, 2019-2020

water (including boreholes and tap water) – with 75 percent of refugees in the settlement and 60 percent in the host community – UNHCR’s target is not being met. Water from unimproved water sources (including traditional wells and surface water) is still being drunk by 19 percent of

households in the settlement population and up to 30 percent of those in the host community. Due to the limited availability of clean drinking water, FGD participants talked of frequent conflicts at boreholes between refugees, as well as between refugees and members from the host community.

**Figure 5: Sources of drinking water**



Source: JAM 2021

Also, the same standards stipulate the distance between a dwelling and the water point not to be greater than 200 metres<sup>15</sup>. JAM findings point to significant difference in the time it takes refugee households in the settlement and the host community to fetch drinking water: while about 39 percent of refugee households in the host community need more than one hour, merely 9 percent of households in the settlement do to access their drinking water. The use of improved latrines is not common, neither in the settlement nor in the host community. Instead, traditional, unimproved types of family latrines are the most common types with 82 percent of refugee households in the settlement and 78 percent of refugee households in the host community using them. Sharing latrine facilities is common with almost one-third of host community households (31 percent) and almost one quarter of refugee households in the settlement (24 percent) doing so. In the absence of improved latrine facilities, open defecation is still practiced by 8 percent of refugee households residing in the settlement and 11 percent of refugee households living in the host community.

Shelter: Almost all refugee households in the

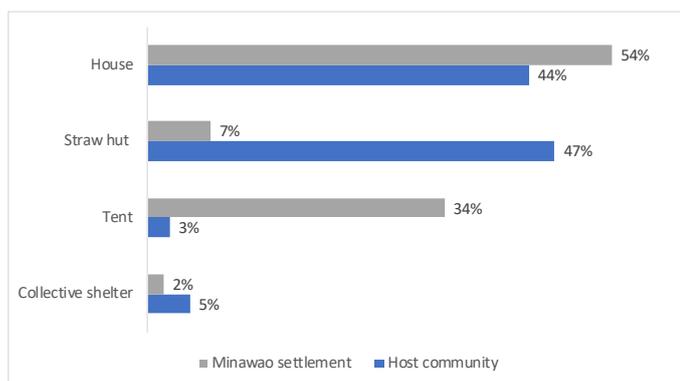
settlement have access to free accommodation (96 percent), with only about 4 percent of households being the actual owners of their place of living. In the host community, owning accommodation is more common (15 percent) and so is renting (18 percent), however, even among them, accommodation is predominately free (47 percent).

Generally speaking, shelters in the camp are greatly exposed to weather hazards and in dire need of improvement. More than half of refugee households in the settlement live in houses (54 percent). However, even after eight years, more than one third still lives in tents. For those living in houses, walls and floors are made of earth, while their roofs are commonly made of straw, earth or tile.

For refugee households in the host community, straw huts are the most common type that almost half of refugee households reside in (47 percent), followed by houses (44 percent). For the large majority, floor material is predominately made of earth; walls are mostly made of straw, earth, wood or brick; and roofs are made of straw, iron sheets or wood.

<sup>14</sup> <https://emergency.unhcr.org/entry/32947/emergency-water-standard>

**Figure 6: Predominant types of shelter**



Source: JAM 2021

**Energy:** Despite impressive contributions by refugees in Cameroon to help build the Great Green Wall to combat desertification<sup>16</sup>, progress remains fragile with refugees and locals still in need of fuel for cooking and heat. While alternative energy sources are being provided, wood remains the main source of energy for nearly all households in (99 percent) and outside the settlement (96 percent). The overdependence on firewood for cooking fuel not only risks significant environmental degradation in the area with potentially irreversible impacts. However, as was also pointed out by FGD participants with refugees, as well as members from the local Cameroonian community, it also increases the potential for conflict between those two parties

due to wood being a particularly scarce resource in the area.

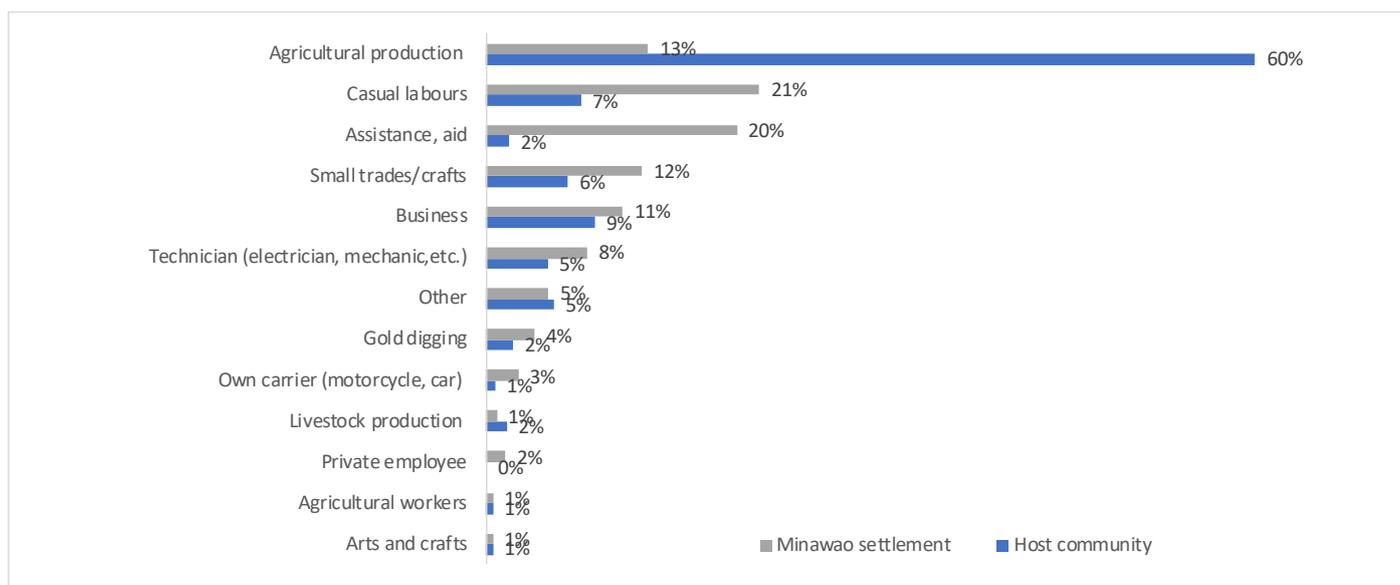
For lighting the large majority of households are using torches run on batteries (78 percent). Comparatively speaking, it is more common for settlement households not to have any lighting at all (13 percent) than refugee households in the host community (4 percent).

## Livelihoods and income sources

The majority of Nigerian refugee households have a farming background. According to FGD participants, access to land for cultivation is extremely difficult to come by for all, especially for those living in the settlement.

Those living in the settlement predominately get their primary income from casual labour (21 percent) and through the receipt of assistance (20 percent). Merely about one in ten households in the settlement engage in agricultural production (13 percent), small trading and crafts (12 percent), as well as in some form of business (11 percent). For refugee households in the host community, on the other hand, agricultural production is the main livelihood that up to 60 percent of households engage in to earn an income. Business (9 percent) and casual labour (7 percent) follow suit providing incomes to less than one in ten host community households.

**Figure 7: Primary livelihood / income source**



Source: JAM 2021

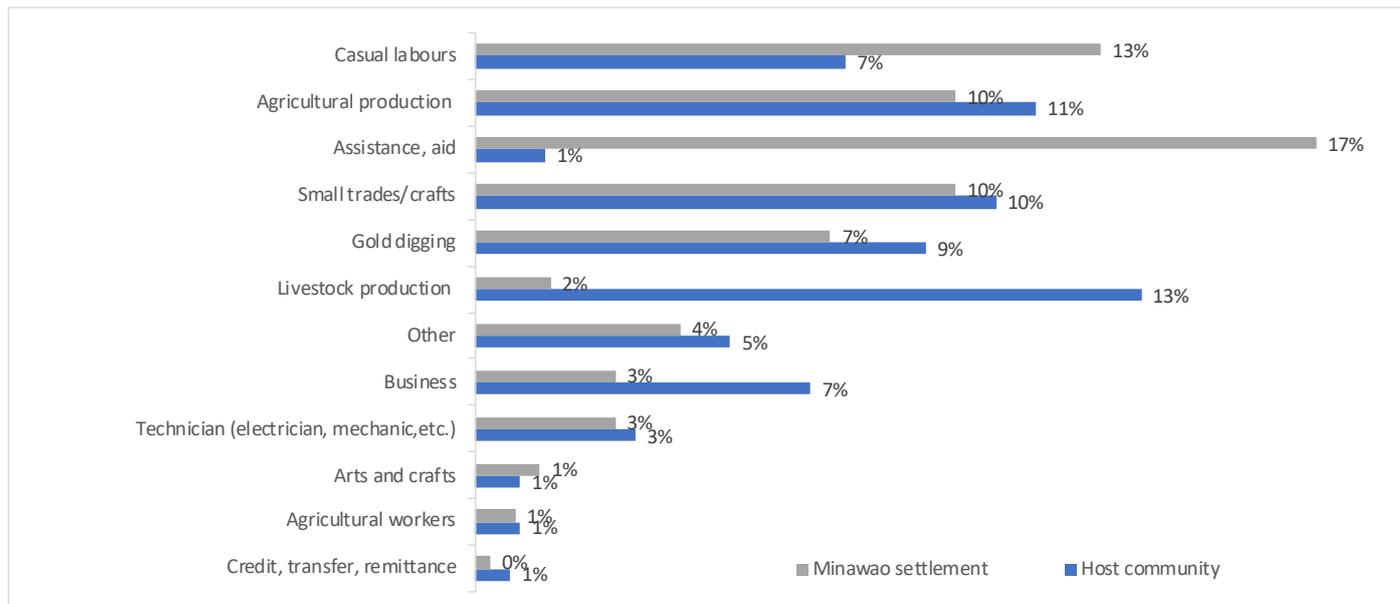
<sup>15</sup> ibid

According to KIIs with community representatives, the income earned from a single livelihood often only complements the insufficient food rations and is by far not sufficient to cover the needs of the entire household, including health- and education-related costs. Most refugee households therefore engage in more than one livelihood activity.

In fact, having a second livelihood is highly common among settlement and host community refugee households (70 percent), covering about

one-quarter of their overall income. For about 17 percent of those living in the settlement this second income source remains the receipt of assistance, followed by casual labour (13 percent), agricultural production (10 percent) and small trading (10 percent). Refugee households in the host community draw a second income from livestock production (13 percent), followed by agricultural production (11 percent) and small trading/crafts (10 percent).

**Figure 8: Secondary livelihood / income source**



Source: JAM 2021

Given that the Far North is rather highly populated, there is a very strong tendency for the poorest to seek paid, seasonal agricultural work elsewhere<sup>17</sup>: in fact, seeking work and the cultivation of agricultural fields were the two main reasons for household members in Minawao to leave the area. In fact, refugee households in the settlement were found more likely to have a head who did not live with the households between March and September 2022 (18 percent) compared to those living in the host community (10 percent). While the search for work for Minawao’s population is the predominant reason for leaving the settlement, only a minimal share (13 percent) allegedly sends back money. Household heads

in the host community mainly leave for health- or education-related reasons, with as few as 7 percent supporting their families financially from afar.

When decisions need to be taken on how to best spend the income, the limited decision-making power that women have in this process is ever present. Decisions made on how to best use the income earned by men in the household are predominately made by men themselves, in both the settlement and in the host community. When the income is earned by women, joint decision-making between men and women is much more prominent.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/news/stories/2021/9/614854b14/refugees-cameroon-help-build-great-green-wall-combat-desertification.html>

### Box 4: Agriculture and Nigerian refugees in the Far North of Cameroon

during 2021/2022 and 15 percent indicated to own livestock. And while agricultural production does not represent a main livelihood source for refugee households in Minawao settlement, up to 43 percent indicated to have somehow been engaged during the agricultural season 2021/2022. However, food production is generally low in the area despite a higher proportion of the population cultivating lands. Main constraints – also confirmed by FGD participants – include the lack of access to fertile, affordable land; high and continuing rising prices of fertilizers caused by pandemic-related supply disruptions; rising costs of renting agricultural land; continuing insecurity; disputes over land between herders and farmers in the area, to mention the most prominent.

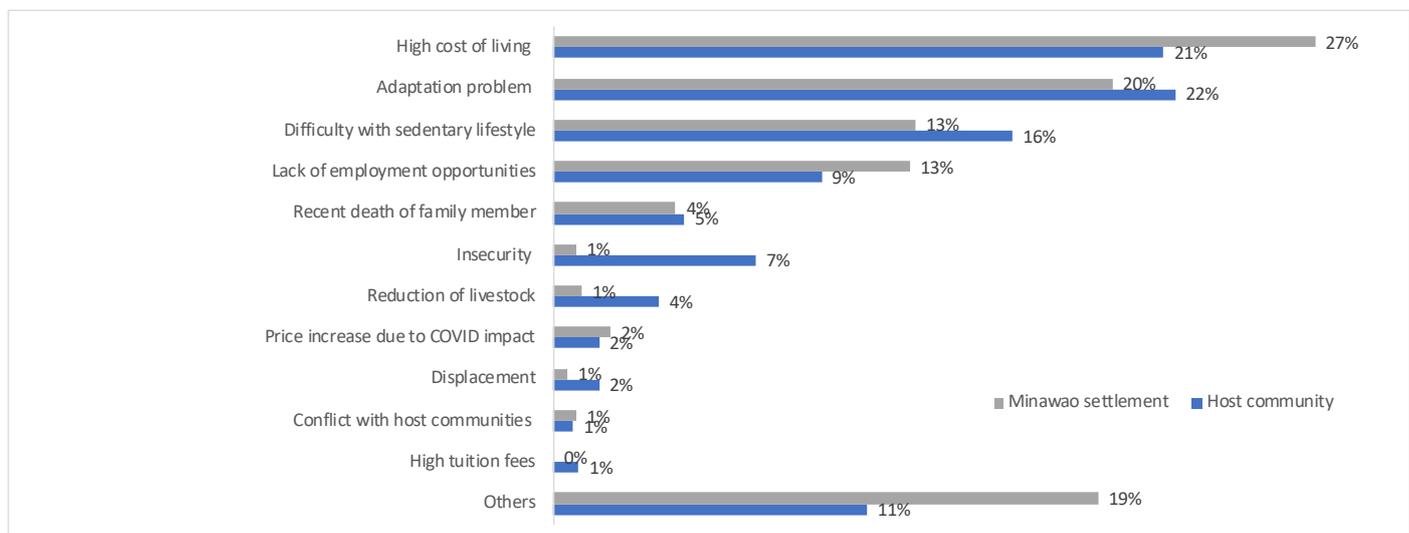
Livelihoods challenges and coping strategies Nigerian refugee households were asked

to identify shocks and difficulties they were confronted with during the six months preceding the survey and that prevented them from pursuing their livelihoods. The two most frequently mentioned shocks and/or difficulties in this regard include the high cost of living and adaptation problems. Additional challenges included their sedentary lifestyle and lack of employment opportunities.

### Livelihoods challenges and coping strategies

Nigerian refugee households were asked to identify shocks and difficulties they were confronted with during the six months preceding the survey<sup>21</sup> and that prevented them from pursuing their livelihoods. The two most frequently mentioned shocks and/or difficulties in this regard include the high cost of living and adaptation problems. Additional challenges included their sedentary lifestyle and lack of employment opportunities.

Figure 9: Primary shocks/difficulties affecting households between July – September 2021



Source: JAM 2021

Male and female headed households in both locations only differed slightly in this regard: female headed households are more likely to consider high costs of living a primary shock (29 percent) than their male counterparts (22 percent). Male headed households, on the other hand, have more difficulties with the inherent challenges of a sedentary lifestyle (16 percent) than households headed by women (11 percent). FGDs - which provided more qualitative insights into

peoples' greatest challenges to their livelihoods – found that male and female FGD participants from both locations also identified the lack of well-functioning markets, ever increasing prices, the lack of money lending structures and rising debt levels at household level to be their primary challenges. Additional challenges included the difficulties in accessing fertile land for agriculture, chronic water shortages for watering the land, the wood-cutting ban and frequent non-payment

for completed field work. There have even been reports of local authorities confiscating farm tools of refugees leaving the camp to farm or fetch wood.

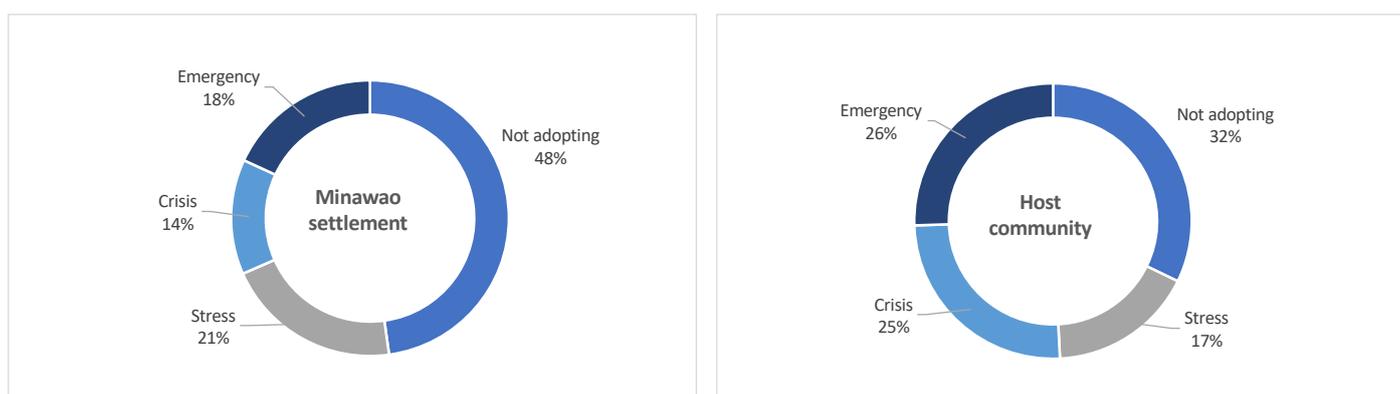
In response to challenges and difficulties that prevent households from meeting their food requirements, they generally adopt a range of livelihood coping strategies. Coping behaviour often involves activities that can undermine not only the long-term productive potential of vulnerable households, but also important social institutions and relationships. The extent to which households rely on destructive practices is an indicator of their vulnerability level.

In fact, in the Far North of Cameroon, almost 70 percent of Nigerian refugee households saw their ability to produce or buy sufficient food compromised due to the above-mentioned shocks and difficulties. Thus, the adoption of livelihood-

based coping strategies was a common way for households to be able to meet their essential needs during those challenging times on the one hand, while further undermining their livelihood resilience, on the other.

Despite allegedly better access to livelihoods, refugee households in the host community were more likely to resort to livelihood coping strategies during the 30 days preceding the survey than households in the settlement. Only 32 percent were in the position to meet their essential needs without putting their livelihood capacities at risk, compared to 48 percent of households in Minawao. The severity level of strategies was also higher among refugee households in the host community with 26 percent of them engaging in emergency livelihood coping, while 18 percent of those in the settlement did.

**Figure 10: Severity of livelihood coping strategies adopted during the 30 days preceding the survey**



Classification	Livelihood coping
Stress	Sold non-productive HH assets, good (e.g. radio, furniture, etc.)
Stress	Spent savings
Stress	Borrowed money/food from formal lender
Stress	Sold more animals (non-productive)
Crisis	Reduced non-food expenses on health and education
Crisis	Sold productive assets or means of transport
Crisis	Withdrew children from school
Emergency	Sold house or land
Emergency	Sold last female animal(s)
Emergency	Begging

Source: JAM 2021

<sup>17</sup> FEWSnet, Livelihoods zone map and descriptions for Cameroon, October 2019

<sup>18</sup> UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response, Nigeria Situation, 2019-2020

<sup>19</sup> WFP, Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Analysis, December 2017

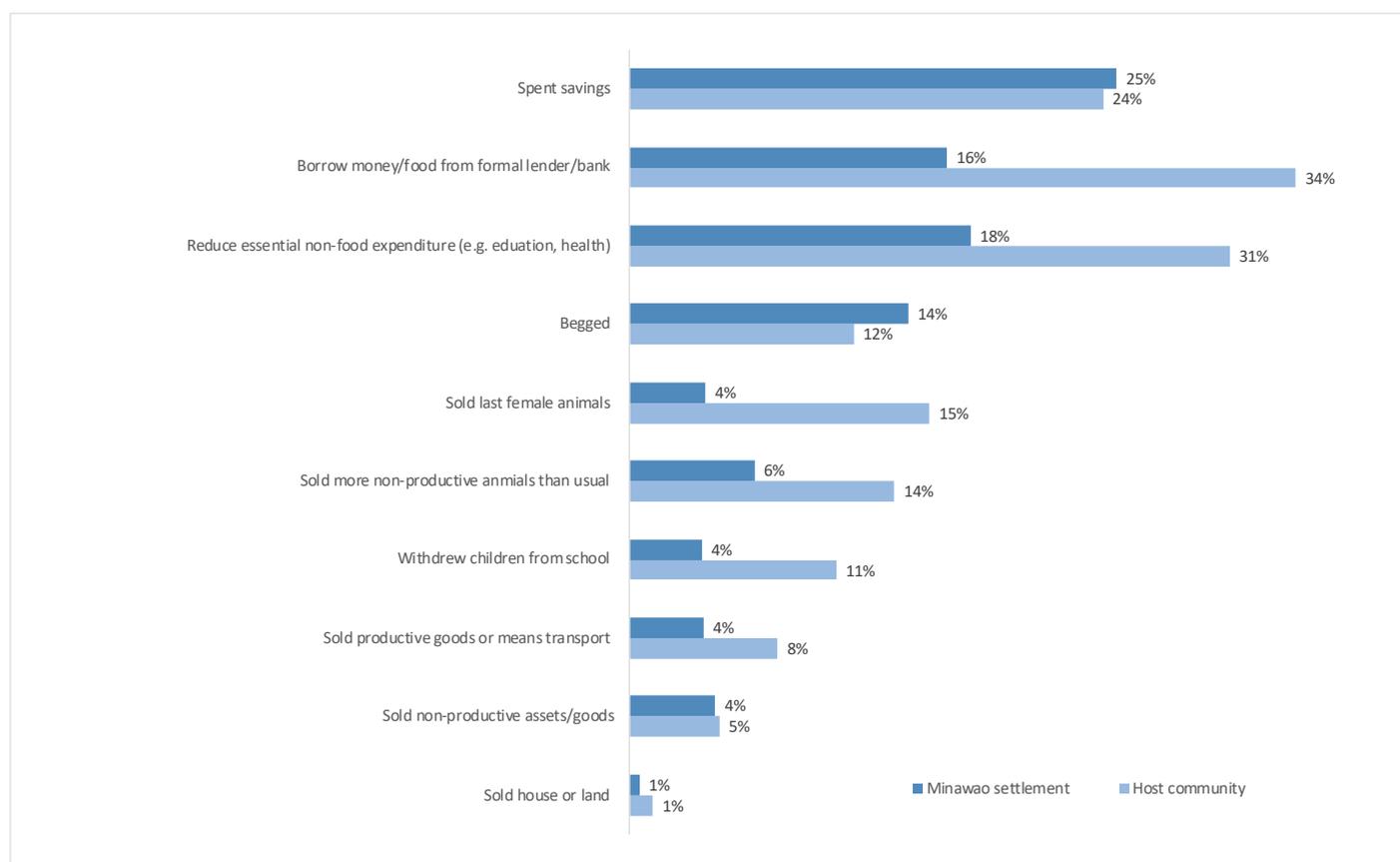
<sup>20</sup> FEWSnet, Cameroon, Food Security Outlook Update, April 2022

<sup>21</sup> The JAM data collection took place in October/November 2021

The three livelihood coping strategies most commonly adopted by both, refugee households in the settlement and in the host community include the *borrowing of money or food, reducing essential non-food expenditures and spending of savings*. However, the share of households adopting them is significantly larger in the host community than in the settlement. Similarly, the emergency coping strategies - *selling*

*of last female animals and withdrawing children from school*, which can undermine household resilience in an irreversible manner – are significantly more common among refugee households residing in the host community (15 and 11 percent) than in the settlement (4 percent each). Begging, on the other hand, is slightly more prevalent among the population the settlement (14 percent) than in the host community (12 percent).

**Figure 11: Most prominent livelihood coping strategies adopted**



Source: JAM 2021

# Economic capacities

## Asset ownership

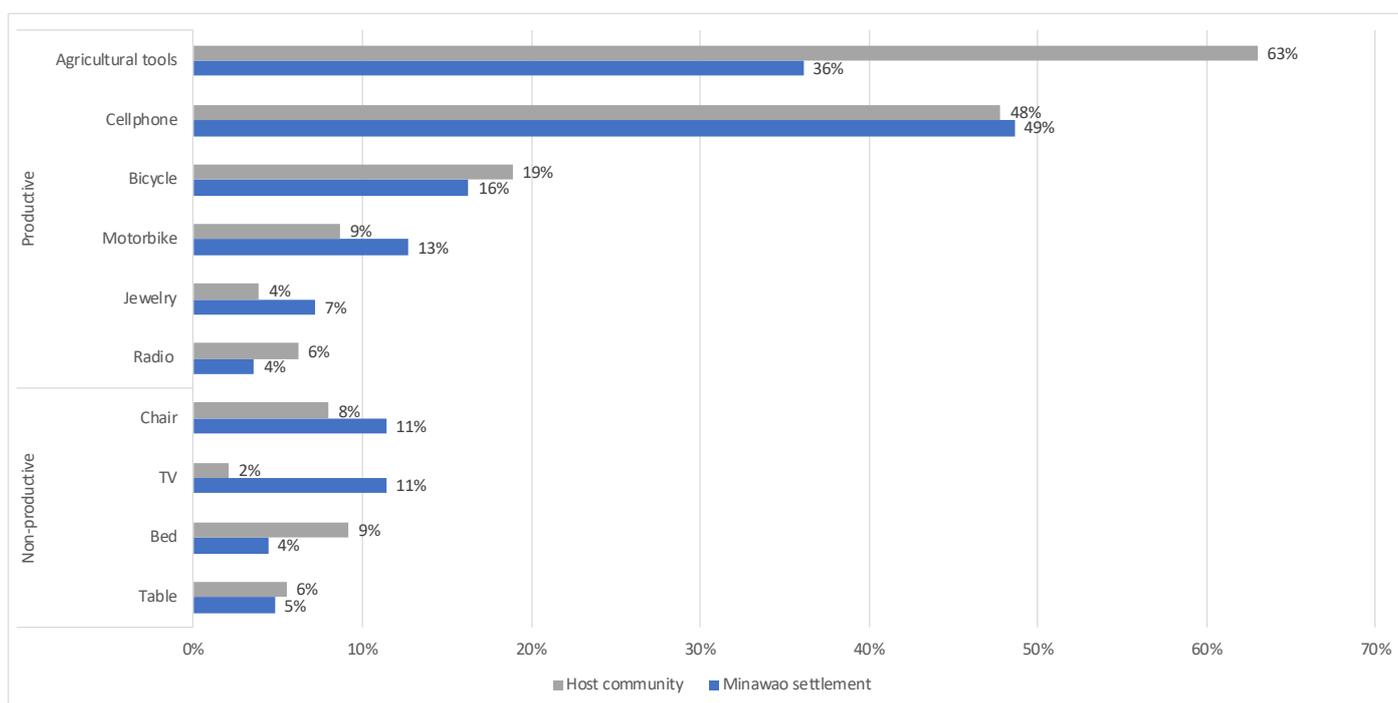
Household ownership of assets provides an insight into the household’s relative well-being and capacities to withstand challenging times. Access to a solid base of non-productive (e.g., kitchenware, chair, cell phones, etc.) and productive assets that facilitate food and income generation (e.g., fruit trees, tools such as a sickle, poultry, etc.) can support and enrich households’ livelihood capacities and level of resilience.

Overall, no substantial differences are observed between refugee households in the settlement and in the host community in terms of the assets they own. However, against the background of agricultural production being the primary livelihood source for the large majority of refugee households in the host community, 63 percent of them own agricultural tools which compares

to merely 36 percent of households residing in Minawao owning them – a reflection of agriculture playing a lesser role in terms of income source for households in the settlement. While the share of refugee households owning livestock is the same in Minawao settlement and in the host community with 16 percent, the average number of livestock heads owned – especially of cows (0 vs 3), goats (3 vs 5) and sheep (1 vs 3) - is higher among those living in the host community.

Cell phones and bicycles – which can facilitate livelihood activities – are equally common among refugee households in the host community and Minawao settlement, with almost half of the population owning a cell phone and up to 19 percent owning a bicycle.

Figure 12: Household ownership of productive and non-productive assets



Source: JAM 2021

## Household food and non-food expenditures

Household expenditure is an indicator of the household’s purchasing power and economic capacity. It provides an insight into how a household allocate their own resources and prioritize competing needs. Expenditures on

food include the consumption of assistance (in-kind and cash), food produced by households and food purchases with cash or by credit. The larger the expenditure share on food, the fewer resources to cater for required non-food needs, thus reflecting a high vulnerability level. The food expenditure share - which is the proportion of the households’ expenditures

spent on food<sup>22</sup> over their total expenditure during the 30 days preceding the survey - stands at 64 percent in Minawao settlement and 63 percent in the host community<sup>23</sup>. Thus, refugee households currently allocate a significant portion of their

monthly budget to food, despite the majority of refugees in Minawao and a smaller portion of refugees in the host community receiving partial food assistance.

Figure 13: Monthly food expenditure share

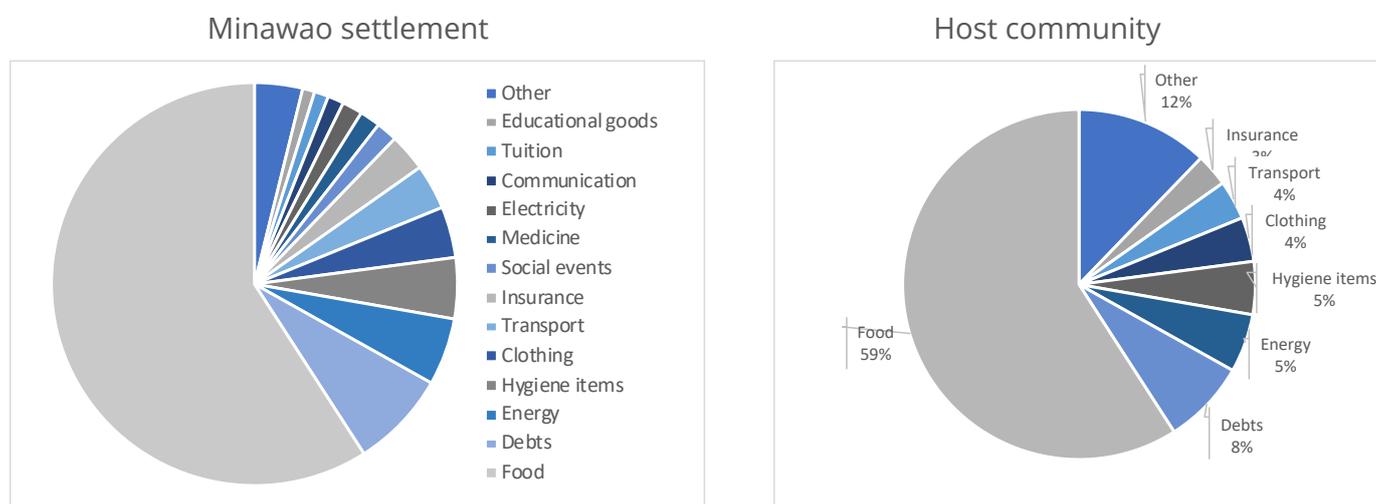


Source: JAM 2021

Looking at an average composition of household expenditures in the settlement and in the host community, most non-food expenses during the month preceding the survey were on the repayment of debts. In fact, almost half of the Nigerian refugee population was found to be

indebted, especially those households residing in the host community (see Section Debts and Savings below). Following the repayment of debts, other most prominent non-food expenses are directed at energy, hygiene items, clothing, transport and medicines among all households.

Figure 14: Average composition of monthly household expenditures in Minawao settlement and host community (CFA)



Source: JAM 2021

While the average expenditure share on food is similarly high, the actual average amount spent on food during one month differs significantly between the locations. Refugee households living in the host community appear to have -

comparatively speaking - much greater financial capacities at their disposal to cover their essential food and non-food needs than their counterparts in Minawao settlement:

<sup>22</sup> Including food consumed through own production or assistance received during the recall period.

<sup>23</sup> Based on WFP's Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators of Food Security (CARI), the Food Expenditure Share (FES) is converted to a four-point scale, indicating the level of food insecurity: FES <50% = food secure; FES 50% - 65% = marginally food secure; 65% - 75% moderately food insecure; FES >= 75% = Severely food insecure.

The overall monthly amount that refugee households in the host community spend reaches an average of CFA 74,289. The average total expenditure per capita stands at CFA 18,448 of which CFA 11,217 is spent on food. This equates

to double the amount that of households in the settlement who spend an average amount of CFA 42,456 of which CFA 5,166 is spent solely on food per person.

**Table 1: Average monthly food and overall expenditures**

	Minawao Settlement	Host community
Average total household expenditure (CFA)	42,456 (69 USD)	74,289 (121 USD)
Average total expenditure per capita (CFA)	9,006 (15 USD)	18,448 (30 USD)
Average food expenditure per capita (CFA)	5,166 (8 USD)	11,217 (18 USD)

Source: JAM 2021

Exchange rate as at May 2022: USD 1 = CFA 614

## Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN)

### Minimum household expenditures for food and non-food needs

The economic capacity to meet essential needs (ECMEN) is an indicator that assesses the extent to which households are able to afford the essential food and non-food needs through their own economic capacity, be it cash and self-production.

Two monetary thresholds were used for this JAM analysis: 1) the food minimum expenditure basket (food MEB) which is the absolute minimum amount required to maintain essential food requirements. and 2) total MEB which is the monetary threshold for households to afford essential needs, both food and non-food. These two thresholds are based on the ENSAN 2021 data provided by WFP Cameroun and were used for the current ECMEN and vulnerability analysis. They are found to be consistent with the JAM expenditure data and related analyses.

If a household's per capita expenditure is below the food part of the food MEB, it points to highly insufficient economic capacity. If household per capita expenditure is above the food MEB but below the overall MEB, households remain economically insufficient as they are unable to cover their basic non-food needs. If, on the other hand, a household's per capita expenditure is above the overall MEB, it shows a sufficient level of economic capacity because the household is spending sufficient amounts to satisfy the essential needs in life



**ECMEN**

(\* Assistance excluded)

Food MEB	—————>	<b>Highly Insufficient economic capacity</b>
Btw. Food MEB&MEB	—————>	<b>Insufficient economic capacity</b>
MEB	—————>	<b>Sufficient economic capacity</b>

The Food MEB and MEB per capita are as follows:

**FOOD MEB:** CFA 12,400 per capita per month

**MEB:** CFA 17,530 per capita per month

About 70 percent of refugee households in the settlement and 61 percent of those residing in the host community do not have the economic capacity to meet their household’s basic food needs using their own resources (see Figure 15).

While this finding points to dire levels of economic vulnerabilities among the entire Nigerian refugee population, regardless of their location, the share of households that can in fact meet all their essential needs – both food and non-food – is observed to be larger among those residing in the host community (27 percent) than among those in the settlement (14 percent).

**Figure 15: Economic capacity to meet essential needs among refugee and host community households**



Source: JAM 2021

## Debts and savings

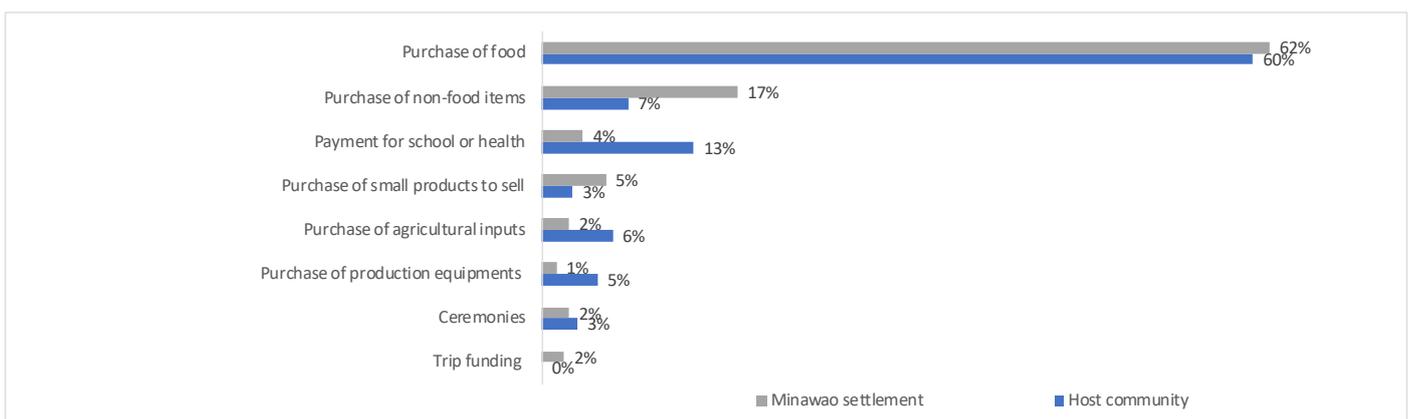
Incurring debts can be an indication of greater economic capacity. However, in this context it is likely to be a first sign of vulnerability as households’ resilience levels are likely to be compromised with a steady increase in debts. Overall, almost half of Nigerian refugee households indicated to have incurred debts (cash or in-kind) over the three months preceding the survey<sup>24</sup>. Refugee households in the host community appear on average more indebted (54 percent) than those residing in the settlement (40 percent).

The main reason for both groups of refugee

households for having incurred debts in the first place, was to be able to purchase sufficient amounts of food (see Figure 16). For households in Minawao settlement this finding suggests that the current level of food assistance provided may not be sufficient to meet their food needs. It also is an indication that own production – especially among households in the host community – does not cover food requirements.

The second most prominent reason for refugee households in the settlement to take on debts was to be able to purchase non-food items (17 percent), while for those in the host community debts helped to pay for school and health related expenses (13 percent).

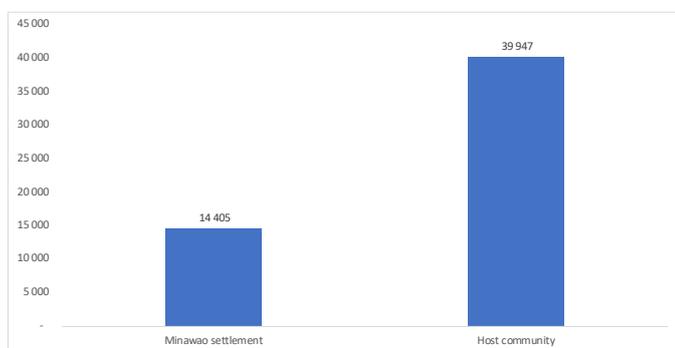
**Figure 16: Reason why households incurred debts during the 3 months preceding the survey**



Source: JAM 2021

While having debts is prevalent among both groups, the average amounts of debts accumulated over the three months preceding the survey, differ: refugee households living in the settlement have incurred an average amount of CFA 14,405 (USD 23) in debts – representing one third of their overall household expenditures per month. Refugee households in the host community, on the other hand, have an average amount of debt of about CFA 39,947 (USD 65), the equivalent of more than half of their average monthly household expenditures and more than double the average amount of debts accumulated by refugee households in the settlement.

**Figure 17: Average debt among households with debts (CFA)**



Source: JAM 2021

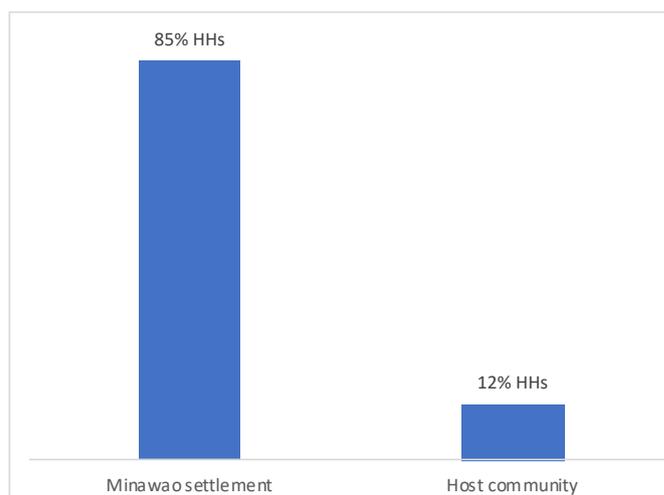
While refugee households in the host community appear to have – comparatively speaking – more financial resources at hand that allows them to take on debts to such an extent – possibly due to better income opportunities - it nevertheless can result in economic stress in the medium- to long-term future as resources to repay their debts tend to decrease. Analyses show that they need – on average – more time to pay back their accumulated debts than their counterparts in the settlement.

## Household food security

### Household food access

Food access concerns a household’s ability to regularly access adequate amounts of food of adequate nutritious quality, through a combination of its own home production and stocks, purchases, barter, gifts, borrowing or food assistance.

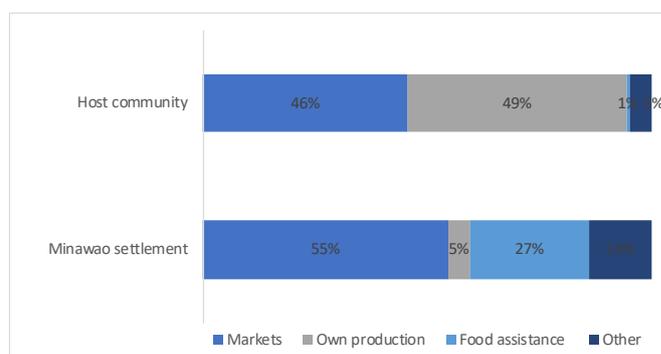
**Figure 18: Receipt of assistance between April and September 2021**



Source: JAM 2021

In-kind food assistance is provided to the entire refugee population residing in Minawao settlement. About 85 percent of households indicated to have been assisted during the six months preceding the survey, almost exclusively with in-kind food assistance.<sup>25</sup> This compares to about 12 percent of refugee households residing in the host community having received assistance, of whom about 7 percent with in-kind food rations and 5 percent with cash transfers.

**Figure 19: Main sources for staples during 7 days preceding the survey**



Source: JAM 2021

However, markets play a significant role for refugee households in both locations: despite being supported with in-kind food rations of rice, pulses, oil and salt on a monthly basis, more than half of households in the settlement purchased staples) during the seven days preceding the survey. It may be to compensate for the reduction in rations that cover merely 70 percent of a standard ration, or else because the last distribution in September/

<sup>24</sup> Between July and September 2021.

October did not last sufficiently long. For refugee households residing in the host community markets are similarly important to source food (46 percent) as is self-production (49 percent).

Thus, Nigerian refugees’ dependency on markets for food goes hand-in-hand with increased exposure to, and thus impact of price fluctuations on households’ purchasing power. Against the background of widespread difficulties in meeting minimum essential needs and indebtedness affecting 47 percent of households, increases in prices – however slight – could have a critical impact on vulnerable refugee households, further undermining already limited resources to meet essential needs, food and non-food alike. In fact, high costs of living are the number one challenge for about one in four refugee households which they indicated prevent them from pursuing their livelihoods successfully. In fact, the price of locally produced maize saw an increase between May and August 2021 – the lean season - while imported rice remained at high levels due to low imports as a result of COVID-19 -related interruptions of the global supply chain<sup>26</sup>. The situation is expected to worsen further during the course of 2022 due to the ongoing war in Ukraine, with anticipated impacts on domestic supplies and prices, especially for wheat and fertilizers, given Cameroon’s structural reliance on those imports from Russia<sup>27</sup>.

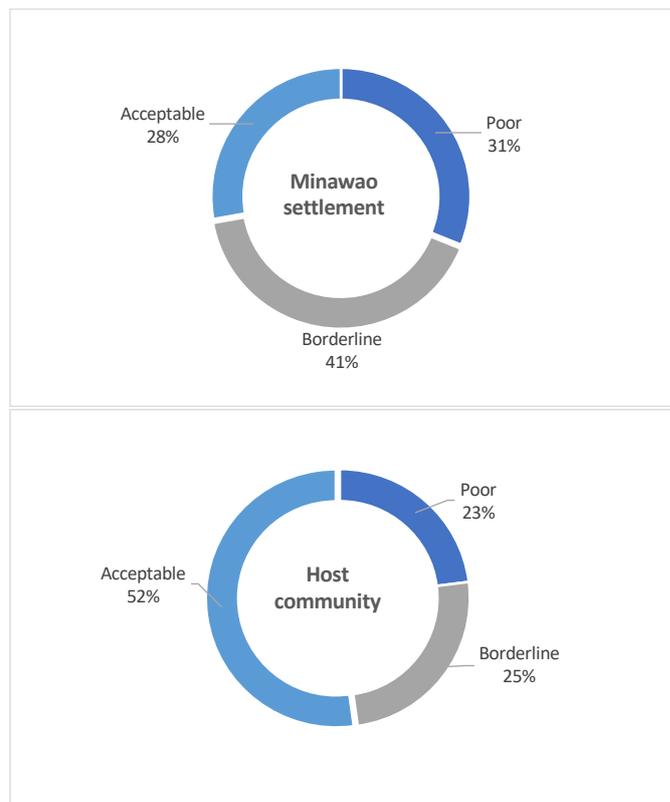
## Household food consumption

Household food consumption is the cornerstone of the food security analysis and is measured using the Food Consumption Score (FCS)<sup>28</sup>. The FCS is a composite proxy indicator for food security and combines dietary diversity (the number of food groups consumed by a household over a seven-day period), food frequency (the number of days a particular food group is consumed) and the relative nutritional importance of different food groups. The higher the FCS, the higher the dietary diversity and frequency. High food consumption increases the probability that a household achieves nutritional adequacy. FCS classifies households into one of three categories: acceptable, borderline or poor food consumption.

Despite food assistance, one in three refugee households residing in Minawao settlement had poor food consumption (31 percent) in October/November 2021 which compares to 23 per-

cent of refugee households who live within the host community. More than half of the refugee households in host community consume an acceptable diet while merely 28 percent of those in the settlement do.

**Figure 20: Household food consumption**



Source: JAM 2021

Data collection took place during the harvest season which may explain the relatively better food consumption patterns found among refugees living outside the camp of whom up to half access their staples through own production (see Figure 19). Potential factors, however, contributing to poor and borderline food consumption among 72 percent of refugee households living in Minawao settlement are manifold and mostly relate to constrained access to food: throughout 2021 monthly food rations had to be reduced due to dramatic funding constraints and merely covered 70 percent of a standard food basket. Also, although the survey did not take place during the Far North’s lean season, dry weather conditions at the beginning of the season in May and June 2021 nevertheless resulted in reduced agricultural activities and crop production on the one hand, and increased food prices on the other<sup>29</sup> - a combination of events that may have had greater impact on the settlements’ population.

<sup>25</sup> Between July and September 2021.

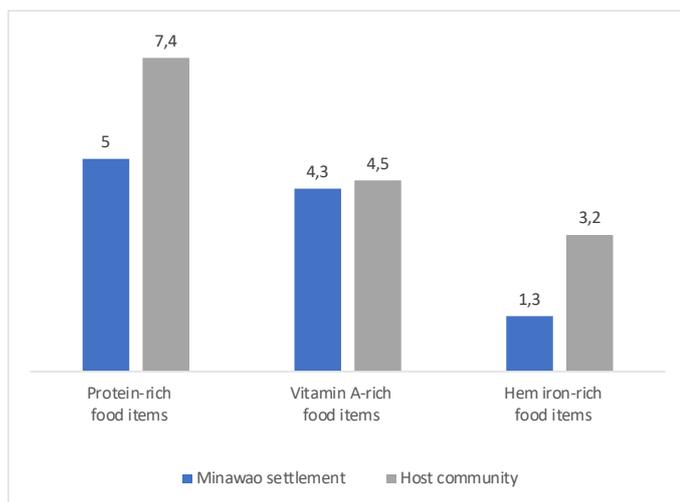
<sup>26</sup> FAO GIEWS, Cameroon Country Brief, December 2021: <https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=CMR&lang=ES>

### Box 5: Food Consumption Score - Nutrition (FCS - N) Quality Analysis<sup>30</sup>

This indicator informs about nutrient-rich groups consumed by households. These nutrients are essential for nutritional health and well-being: protein (essential for growth), iron (to prevent anaemia) and Vitamin A (to prevent blindness and essential for the immune system growth, development and reproduction)<sup>31</sup>.

The quality of average diets consumed by refugee households in the settlement appears to be less varied/less nutritious compared to those living in the host community. While the most frequently consumed nutrients by both groups are proteins, followed by Vitamin A- and hem-iron rich food items, refugees in the host community eat proteins and hem-iron rich foods significantly more often - on average - than their counterparts in the settlement (see Figure 21). This is an additional manifestation of better food consumption patterns prevalent among households in the host community. Vitamin A rich foods are – on average – consumed equally often by the two groups of refugees with a little more than 4 days per week.

**Figure 21: Consumption of nutrient-rich food items (average number of days per week)**



Source: JAM 2021

### Food-based coping strategies and reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)<sup>32</sup>

Households adopt a range of strategies to cope with a lack of food and/or the means to buy it. The reduced Coping Strategies Index (rCSI) is an indicator used to compare the hardship faced by households due to shortage of food. Households are asked to recall how many days they made use of any of five strategies in the seven days preceding the assessment. Based on the frequency and the weight of each strategy adopted<sup>33</sup>, the rCSI was calculated. The rCSI ranges from 0 to 56 and the higher the score, the greater the stress the household has had to endure.

Despite better food consumption patterns and qualitatively richer diets, refugee households living in the host community tend to alter their food consumption patterns in similar ways to households living in the settlement. The latter benefit from regular in-kind food assistance and yet find themselves in situations that demand the adoption of food-related coping strategies. These findings provide an insight into the level of hardship refugee households are confronted with and the risks they are prepared to take when confronted with food deficits at household level.

During the seven days preceding the survey, the main food-related coping strategy the large majority of both, refugee households in the settlement (89 percent) and in the host community (90 percent) resorted to, is the consumption of less preferred or less expensive foods. This was followed by the reduction of meal portions and the reduction of the number of meals consumed during the day. The latter was significantly more common among refugees in the host community (60 percent) than among those in the settlement (43 percent).

The two most severe food related coping strategies – which can have most serious repercussions on the lives and livelihoods of the household, including the restriction of the consumption of adults so children can eat more and the borrowing of food or reliance on help from friends and family – were adopted by around 40 percent of the households.

<sup>27</sup> According to the National Institute of Statistics, Russia ranked 14th among Cameroon's trading partners in 2020, and 8th position for imports. The two main goods imported from Russia during the 2018-2020 period were wheat (wheat and meslin) and fertilizers. These two products composed 65 percent and 17 percent of Cameroon's imports from Russia in 2020, thus positioning Russia as a major supplier of mineral fertilizers in Cameroon (FewNet, Cameroon, April 2022: <https://fewnet.net/west-africa/cameroon/food-security-outlook-update/april-2022>).

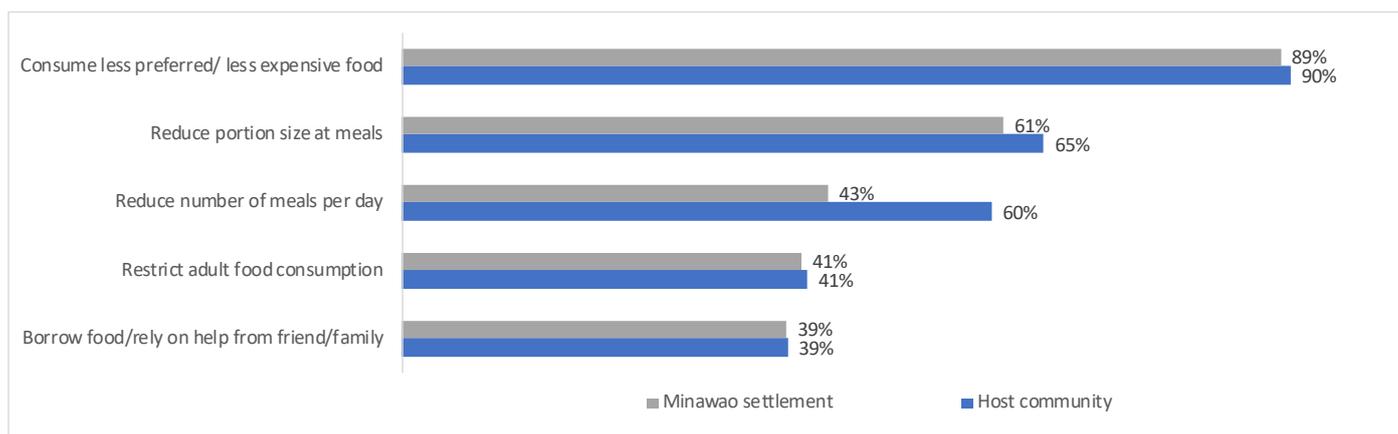
<sup>28</sup> WFP, Emergency Food Security Assessment Handbook, 2009

<sup>29</sup> FAO GIEWS, Cameroon Country Brief, December 2021: <https://www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=CMR&lang=ES>

<sup>30</sup> For more details on FCS-N refer to this link: <https://resources.vam.wfp.org/data-analysis/quantitative/food-security/food-consumption-score-nutritional-quality-analysis>

<sup>31</sup> Food items rich in Vitamin A: dairy, organ meat, eggs, orange veg, green veg and orange fruits; in Protein: Pulses, dairy, flesh meat, organ meat, fish and eggs; in Hem iron: Flesh meat, organ meat and fish.

Figure 22: Adoption of food-related coping strategies



Source: JAM 2021

Household vulnerability is a composite indicator measured by three outcome indicators, including food consumption score (FCS), livelihood coping classification and economic capacity to meet es-

sential needs (ECMEN). A household’s status, determined through the combination of these three dimensions, reflects the vulnerability classification of this household<sup>34</sup>.

Table 2: Vulnerability Classification Framework

Food consumption	Extreme coping strategies	Economic capacity	Overall Vulnerability
Acceptable	Low coping/crisis coping	Sufficient	Least vulnerable
		Insufficient	Moderately vulnerable
	Emergency coping	Highly insufficient	Highly vulnerable
Borderline	Crisis coping	Sufficient/Insufficient	Moderately vulnerable
	Emergency coping	Sufficient/Insufficient	Moderately vulnerable
		Highly vulnerable	Highly vulnerable
Poor	Crisis coping	Sufficient/Insufficient	Moderately vulnerable
	Emergency coping	Sufficient/Insufficient	Highly vulnerable
		Highly vulnerable	Highly vulnerable

Source: JAM 2021

To adequately reflect the vulnerability situation of the surveyed population in accordance with the JAM 2021 objectives, the Vulnerability Classification Framework in Table 2 identifies four levels of vulnerability.

**High vulnerability:** Households are considered highly vulnerable when at least two or all of the three indicators – ECMEN, livelihood coping classification, food consumption score – fall into the most severe or negative category. Households in this category show the highest level of vulnerabil-

ity given their lack of the economic capacity (with monthly expenditure falling below the SMEB) poor food consumption and/or the adoption of either crisis or emergency coping strategies to meet their essential needs.

Almost half of Nigerian refugee households can be considered highly vulnerable. In Minawao settlement, the share of highly vulnerable refugee households is higher (49 percent) than in the host community (40 percent) (see Figure 23).

<sup>32</sup> The Coping Strategies Index – Field Methods Manual (second edition)

<sup>33</sup> Eating less preferred/expensive food, limiting portion size at mealtime and reducing the number of meals per day have a severity score of 1. Borrowing food or relying on the help of friends/relatives has a severity score of 2 and limiting adult intake in order to allow small children to eat has a severity score of 3.

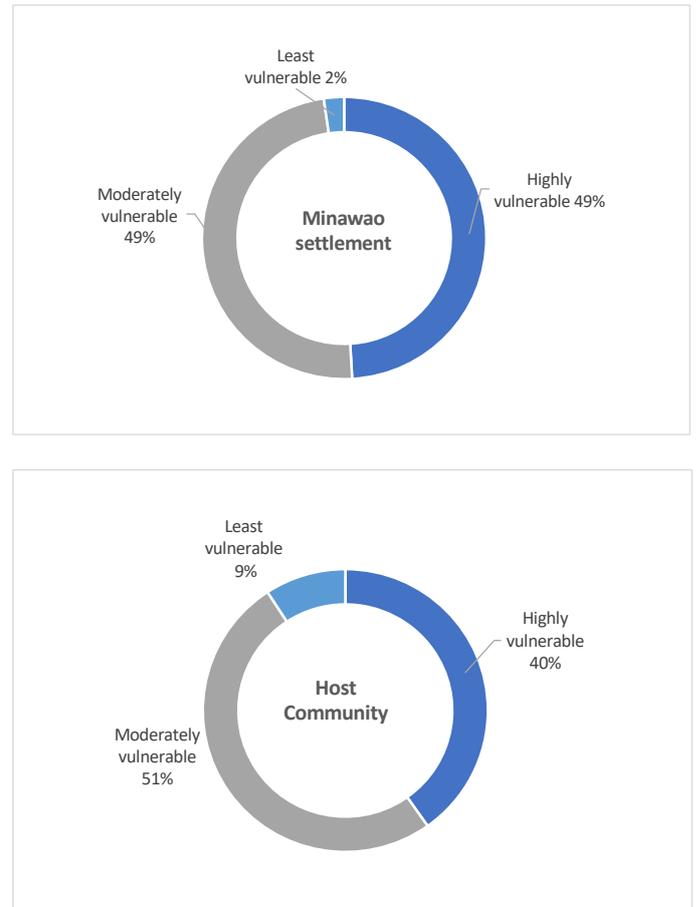
**Moderate vulnerability:** Moderately vulnerable households may have acceptable food consumption and not engage in any particularly risky coping strategies (low or crisis coping), but lack the economic capacity to meet all essential needs, including non-food needs. They may have borderline food consumption and have the economic capacity to at least meet their essential food needs, but engage in crisis or emergency coping strategies that may undermine their livelihood resilience. Lastly, moderately vulnerable households may have the economic capacity to meet their essential food needs (if not all essential needs), engage in crisis coping strategies but have poor food consumption.

A more or less equal share of moderately vulnerable households can be found in both groups, with about 49 percent of households in Minawao settlement and 51 percent of refugee households residing within the host community affected by this level of vulnerability (see Figure 23).

**Least vulnerable:** Households in this category are those that have shown satisfactory or acceptable level across all the three indicators. Their level of monthly expenditure is beyond the minimum expenditure basket, and have an acceptable food consumption and do not adopt any emergency or crisis coping.

Less than one in ten refugee households can be considered least vulnerable with about 9 percent living in the host community and merely 2 percent in Minawao settlement (see Figure 23).

**Figure 23: Overall vulnerability among refugee households in October/November 2021**



Source: JAM 2021

<sup>34</sup> WFP Essential Needs Assessment, Guidance Note, December 2020

## Categorization of vulnerable groups

Further analyses were conducted to identify and capture common socio-demographic characteristics and economic capacities associated with each vulnerability category (highly, moderately and least vulnerable).

tics and economic capacities associated with each vulnerability category (highly, moderately and least vulnerable).

**Table 3: Refugee household profiles**

### Socio-demographic characteristics

Highly Vulnerable	Moderately vulnerable	Least Vulnerable
 Higher % female headed HHs (38%)	1/3 of female headed households (33%)	Lower % female headed households (28%)
 Lower % unmarried HH heads (18%)	Limited % of unmarried HH heads (22%)	Higher % of unmarried household heads (35%)
 A larger household size (avg. 6)	A smaller household size (avg. 5.2)	A remarkably smaller household size (avg. 2.7)
 Higher # of children (avg.4)	Lower # of children (avg. 3)	Much lower # of children (avg.1)
 Higher # of young children (avg. 1), including female children (avg.1.9)	Lower # of young children (avg. 1.5), including female children (avg. 1.5)	Lower # of young children (avg. 0.3), including female children (avg. 0.5)
 Average # of female members > 3	Average # of female members < 3	Average # of female members ~1
 High dependency ratio for >60% HHs	High dependency ratio for ~ 50% HHs	High dependency ratio for ~25% HHs

### Economic capacity

Highly Vulnerable	Moderately vulnerable	Least Vulnerable
 Limited asset categories owned (avg. 1.5)	Limited asset categories owned (avg. 1.6)	More asset categories owned (average 1.9), despite very low
 More likely to own productive assets such as agricultural tools (avg. 52%)	Less likely to own productive assets such as agricultural tools (avg. 44%)	Less likely to own productive assets such as agricultural tools (avg. 43%)
 Less likely to own assets for mobility such as bicycle or motorcycle (avg. 22%)	Less likely to own assets for mobility such as bicycle or motorcycle (avg. 29%)	More likely to own assets for mobility such as bicycle or motorcycle (avg. 38%)
 Less likely to engage in agricultural production (27%), despite owning more agricultural tools	Limited engagement in agricultural production (33%)	More likely to engage in agricultural production (55%)
 More likely to rely on unstable/daily jobs for primary income	Less likely to rely on unstable/daily jobs for primary income	Unlikely to rely on unstable/daily jobs for primary income

### **Highly vulnerable refugee households:**

mong households categorized as highly vulnerable, the great majority (82 percent) are headed by a married person. More than one third (38 percent) of them are female-headed households. The average highly vulnerable household has 6 members, of which 3 are typically female. The average household composition includes an average of 4 children between 0 to 17 years of age, an average of one child under 5 years of age, and an average of 1.9 female children.

Larger households tend to be extremely vulnerable as it becomes challenging to guarantee acceptable food consumption and economic well-being, while needs and demands are high and resources to meet them are stretched. This is particularly true when a fair share of household members is unable to consistently contribute to household income, due to their age, gender or other reasons. In fact, the highly vulnerable group is characterized by a high dependency ratio of 2.4, meaning that for every able-bodied, working-age refugee between (18 to 59 years of age), there are more than two non-working household members, unable to engage in productive work because of their age or any disabling health or physical condition.

Overall, households in this vulnerability group are characterized by poorer economic capacity. Compared to the other vulnerability groups, highly vulnerable households are less likely to own asset categories, especially of mobility assets - such as bicycles or motorcycles that are often linked with working activities. They are, however, more likely to own productive assets such as agricultural tools. This finding will need more probing given that the group of highly vulnerable households are least likely to engage in agricultural production. Instead, they predominately draw their primary income from unstable sources, such as daily jobs.

### **Moderately vulnerable refugee households:**

Similar to highly vulnerable households, the majority of moderately vulnerable households is headed by a married person (78 percent). About one third of them are female-headed (33 per-

cent). They are smaller in size (with an average of five members) compared to the highly vulnerable group and the average number of female members and children in the household is also lower (2.7 and 3 on average respectively). Moderately vulnerable households are characterized by a relatively lower dependency ratio (1.94).

Compared to highly vulnerable households, those that are moderately vulnerable are more likely to own mobility assets, such as bicycles or motorbikes (29 percent) and less likely to own productive assets, such as agricultural tools (44 percent). Their engagement in unstable daily jobs as primary income is less prevalent compared to highly vulnerable households, with agricultural production gaining importance.

### **Least vulnerable refugee households:**

More than 70 percent of least vulnerable households are headed by males, while more than one-third (35 percent) are headed by unmarried persons, either single, divorced, separated or widowed<sup>35</sup>. The size of a least vulnerable household is relatively small with an average of 2.7 members. The number of female members, of children between 0 and 17 years of age and of young children under 5 years of age is relatively lower, compared to the other two vulnerability categories. In line with household composition, the dependency ratio in this group appears lower, with an average of 1.09.

Least vulnerable refugee households are unlikely to earn their primary income from unstable or daily jobs, but rely on agricultural production instead. Against this background and compared to the other vulnerability groups, least vulnerable households are most likely to own mobility assets, pointing at a more favourable economic situation and heightened resilience capacity.

Additional information on the profiling analysis, including the vulnerability profiles for refugee households in Minawao settlement and in the host community, are provided in Annex XXConclusions and recommendations

## Conclusions

- At the time of the survey in October/November 2021 half of the Nigerian refugee population in and around Minawao settlement in the Far North of Cameroon is highly vulnerable. The share of highly vulnerable refugee households is significantly higher among those residing within the settlement than among those living in the host community. Highly vulnerable refugee households do not have the economic capacities to meet their essential needs, have poor consumption patterns and demonstrate low livelihood resilience to cope with resource shortages or any potential shocks. Against the background of the ongoing war in Ukraine, the economic implications of rising prices and declining supplies of wheat and fertilizers at national level are expected to further undermine already compromised resilience levels at household level<sup>36</sup>.
  - While no security concerns were raised by survey respondents – whose accounts spoke of relatively unproblematic social and economic interactions between themselves and members of the local community - the security situation in Mayo-Tsanaga in the Far North of Cameroon remains highly volatile. With 54 percent of Nigerian refugees being women, 82 percent being children, and 29 percent with specific needs<sup>37</sup>, the Nigerian refugee population is highly exposed to wide-ranging protection risks, including SGBV. In fact, SGBV remains one of the most serious threats to the safety and security of refugee women and children in Cameroon<sup>38</sup>. Ensuring protection in this highly unstable, insecure environment remains a dramatically challenging endeavour.
  - The surroundings of Minawao settlement – marred by ongoing conflicts and insecurity - is characterized by an endemic lack of socio-economic opportunities, climate change induced environmental degradation and greatly limited infrastructure<sup>39</sup>. Thus, engaging in sufficiently lucrative livelihood activities that allow for the provision of an entire household, is extremely challenging, especially for refugee households residing in the settlement. In fact, their economic capacities are – compared to those living in the host community - significantly more limited: while refugee households in the host community predominately draw their primary income from agricultural production, refugee households in the settlement engage in casual labour, receive assistance, are involved in agricultural production, as well as small trade and crafts.
  - Despite better food consumption and greater economic capacities, refugee households living in the host community demonstrate limited livelihood resilience. They are more likely to engage in risky livelihood strategies than households in the settlement which have the potential to undermine households' capacities to withstand economically challenging times and shocks. Similarly, the share of refugee households in the host community altering their food consumption patterns in order to cope with a lack of food and/or the means to buy it, is significantly larger compared to those living in the settlement. Lastly, indebtedness – potentially a sign of vulnerability as households' resilience levels are likely to be compromised with a steady increase in debts - is also comparatively more common among those in the host community.
  - Access to basic services differs significantly between the two locations with – comparatively speaking - the areas of the host communities being disadvantaged in a number of respects: For example, seeking medical help from hospitals and pharmacies when a child is sick with malaria and/or diarrhea was found to be significantly more common among refugee households living in the settlement than those residing in the host communities. Also, while the large majority of Nigerian refugees access their drinking water from protected water sources, distances to reach those sources are larger for refugee household living within the host communities than for those in the settlement. The consumption of drinking water from unprotected water sources (including traditional wells and surface water) is also more common among those living in the host community than in the settlement. Similarly, the use of improved latrines is marginal overall, with open defecation being practiced by about one in ten refugee households.
- The predominant source of energy remains wood for all, keeping environmental risks and potential for conflict between the host and the refugee population high.

Illiteracy is highly common overall, affecting more than half of the population in Minawao settlement. Religious schooling is the most prominent education the majority of refugee household heads completed, especially those living within the host community.

## Recommendations

Against the background of the above-mentioned findings and conclusions, the broad dissemination of the Cameroon JAM 2021 to all humanitarian and development actors is highly recommended. Additional recommendations have been formulated by UNHCR and WFP and will guide the two agencies' future interventions targeted at Nigerian refugees in Cameroon's Far North region.

### Strategic

- Support the transition from humanitarian assistance to longer term solutions for refugees in close coordination with other actors, guided by Government's commitments under the Global Compact on refugees and the current Multi-Year Multi Partner strategy. Collaboration with development partners will be critical to ensure relevant development interventions are inclusive of and support outcomes for refugees and refugee hosting communities. This recognizes that refugees' ability to meet their basic needs and achieve self-reliance over time are inherently linked to the local development context, and necessitate their inclusion in the broader national development agenda. The approach requires political advocacy to support buy-in. A key element of this will be advocacy for the improvement of services in the camp to bring them up to the same standards as national services.
- The Cameroon JAM findings should be used as baseline data to monitor outcomes over time.

### Targeting of food assistance

- Promote a harmonized, joint targeting approach across the different assistance pro-

grammes (humanitarian and development) based on refugees' profiles and vulnerability status to ensure that the right assistance is given to the right beneficiaries at the right time, optimizing limited resources and maximizing impact;

- Finalize the ongoing refugee verification exercise across the country, which will be essential for the development and implementation of any future targeting exercise;
- Update the list of refugees living in the camp and introduce the GDT system to adapt assistance according to available resources;
- Implement a cash feasibility study to evaluate a potential transition from in-kind to cash assistance.

### Livelihood support

- Advocate for land access with the Government and local authorities given refugees' strong reliance on agricultural livelihoods on the one hand, and the challenges they experience accessing land on the other.
- Implement a joint livelihood assessment in order to identify and map the skills and interests of refugees with specific focus on women and youth, the potential needs gaps of host communities, and the priorities of the administrative authorities.
- UNHCR, WFP, FAO and livelihood specialized partners to scale up livelihood interventions targeted at both, the refugee and host community, with a focus on the agricultural sector. Future interventions may include the introduction of fuel-efficient stoves, improved cooking practices, use of alternative fuel, tree planting, strengthened agricultural practices, including kitchen gardening, the support of income-generating activities, as well as the provision of vocational trainings. Additional suggestions for future livelihood interventions, put forward by refugees, include tailoring, breeding of animals, creation of market for commerce.

<sup>35</sup> Results mainly driven by single heads.

<sup>36</sup> According to the National Institute of Statistics, Russia ranked 14th among Cameroon's trading partners in 2020, and 8th position for imports. The two main goods imported from Russia during the 2018-2020 period were wheat (wheat and meslin) and fertilizers. These two products composed 65 percent and 17 percent of Cameroon's imports from Russia in 2020, thus positioning Russia as a major supplier of mineral fertilizers in Cameroon. FEWSnet, Food Security Outlook Update, April 2022; <https://fews.net/west-africa/cameroon/food-security-outlook-update/april-2022>

<sup>37</sup> UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response Plan, Nigeria Situation, 2019 – 2020.

<sup>38</sup> UNHCR, Protection and Solutions Strategy Cameroon, 2018 - 2020

<sup>39</sup> UNHCR, Regional Refugee Response Plan, Nigeria Situation, 2019 – 2020.

## Protection and Accountability to Affected People (AAP)

- Ensure the monitoring and mitigation of protection risks including gender-based violence, early or forced marriage, family separation, school dropouts (due to limited household resources and lack of teachers), child labour and begging. This should be done through sensitisation, targeted assistance and ensuring access to relevant services. Men, including male community leaders, should be trained on the role they can play in preventing gender-based violence.
- Update the camp distribution SOP taking into account the various constraints that emerge during the different distributions and empower the different stakeholders in the implementation of the distribution activity. Also, complete the construction of the three distribution sites in the Minawao camp while ensuring that these meet quality standards.
- Advocate with the government to recommend the issuing of new IDs in the Far North Region – like was done in the East Region – as these new IDs are expected to provide an increased freedom of movement to refugees. Additionally, strengthen authorities' capacities in terms of the importance of international protection and refugee identification documents in order to help increase the free movement of refugees, especially against the background of authorities' staff turnover.
- Continue safeguarding the existing peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities through their engagement in joint activities such as agricultural, livestock rearing, trading, among others, as well as consistent and regular awareness raising about the

importance of trust, collaboration, joint opportunities and addressing any differences peacefully.

- Consult refugees, including women, persons with a disability or a chronic illness, older people, illiterate people and minorities, on their preferred ways to receive key information and share questions, feedback and complaints, and adapt two-way communication channels accordingly. Also, ensure that communication with community members always takes place in the refugees' preferred languages. Finally, clear procedures need to be in place that guide the reception, follow-up and response to questions, feedback and complaints, while staff capacities are to be reviewed so that issues raised by community members can be managed in a timely manner.

## Advocacy

- UNHCR and WFP to jointly advocate for funding to ensure the continued support for self-reliance and livelihood interventions targeted at refugees and the host population, as well as adequate food assistance to meet the needs according to vulnerability profiles.

## Annex

To access the **household questionnaire** and an overview of **main results** – including the prevalence of the most representative indicators – please refer to the following links:

**Household questionnaire**

**Overview of results of main indicators**



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



**WFP**  
World Food  
Programme

---

**Joint Assessment Mission for Nigerian Refugees in Far North  
Region in Cameroon 2022**

Data collection: October – November 2021  
Report published: September 2022