

SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

Urban Focus Nigeria: COVID-19 economic impacts on essential needs for urban and slum households in Nigeria

Published April 2021



World Food
Programme

© WFP/Oluwaseun

Key Findings

- This report analyses how the pandemic has influenced the ability of **urban households in Nigeria to meet their food and essential needs**, and if households were able to recover from the economic shock in the mid-term. It covers all 36 states and one federal capital territory of the country, with a special focus on urban areas and people living in urban slums. It is mainly based on a data collected through web surveys in October 2020, with a total sample size of around 14,500.
- Urban households were severely affected by lockdown measures, with 13 % of respondents who reported to have **lost their income**; however, most households were able to recover from job losses around August 2020. In addition to job losses, at least 50 % of households for many job categories experienced either a reduction in their income or completely lost income.
- **Households in urban slums** have been affected stronger by income losses than other urban households and than households in rural areas. They are also less able to meet their essential needs, in all dimensions, and had to apply more often livelihood coping strategies.
- Based on the survey results, one in five households were receiving **remittances** from inside or outside of Nigeria prior to the pandemic. Households receiving remittances from within Nigeria were even more affected by loss or reduction of this income than households receiving international remittances.
- Many households residing in urban slums **still produce food or raise** livestock which contributes to their income in half of the cases – and serves as a potential buffer against job loss.
- Almost half of households were found to be **multidimensionally deprived**; internally displaced people, large households, households with children and households in urban slums are the most multidimensionally deprived households.
- The highest rate of deprivation has been observed in **health**, where on more than half of households struggled to access pharmacies and health clinics when needed, followed by safety and food. Access to **health services has deteriorated** since COVID-19.
- Since the first round of data collection in Nigeria in August 2019, there has been an **overall increase in the percentage of households** that felt worried for not having enough food to eat (from 59 % to 65 %).
- Households with children and/or elderly members are more vulnerable to **food insecurity**. Households residing in urban slums have a greater tendency to food insecurity compared to those populations residing in peri-urban, rural or non-slum urban areas.
- Urban slum households reported largest difficulties of accessing clean **water**, in comparison to rural households and urban households outside of slum areas.
- **Safety** remains a concern for a considerable number of individuals. Displaced populations are particularly concerned with their security.

Table of Contents

Key Findings	2
Background	4
COVID- 19 in Nigeria	4
Urbanization in Nigeria	4
Survey Methodology.....	5
Profile of Respondents.....	6
Urban Livelihoods during the COVID-19 Pandemic	6
Income and job losses.....	6
Urban agriculture as a source of resilience against economic shocks	7
Remittances	8
COVID-19 impacts on essential needs	9
Multidimensional Deprivation Index	9
Food.....	10
Education	10
WASH.....	11
Health	11
Conclusions and recommendations	12

Background

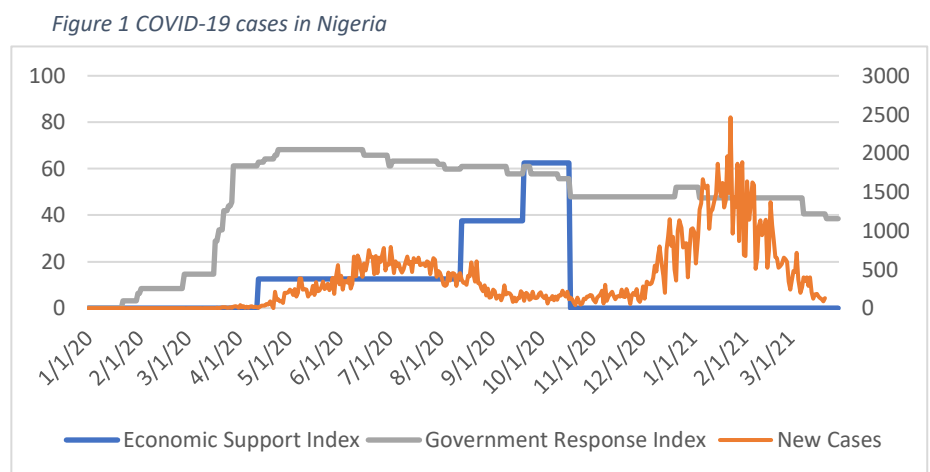
Measures implemented by governments to contain the spread of COVID-19 have led to direct income and job losses for households, in particular urban households, worldwide. This report analyses how the pandemic has influenced the ability of urban households in Nigeria to meet their food and essential needs, and if households were able to recover from the economic shock in the mid-term. It compares the situation of urban households in different urban centers in Nigeria, and of urban slum dwellers with urban households from better-off areas.

The report is mainly based on data collected through web surveys in October 2020. The data provide information representative of the overall Nigerian population as well as specific slum areas in Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Ogun. The questionnaire had a total of 29 questions focusing on the livelihood situation, essential needs, food security and safety. This data is compared against a web survey dataset from 2019, as well as further secondary data.

COVID- 19 in Nigeria

Nigeria has been one of the first countries to detect COVID-19 cases in Sub-Saharan Africa. As a response, the Nigerian government implemented strict measures. While those restrictions caused many job losses particularly from March to June especially in urban areas, the country's economy was at the same time also highly impacted by drops in oil prices, leading Nigeria into a phase of recession¹.

The peak of the first wave of COVID-19 was observed in summer, a second, even bigger wave hit 6 months later. The strongest containment measures were implemented during the first wave, in particular in Lagos, Ogun and Abuja. Those measures were gradually weakened from June onwards, as can be seen in Figure 1. The government increased economic support from April onwards.



Source: Nigeria Centre for Disease Control COVID-19 Tracker & Oxford Stringency Index²

Urbanization in Nigeria

Nigeria is a rapidly urbanizing country with a rapidly growing population. The population in Nigeria is expected to double until 2050, while the urbanization rate will reach 70 % from 50 % today³. Lagos is expected to be the third largest city in the world by 2050 yet it is lacking the infrastructure to accommodate such a population. Nigeria has several cities with more than 1 million inhabitants. Lagos is by far the largest city in Africa - the metropolitan area has a population estimated at 21 million. This megacity extends over 160 km from Ondo to Ilorin and along an east-west axis from Omuo to Oyo over a 200 km distance⁴. More than two-thirds of Lagos population live in slums⁵.

¹ IMF, 2020. [Nigeria's road to recovery](#).

² The Economic Support Index and the Government Index are part of the Oxford Contingency Index; both indices take a value between 0 and 100, a higher score indicating more support or a stronger response; details can be found here: [covid-policy-tracker/codebook.md at master · OxCGRT/covid-policy-tracker · GitHub](#)

³ UN Habitat, 2020. [The state of African cities 2010](#). World Population Prospects data (<https://population.un.org/wpp/>)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UNHS) defines a slum as a wide range of low-income settlements and/or poor human living conditions, which include the vast informal settlements that are quickly becoming the most visual expression of urban poverty.

Survey Methodology

This report uses a unique data set covering urban households in different areas of Nigeria, and – for comparative purposes – a nationally representative sample, collected in October 2020. The sample of urban households can be disaggregated by the largest urban centers in Nigeria, as well as specifically urban slums. The data was collected through a specific web-survey methodology, that allows for a random sample⁶.

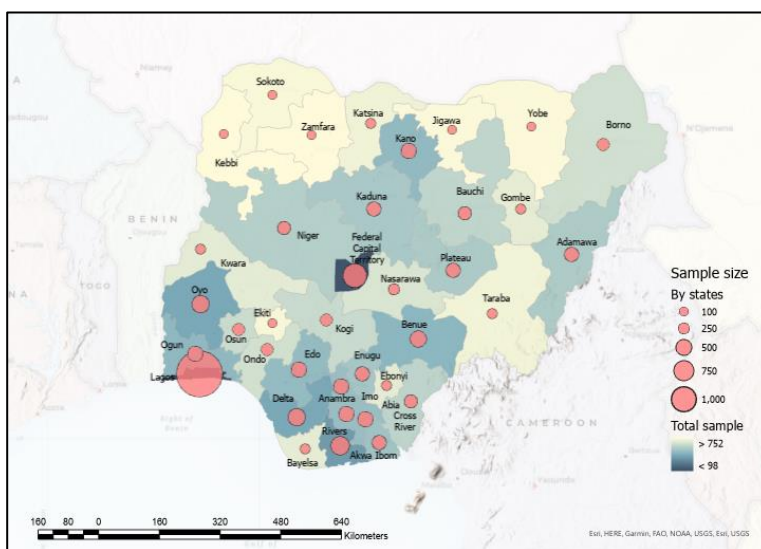
This dataset allows comparison to a baseline from 2019, which collected data with a national representative sample of 7000 households using the same methodology but focusing on the impacts of migration on the food security and other essential needs of families left behind.⁷ Due to differences in the questionnaires and different sampling in each survey, the current survey and the baseline are only compared where appropriate.

Web-surveys were used due to a number of advantages: First, they can be conducted remotely, allowing for social-distancing requirements during the pandemic, without having to take security considerations for the enumerators. Second, they are cost-efficient and provide results quickly. Third, they do not require a sampling frame, and therefore can cover also more complex samples, for example focusing on urban slums.

However, web surveys also come with some limitations. They are accessible only to people who are literate and have access to the internet, hence they do not allow for representativity of the entire population. This presents a certain bias, however, recent telecommunication data for Nigeria revealed that the percentage of internet users continues to be on the rise – and is in particularly high in urban areas. As web surveys capture the voices of literate populations connected to the internet, population groups with higher literacy and internet access rates (e.g. young male respondents, better-off households) are over-represented in the sample. To mitigate against these biases, a weighting system was implemented at the analysis stage based on state level population data (admin level 1), disaggregated by sex and age⁸.

Web surveys ran until quotas for all strata were fulfilled which led to a total sample size of around 14,500. All individuals above 14 years of age were allowed to participate. Map 1 illustrates the sample sizes for each stratum, including all 6 states and 4 major urban centers, as well as slums in Lagos.

Map 1 Sample size by states for WFP Web Survey, October 2020



⁶ In practical terms, web surveys appear when internet users click on a broken link or make a mistake when typing in a URL link, ensuring a randomized sample. Using this technology, Nigerians were interviewed across the country, covering all 36 independent states and the Federal Capital Territory. WFP contracted RIWI Corporation to implement web-based surveys using its patented Random Domain Intercept Technology (RDIT™). Detailed information regarding RDIT can be found on the service provider's website: <https://riwi.com/>

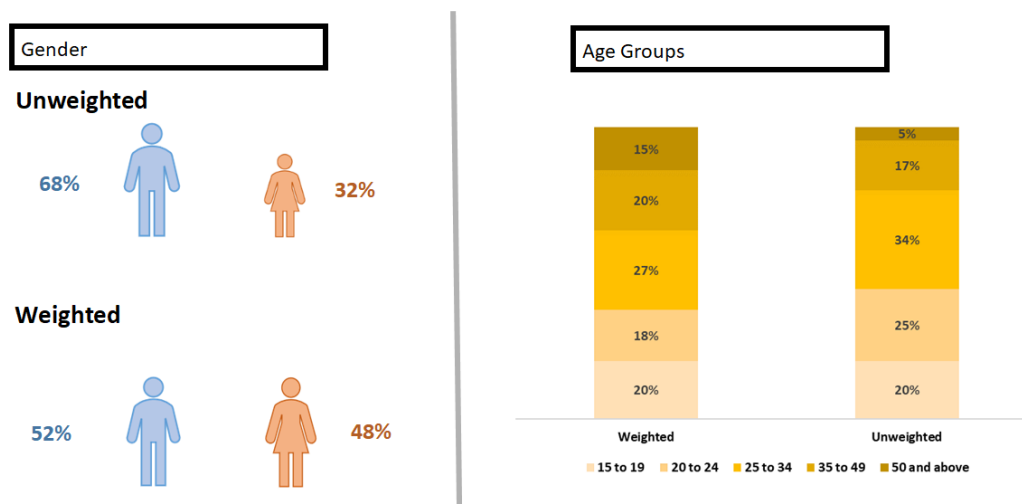
⁷ WFP, 2019. Migration Pulse Nigeria.

⁸ This weighting system allows for representative comparison on admin1 level.

Profile of Respondents

Looking at the unweighted sample, only 20 % of respondents were above 35 years of age. Males were more present in the survey (more than 60%) than females. This is not surprising as the younger population as well as males are stronger represented in the internet-using population. Nevertheless, the survey reached and captured the voices of all sex and age groups, and sample weights were introduced to compensate for any bias to reflect the actual population distribution.

Figure 2 Sex and age distribution of survey respondents (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



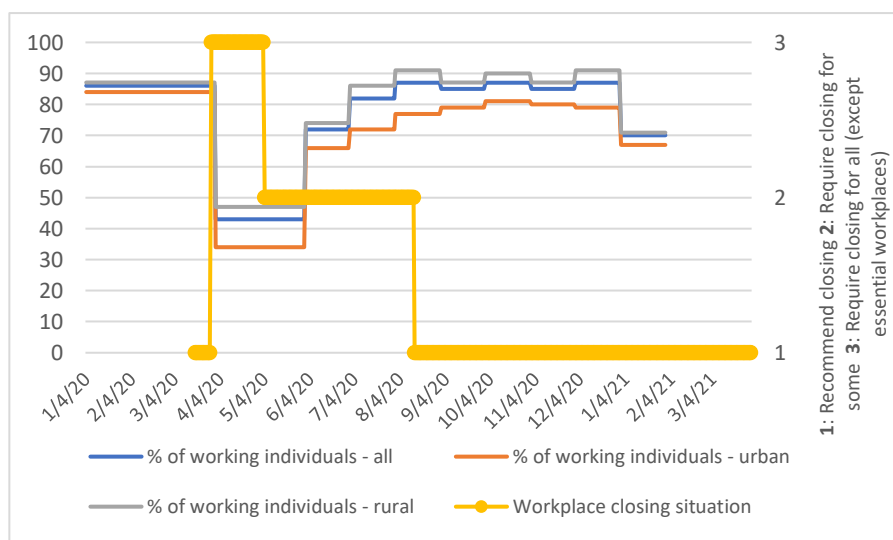
Urban Livelihoods during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Income and job losses

Almost half of households in Nigeria were highly impacted by strict lockdown measures during the first confinement in March 2020⁹. The recession Nigeria's economy is facing put an additional strain on the economic recovery of households after the end of the lockdown.

Figure 3 shows the sudden impact of the containment measures on individual employment, based on a nationally representative, longitudinal phone-survey¹⁰. Employment dropped from almost 90% to below 50% in March 2020, effects being strongest for the urban population. With the end of the strict lockdown measures in June 2020, a phase of recovery started, which has been quicker for the rural population, which reached pre-pandemic levels of employment in July. Urban workers were not able to recover back to these levels yet but reached 80% of employment in October.

Figure 3 COVID-19 Workplace closing and share of respondents working



Source: COVID-19 Stringency Index; COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey 2020 of Nigeria¹¹

⁹ Reuters, 2020. Lockdown measures in Nigeria.

¹⁰ More information on the survey can be found here: <https://microdata.worldbank.org/index.php/catalog/3712>

¹¹ COVID-19 National Longitudinal Phone Survey (NLPS) 2020 is a World Bank-supported NLPS that can be used to help assess the economic and social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on households and individuals; the Workplace closing situation index is part of the COVID-19 Stringency Index, a composite measure calculated by the Oxford Coronavirus Government Response Tracker. For more information, see: [COVID-19: Stringency Index - Our World in Data](https://www.banque-monde.org/fr/actualites/2020/11/01/covid-19-stringency-index-our-world-in-data).

Despite the strong recovery in number of persons employed, households remain to suffer from income reductions in the mid term, as 62 % of all households reported to have lost all or part of their income in October 2020. Households in urban slums are facing stronger difficulties in the recovery, 17 % report to have completely lost income compared to a year ago, while overall 13 % reported full income loss (Figure 4).

The impact of the COVID-19 shock on income also depended on the type of employment before the pandemic. Overall, two-thirds of respondents relied on salaried work or their own business trade, 11 % of households on remittances as main income source. Most sectors were highly impacted by COVID-19 and the economic slowdown. While the most resilient sector was salaried work, those with informal employment such as petty trade, selling on the streets and daily casual labour were most impacted (Figure 6). The rate of informal work is in particular high in urban slums. While 40 % of households relied on salaried work in urban areas overall, this rate was 11 % lower for respondents from slums as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 4 Income changes compared to a year ago by type of residence (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)

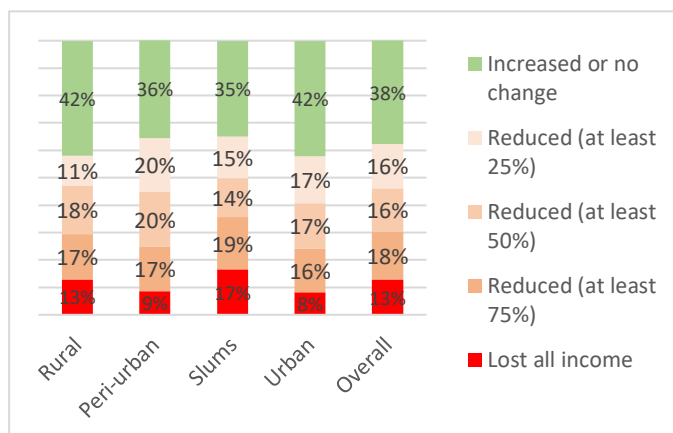


Figure 5 Type of work by type of residence (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)

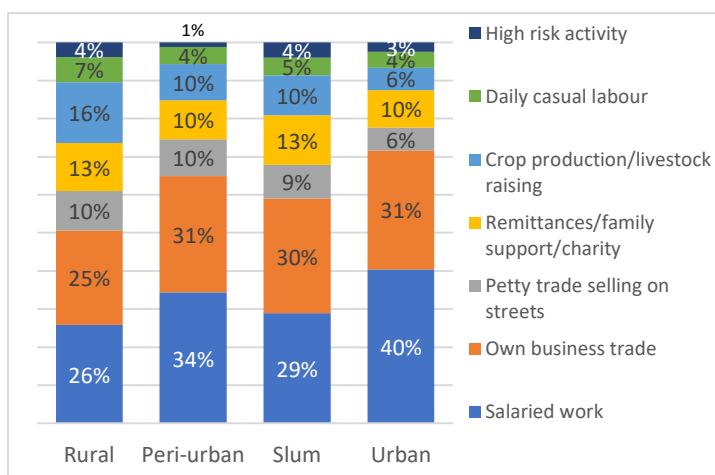
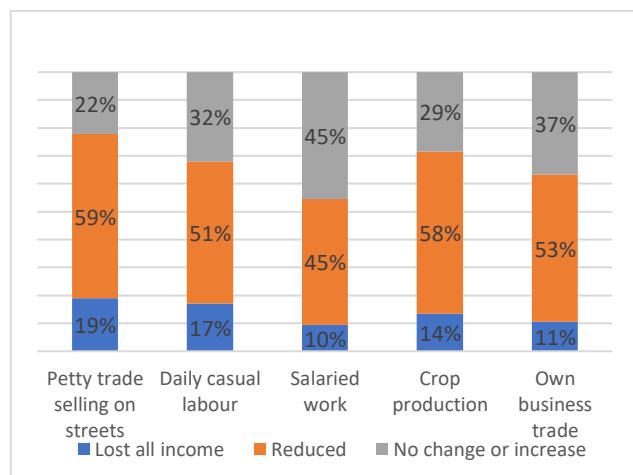


Figure 6 Income change during COVID-19 compared to a year ago (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Urban agriculture as a source of resilience against economic shocks

Food production and livestock play an important role not only for rural, but also for urban households. In slums, 51 % of households produce food or raise livestock, and for half of these households, food production contributes to the income. The farming community of Lagos consists to a large share of rural migrants in search of employment¹². In times of economic crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, urban agriculture can serve as protection against income shocks, as it offers an additional source of income or food.¹³ Data also showed that households that produced food had less worries for not having enough food to eat particularly in slums and rural areas (57% vs 62% and 48% vs 51% respectively for worrying not to have enough food to eat).

¹² Taiwo, 2016. *Analysis of Urban Agricultural Characteristics along Land Use Gradient in Lagos State, Nigeria*

¹³ Poulsen, Melissa N. & McNab, Philip R. & Clayton, Megan L. & Neff, Roni A., 2015. "A systematic review of urban agriculture and food security impacts in low-income countries," *Food Policy*, Elsevier, vol. 55(C), pages 131-146.

Remittances

With workers experiencing income losses all over the world, remittance flows decreased strongly during the pandemic.¹⁴ Remittances are an important income source for households in Nigeria. In the 2019 web-survey nearly two thirds of families with international migrants among their immediate members reported receiving remittances; even those without migrants (10 % of respondents) benefited from remittances from other persons¹⁵. In October 2020, this number decreased, and only one in five families overall stated that they receive remittances either from within or from outside Nigeria. Figure 7 also shows that households living in slums, as well as displaced households are more often dependent on remittances, with one in four and one in three households depending on remittances, respectively¹⁶.

Figure 7 Households receiving remittances (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)

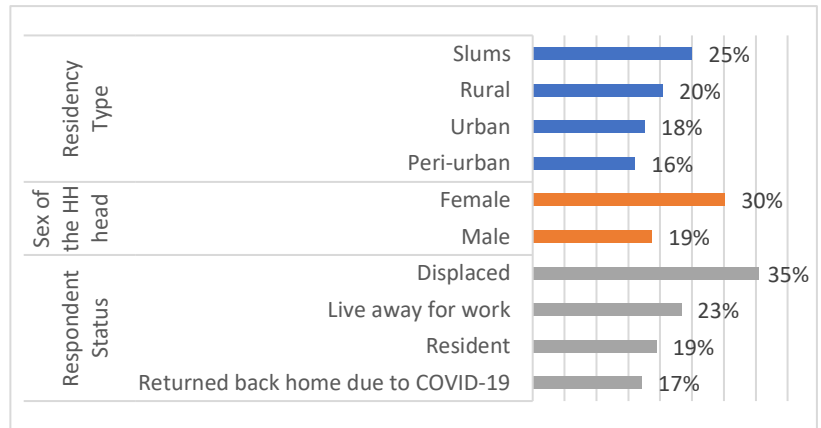
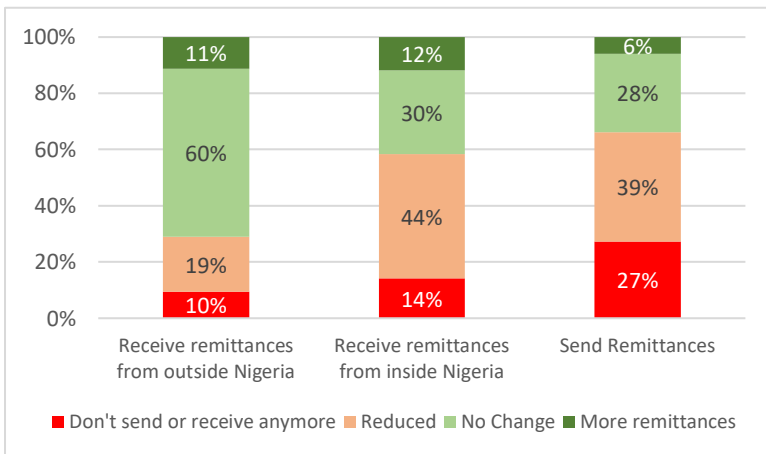


Figure 8 Changes on sending and receiving remittances since COVID-19 outbreak (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)

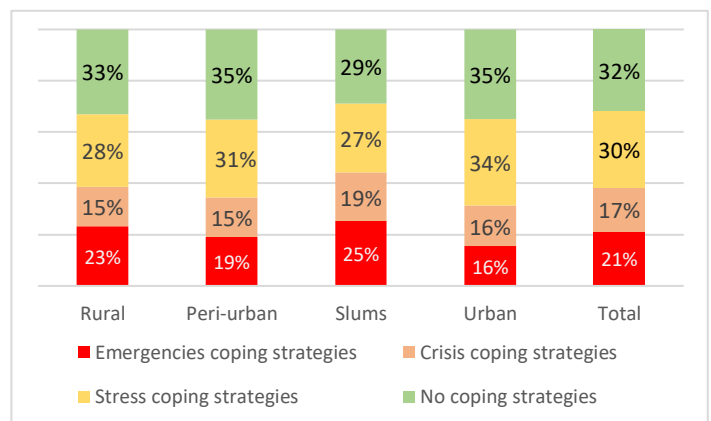


Despite the global effect of the pandemic on international remittances, households that receive remittances from inside Nigeria were even more severely affected by decreases (see Figure 8): 14 % of households who were dependent on internal remittances reported not receiving those remittances anymore and 44 % experienced a decrease in the amount of remittances they normally receive. Remittances from abroad seem to be less affected. The strong reduction in remittances from within Nigeria is reflected by a reported decrease in sending of remittances. Around 27 % of households who used to send remittances stopped sending due to the pandemic.

Livelihood Coping Strategies

In order to cope with the effects of the pandemic, many Nigerians had to apply livelihood coping strategies (Figure 9). Overall, 21 % of Nigerians applied emergency coping strategies such as begging, moving out of the city due to lack of income, engaging in illegal or risky jobs or sending children to work. In urban slums, even more people (25%) had to apply emergency coping strategies. Only one third of respondents did not need to apply any coping strategy to cover their essential needs.

Figure 9 Livelihood coping strategies by type of residence (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



¹⁴ IOM & WFP, 2020. Populations at risk: Implications of COVID-19 for hunger, migration and displacement.

¹⁵ Ibid.

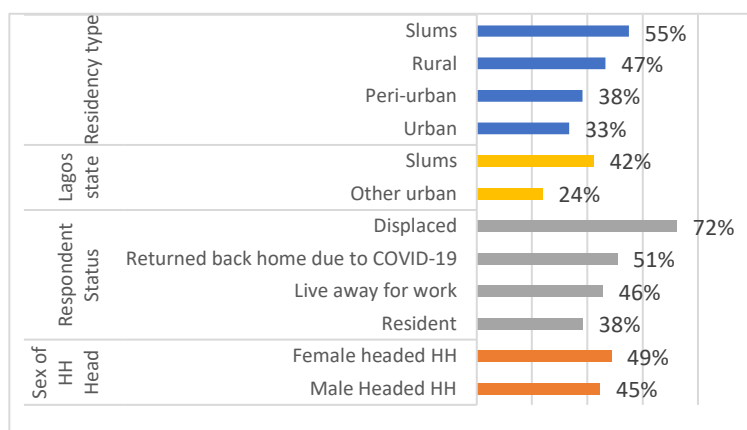
¹⁶ Data from the first round of Nigeria web-surveys shows that half of the money senders from abroad are residing in North America and Europe while the rest is from other West African countries and North Africa (Libya).

COVID-19 impacts on essential needs

Multidimensional Deprivation Index

Urban households strongly depend on markets to fulfill their essential needs, including food needs and housing. High living costs in the city make them vulnerable to income shocks such as through COVID-19, forcing them to choose between meeting different essential needs. The Multidimensional Deprivation Index (MDDI) is a composite score of deprivation in different dimensions of essential needs, that allows to look at deprivations in a more holistic manner and understand where households face largest gaps¹⁷. For the purpose of this report and based on the availability of data the index includes shelter crowding, health access, water availability, food security and safety. Education, although usually part of the MDDI, is not covered due to the lack of data on current school attendance due to the closure of schools. Households are considered as multidimensionally deprived, if they are deprived in more than one third of dimensions.

Figure 10 Percentage of multidimensionally deprived households by different categories (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Internally displaced people, households with several children, households that live in urban slums are most often multidimensionally deprived (see Figure 10).

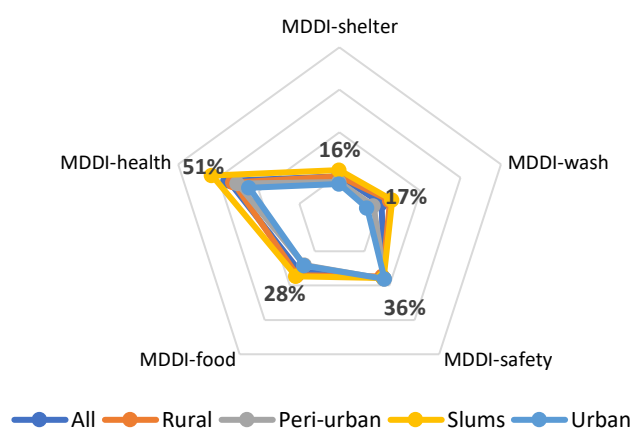
Vulnerability of households also differs by region- households in the Northern part of Nigeria are more often deprived in several dimensions compared to the Southern part. Overall, the population in rural areas is more deprived than the urban population, a pattern that can also be observed in other countries. However, disaggregation into slum areas is important to understand the full picture, as urban slum dwellers are more often deprived than the rural population.

Health is the dimension with the highest rates of deprivation, with 51% of Nigerians reporting not having access to health facilities¹⁸. 16% live in overcrowded shelters, 17% are without access to clean drinking water, 28% are deprived in regard to food security and 36% in regards to their safety (Figure 11).

Households residing in slums are the most deprived in all dimensions. Health is the dimension with the largest gaps for this group, most concerning in times of the pandemic, which might also lead to disruptions in treatment for other chronic diseases such as HIV.

In the next part of the report, the different dimensions of essential needs will be analysed in detail to better understand vulnerability among different groups.

Figure 11 Multidimensional deprivations by place of residence (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



¹⁷ Multidimensional Deprivation Index (MDDI) indicators: MDDI Food – had only one or none portion yesterday; went one day without eating or skipped meals. MDDI Health – Did not have access health services when needed; cannot afford medicine or impossible to reach; at least half of household members are sick. MDDI WASH – no access to clean water. MDDI Shelter – crowding index over 3. MDDI Safety- felt unsafe in the last month; displaced in the last 2 years.

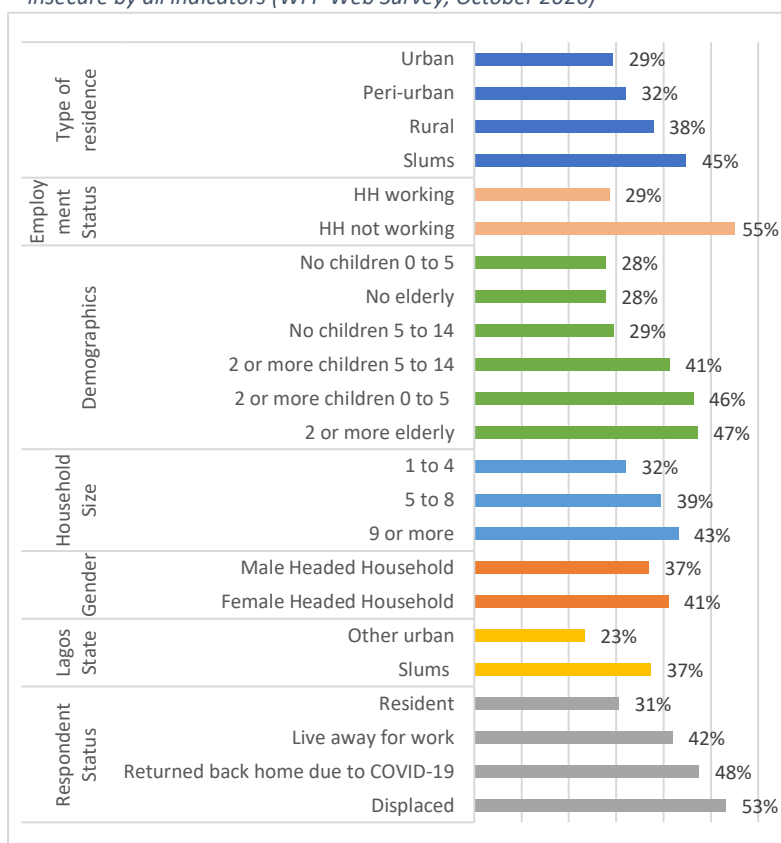
¹⁸ The MDDI health dimension in this report uses different indicators, therefore, differences compared to [WFPs Essential Needs Analysis report](#) (2021, based on face-to-face data) in Nigeria are expected. While this MDDI defines health deprivation as not having enough access to health services or cannot afford medicine; the standard MDDI defines as having half of the household members sick and not being able to seek treatment when needed.

Food

Since the first round of data collection in Nigeria in August 2019, the percentage of households that felt worried for not having enough food to eat increased (59 % to 65 %), as shown in Figure 12.

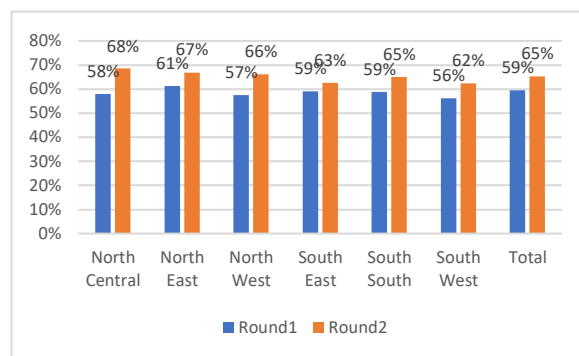
For deeper insights, the different food security indicators were aggregated to the remote-CARI, which is an adaptation of WFPs CARI for reporting on a population's overall food security status, suitable for web surveys. This composite indicator combines two dimensions, the current food consumption status of households and current coping capacity of households to meet future needs (incl. economic capacity and livelihood coping)¹⁹.

Figure 13 Percentage of households that are severely or moderately food insecure by all indicators (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Even before the pandemic, almost 40% of children did not attend primary school, even though it is compulsory and free²¹ - the recent closures have the potential to lead to permanent drop-outs for many additional children, in particular children from poorer households and girls.

Figure 12 Percentage of households that felt worried for not having enough food to eat (WFP Web Survey 2019/ WFP Web Survey 2020)

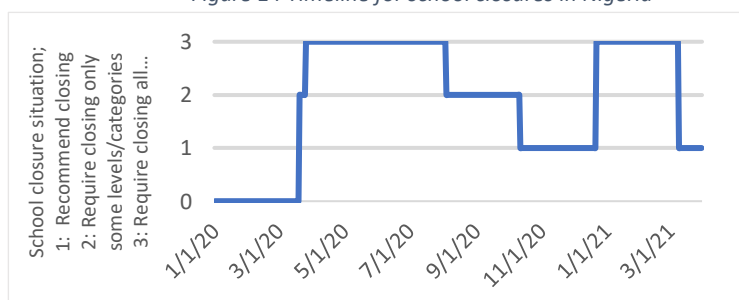


Food insecurity is a common problem in urban slums. 45 % of households residing in urban slums are moderately or severely food insecure compared to 38 % in rural areas and 29 % of those residing in non-slum urban areas. The most vulnerable group are displaced households, with around 50 % being food insecure, including 8 % in severe food insecurity. Food security levels are highly influenced by demographic factors. Households with more elderly members or children, female headed households as well as larger households tend to be more vulnerable to food insecurity (see Figure 13).

Education

The closure of Nigerian schools at the beginning of the pandemic for 7 months has led to more than 50 million children remaining at home²⁰. As Figure 14 below illustrates, despite the efforts to keep the close open during the first semester of 2019/2020 school year, the schools were closed right after the second wave.

Figure 14 Timeline for school closures in Nigeria



Source: Oxford Stringency Index is a composite measure for government response to COVID-19; timeline for school closures is one of the indicators.

¹⁹ The interim version of the remote CARI guidance is for internal use and testing by WFP VAM officers. Future versions of the guidance will be published online based on experiences collected from the field.

²⁰ UNICEF, 2020. Nigeria COVID-19 education.

²¹ UNICEF. Education in Nigeria.

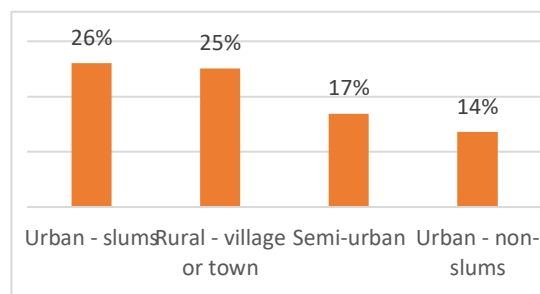
WASH

The survey results show that urban slums households are not better off than rural households in regard to access to clean water (Figure 15). The rate of households reporting access issues for water is much lower for peri-urban and urban-non slum households. Limited access to water and hand wash facilities also impedes hygiene measures necessary for the prevention of COVID-19.

Health

Health systems are in general stronger in urban areas in comparison to rural areas in Nigeria, and better in the Southern regions than in the North of the country, as based on Africa COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI). Comparing urban areas, Abuja and Kano have stronger health systems than Lagos. This is also reflected in the results from the web-survey, where households in rural areas and in the North more often reported to have limited access to needed health care (compare Map 2). As already seen in the analysis of other essential needs, the situation of the population living in urban slums, however, is worse than in other urban areas, and also than in many rural areas.

Figure 15 Percentage of Households that do not have access to clean water (using unprotected well or surface water) (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Map 2 Health Access in Nigeria

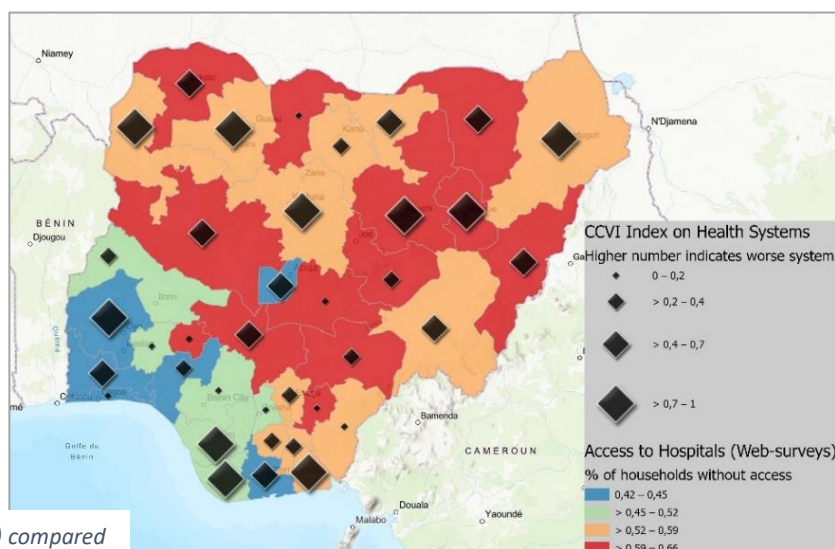
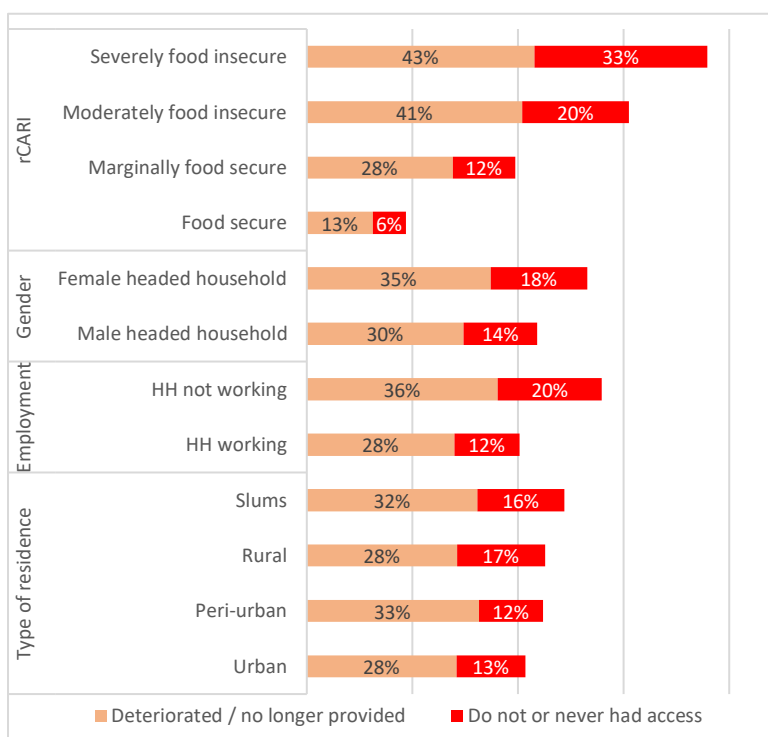


Figure 16 Provision of health services (clinics/doctors) compared to before Coronavirus (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Source: Access to Hospitals: WFP Web Survey, October 2020²²; CCVI Index on Health Systems²³: various resources (DHS, WHO, Malaria Atlas Project, OSM)

When respondents were asked if there were any changes to health services compared to before the coronavirus, female headed households and unemployed household heads along with households from urban slums and rural areas seem to be particularly affected from deterioration of access as shown in Figure 16. The groups who are already experiencing lack of access to health care before the pandemic, were most affected by additional deterioration.

²² It shows the percentage of households who could not access due to COVID-19 or who never had access to health services.

²³ The Africa COVID-19 Community Vulnerability Index (CCVI) is a composite measure of health facilities per capita, access to healthcare systems and healthcare system performance.

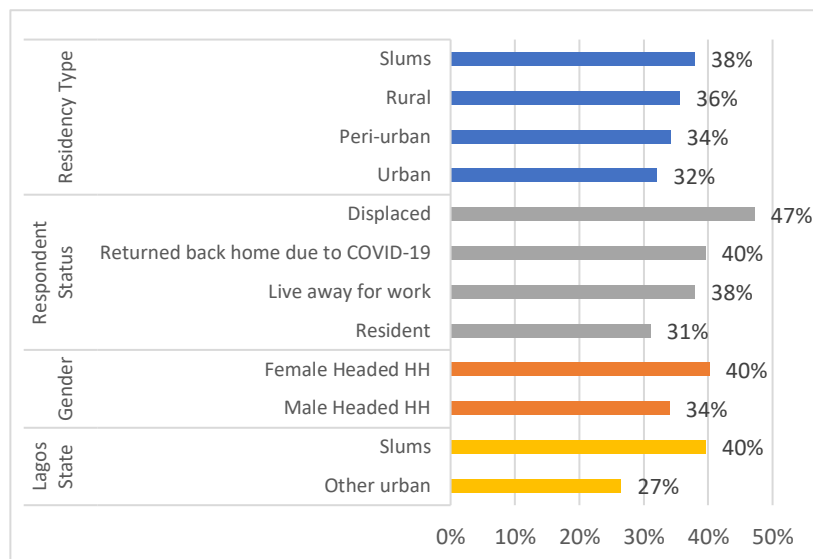
Safety

Safety is a concern for a considerable number of individuals. On average, one in every three respondents reported to feel unsafe in the country. Displaced individuals more often report to feel unsafe (one in two persons); followed by individuals residing in Lagos slums and female headed households (40 % for both groups). While the reasons for feeling unsafe vary between violence in the community, high crime rates, domestic violence etc. for all groups, the main reason for unsafety stands out for Lagos residents living outside of slums with violence in the community.

An increase in tensions or violence in their community since the beginning of the pandemic has been reported by almost half of the respondents.

Respondents were mostly worried about widespread protests, early signs of civil unrest and increased crime rates. Also, secondary data show that widespread protests were at its peak during the time of the data collection, an increase related to End SARS protests.

Figure 17 Percentage of respondents currently feeling unsafe (WFP Web Survey, October 2020)



Conclusions and recommendations

1. The results show that urban households, in particular urban slum households, have been affected strongly by the socio-economic effects of the pandemic, and were not able to fully recover. Urban slum households face high rates of deprivation in multiple essential needs. The situation of these households therefore needs to be monitored closely, and assisting these vulnerable households needs to be considered.
2. In urban areas, vulnerability, affectedness from income shocks due to COVID-19 and the ability to recover from these shocks depends on demographics, such as age and gender of the households head or number of children in the household – but also strongly on the type of income households have access to. Livelihoods and type of income therefore need to be considered for targeting.
3. Assistance provided to vulnerable urban households needs to take into account the main drivers of food insecurity and deprivation, which are poverty and sudden loss of income. Households face multiple pressing needs and have to prioritize between these.
4. Web-surveys have shown to be a cost-effective and flexible solution to monitor urban populations, including urban slum populations. Additionally, web-surveys are well adapted for longitudinal studies for urban vulnerabilities because they do not require an established database of respondents, which enhances the ability and agility to follow-up urban population overtime in specific geographic areas of interest.



WFP RAM Headquarters

- **Claudia Ah Poe**, Head of Needs Assessments & Targeting Unit; Email: claudia.ahpoe@wfp.org
- **Lena Hohfeld**, VAM Officer; Email: lena.hohfeld@wfp.org
- **Ilgi Bozdag**, Needs Assessment Analyst; Email: ilgi.bozdag@wfp.org

WFP Country Office Nigeria

- **Christoph Waldmeier**, Head of Research, Assessment, Monitoring. christoph.waldmeier@wfp.org