IDP INTENTION SURVEY YOBE STATE

August 2025

Photo during a key informant interview - at Abbari YBC, Damaturu central ward, Damaturu LGA, Yobe State © SEMA 2025 / Muhammad Modu Kolo

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IDP Intention Survey conducted in Yobe State provides critical insights into the future intentions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in camps and camp-like settings. The survey, implemented by the Yobe State Government in collaboration with key partners, including Yobe State Emergency Management Agency (YOSEMA), National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency (RUWASA), Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Budget, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Health & Human Services, Ministry of Housing & Urban Development, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Wealth Creation & Empowerment and Employment Generation, Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Works, Ministry of Youth, Sport & Social Development, Yobe SOLID Project, Yobe Geographic Information Service, representative of the IDPs, representative of the host communities, and supported by the Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF), reached 214 households across 14 sites in two LGAs. It aimed to assess IDPs' preferences to return to their places of origin, integrate locally, or relocate elsewhere in Nigeria, and to identify the conditions influencing these decisions.

Most of the respondents (50%) were displaced before 2016, with many experiencing multiple displacements. The survey revealed a complex and evolving displacement landscape shaped by conflict, environmental shocks, and socio-economic challenges. While 18 per cent of IDPs expressed a preference to return to their place of origin, 29 per cent wish to integrate locally, and only 4 per cent intend to relocate elsewhere. Notably, 37 per cent remain undecided, underscoring the need for flexible, informed, and inclusive durable solutions.

KEY FINDINGS

The findings highlight that decisions around return, integration, or relocation are primarily made by heads of household and are influenced by factors such as security, access to livelihoods, housing, and social networks. The report also reveals significant uncertainty regarding timelines for action, with many IDPs unable to specify when they might return, integrate, or relocate.

The findings are intended to guide durable solutions planning by the Yobe State Government and partners, ensuring that interventions are evidence-based, voluntary, and respectful of IDPs' choices.

IDP Intention Survey – Yobe State

June 2025

INTRODUCTION

Yobe State grapples with a protracted displacement crisis, bearing the brunt of conflict-induced displacement driven by non-state armed groups (NSAGs), communal clashes, and farmers-herders clashes and compounded by environmental shocks, such as floods and droughts. Since the escalation of violence in 2014, the state has faced a complex humanitarian emergency, resulting in large-scale internal displacement and significant challenges to recovery and reintegration.

In response to this enduring crisis, the Yobe State Government—through the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and other key MDAs—has intensified efforts to pursue durable solutions for internally displaced persons (IDPs). These efforts have been significantly bolstered by the support of the **Internal Displacement Solutions Fund (IDSF)**, which has provided a strategic platform for the government to collect, analyze, and disseminate critical data on displacement dynamics and future intentions of IDPs.

As part of this initiative, and in collaboration with key government partners including the State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), and other MDAs, a comprehensive **Intention Survey** was conducted in IDP camps across the state.

This survey aimed to assess the future intentions of displaced households—whether to return to their places of origin, locally integrate, or relocate—within the next 12 months. By reaching 214 households, the survey provides robust evidence-base data to inform policy and programming that respects the choices of IDPs and supports safe, voluntary, and dignified solutions.

The data generated through this exercise not only reflects the voices and aspirations of displaced communities but also strengthens the capacity of the Yobe State Government to plan and implement targeted interventions. It demonstrates the state's leadership in advancing recovery and resilience, while reinforcing the collective commitment to ensure that no one is left behind in the journey toward sustainable peace and development.

OBJECTIVES

The Intention Survey tool aims at understanding IDPs' preferred solution options and the conditions that influenced such preferences. The main objectives of the survey are as follows:

I. To assess IDPs who wish to return, relocate, and locally integrate.

II. To map out areas to which IDPs wish to return, relocate, and locally integrate.

III. To understand the conditions in (actual and intended) locations of solutions.

IV. To determine the estimated timelines for return, relocation, and local integration.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection period was between April and May 2025 in camps within Damaturu and Gujba LGAs of Yobe State. A structured, face-to-face interview methodology was chosen for the survey to allow for in-depth responses and to account for literacy levels. Interviews were conducted by trained enumerators (9 females and 21 males) who administered the survey instrument to each sampled head of household across 14 camps and camp-like settings in Yobe State.

Given the population size of IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings in Yobe State, the survey targeted a sample of households. This approach ensured representative coverage and maximized data accuracy for analysing household intentions.

The questionnaire was developed to capture demographic information, household size, length of stay in the camp, and specific intentions regarding return, local integration, or relocation. Additional questions were included to understand factors influencing these choices, such as safety, access to basic services, livelihood opportunities, and family considerations.

The questionnaire was pre-tested in a pilot camp within Yobe State to ensure clarity, cultural relevance, and suitability. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine question wording and response options.

A team of enumerators fluent in English and local languages (Hausa and Kanuri), and familiar with the cultural context of the camps from SEMA and other partners, was trained. The training covered survey objectives, interview techniques, ethical considerations, and the importance of neutrality and confidentiality.

Household Interviews: Enumerators visited each household within the camps and conducted interviews with the heads of household. In cases where the head was unavailable, a senior household member was interviewed. Responses were recorded digitally on tablets to ensure accuracy and facilitate real-time data entry.

Informed consent was obtained from each respondent before beginning the interview. Participants were assured of confidentiality, and responses were anonymized to protect identities. Participation was entirely voluntary, with no repercussions for opting out.

Data collected was cleaned, anonymized, and processed for analysis.

IDP Intention Survey – Yobe State

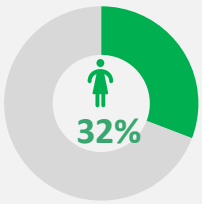
June 2025

214
Interviewed Households

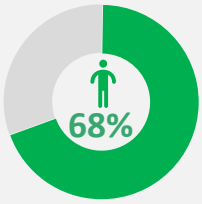
45
Average Age of Respondents

7
Average Household Size

Gender of Respondents



Female



Male

14
IDP Camps and Camp-like Settings

To understand the future intentions and aspirations of IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings in Yobe State, the state government through the Durable Solutions Data Management Working Group surveyed two Local Government Areas (LGAs) where IDPs living in camps and camp-like settings were situated. Out of the 2,970 displaced households living in 14 camps and camp-like settings in the state, 214 were sampled and interviewed. The respondents were primarily heads of household (HoH). Where the HoH was absent, a senior household member was interviewed.

Figure 1: Number of Displacement

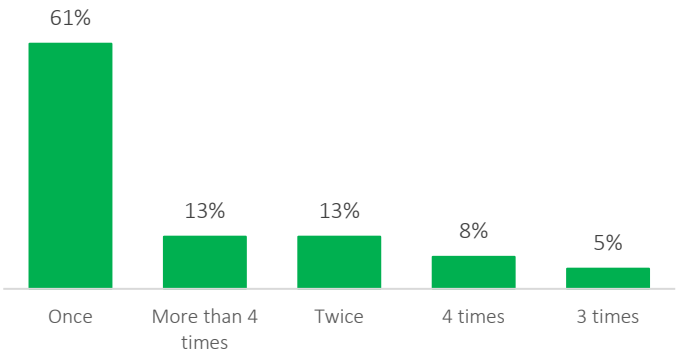
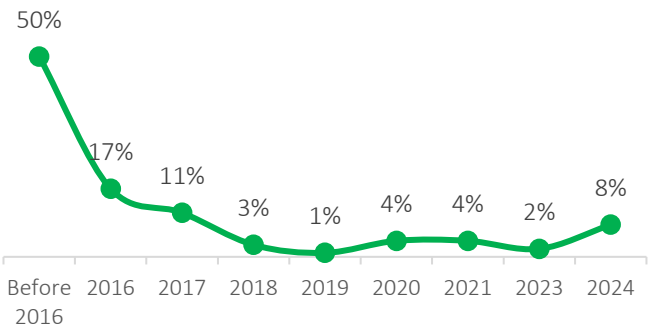


Figure 2: Year of Displacement



FUTURE INTENTION

The future intentions of IDPs in Yobe State reveal a diverse range of preferences and uncertainties. Approximately 29 per cent, express a desire to stay at their current location, indicating a preference for integration into the local community. Many IDPs have found a sense of stability and support in their current environment, which they are reluctant to leave.

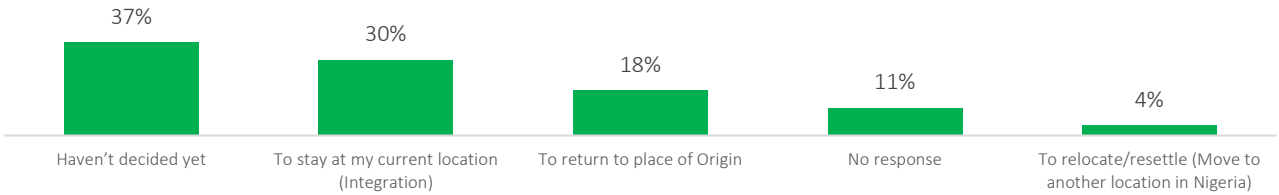
On the other hand, a smaller percentage, around 18 per cent, wish to return to their place of origin. This group hopes to rebuild their lives in familiar surroundings once conditions permit. However, the relatively low percentage indicates that returning home may not be a viable option for many, possibly due to ongoing insecurity or lack of resources.

A very small fraction, about 4 per cent, intends to relocate to another location within Nigeria. Some IDPs may be seeking new opportunities or environments that they believe may offer better prospects for their future.

Interestingly, a substantial portion of the IDPs, approximately 37 per cent, have not yet decided on their future intentions. This uncertainty is a result of the complex and fluid nature of displacement, where many individuals are still weighing their options and considering various factors before making a definitive decision.

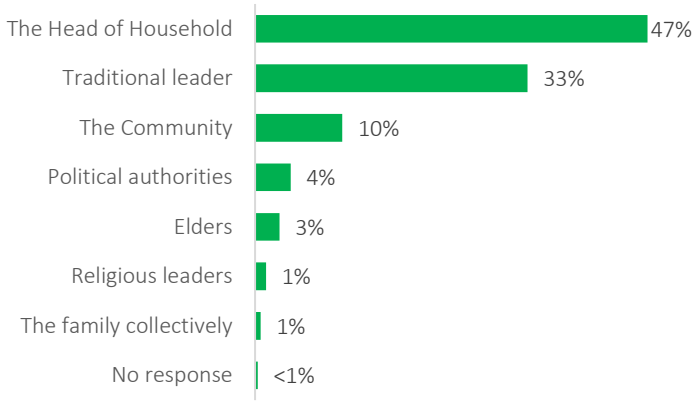
There is a need for continued support and tailored interventions to address the diverse needs and aspirations of IDPs in Yobe State. Efforts to facilitate integration, support voluntary return, and provide information and resources for those undecided will be crucial in helping IDPs navigate their future paths.

Figure 3: Future Intentions



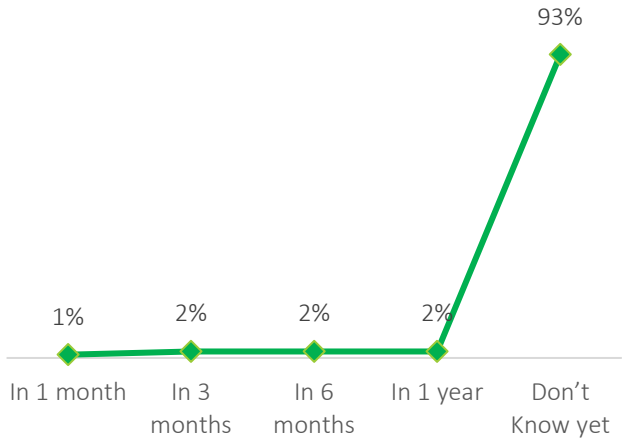
INTENTION TO RETURN TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

Figure 4: Who Makes the Decision to Return?



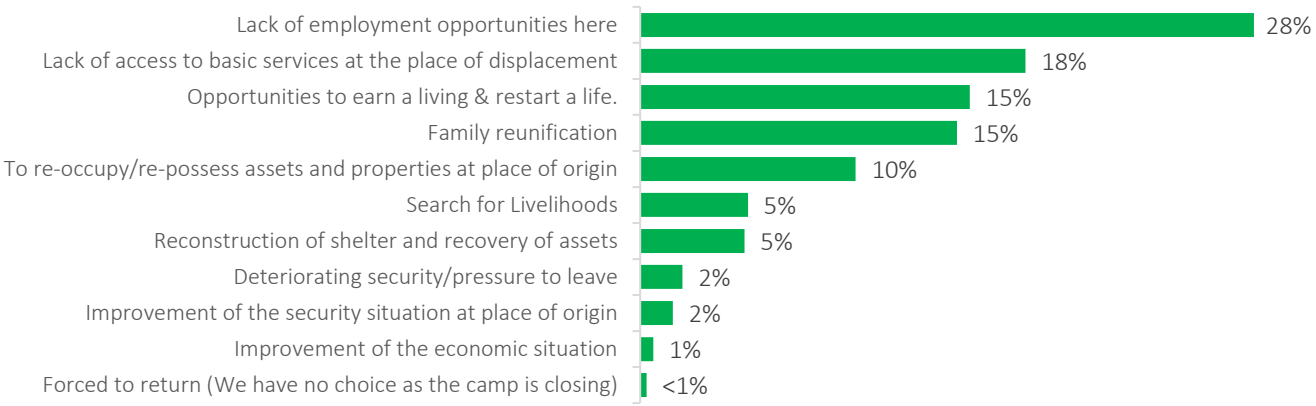
The decision to return to the place of origin for displaced households is primarily made by the head of household, accounting for 47 per cent of the responses. This is followed by traditional leaders, who influence 33 per cent of such decisions, and the community, which plays a role in 10 per cent of cases. These top three actors collectively shape the majority of return decisions, reflecting the strong influence of household leadership and traditional/community structures in displacement settings

Figure 5: Intended Time of Return



Among displaced households that intend to return to their place of origin, the majority (93%) are uncertain about when the return will happen, indicating they do not know when they would return. Only a small proportion have a defined timeline, with 1 per cent planning to return within one month, 2 per cent within three months, 2 per cent within six months, and 2 per cent within a year. This highlights significant uncertainty surrounding the timing of return, likely influenced by prevailing security, livelihood, or shelter conditions.

Figure 6. Reasons for Return to place of origin*



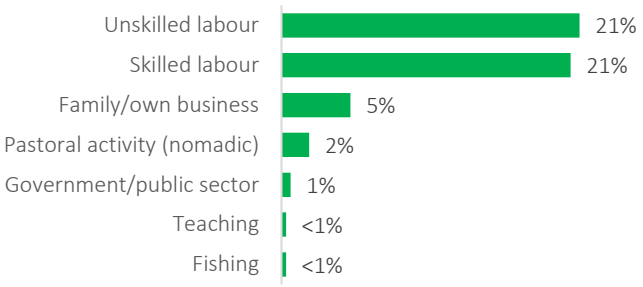
The primary reasons displaced households intend to return to their place of origin are largely driven by challenges in their current locations. The lack of employment opportunities at displacement sites is the most cited reason, accounting for 28 per cent, followed by the lack of access to basic services at 18 per cent. Additionally, 15 per cent of households mentioned both family reunification and opportunities to earn a living and restart life as motivating factors. Other reasons include the desire to reoccupy or reclaim property at the place of origin (10%), efforts to rebuild homes or recover assets (5%), and the search for livelihoods (5%). A smaller percentage referenced deteriorating security or pressure to leave (2%) and perceived improvement in security or economic conditions at the place of origin (1% and 2% respectively). Notably, less than 1 per cent reported being forced to return due to camp closure.

This pattern suggests that returns are primarily voluntary and driven by push factors related to unmet needs at displacement sites, rather than pull factors from places of origin.

**Multiple options selected*

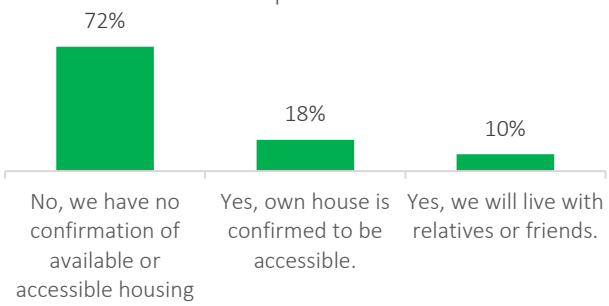
INTENTION TO RETURN TO PLACE OF ORIGIN

Figure 7: Access to livelihood in place of origin*



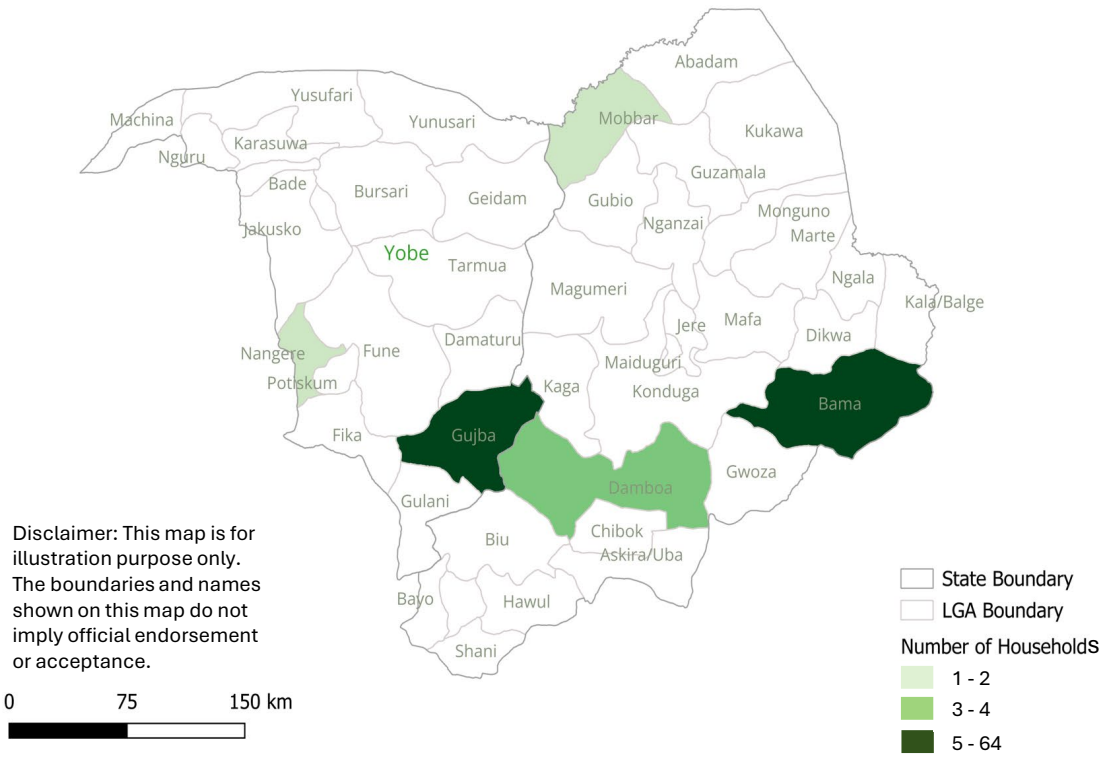
Access to livelihoods at places of origin for displaced households is primarily concentrated in informal labor sectors. Skilled and unskilled labour each account for 21 per cent, making them the most accessible livelihood options. A smaller proportion of households reported access to family or their own businesses (5%), while pastoral activities are available to 2 per cent. Very limited access was noted in the government/public sector (1%). This indicates that returnees are more likely to rely on manual or informal work opportunities upon returning.

Figure 8: Availability/Accessible Housing in intended place of Return



The majority of displaced households (72%) reported having no confirmation of available or accessible housing in their intended place of return. Only 18 per cent indicated that their own house was confirmed to be accessible, while 10 per cent plan to live with relatives or friends upon return. This highlights significant uncertainty and potential shelter challenges for most households considering return.

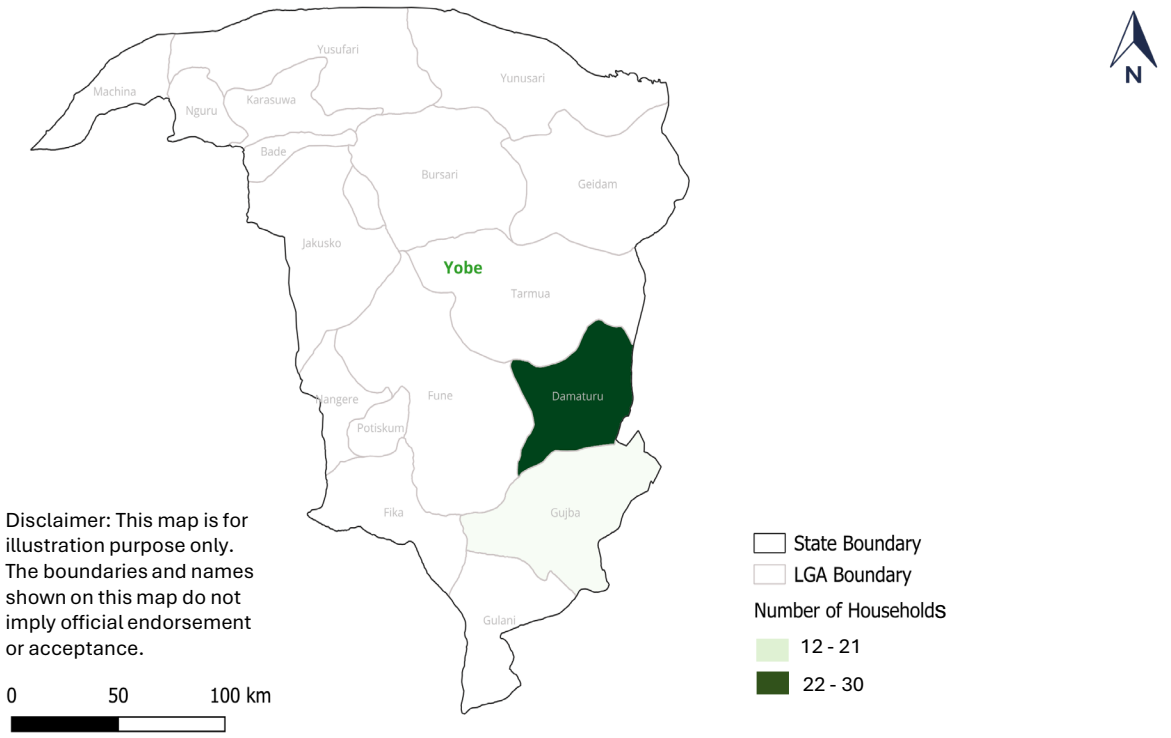
MAP 1: AREAS OF INTENDED RETURN



Multiple options selected

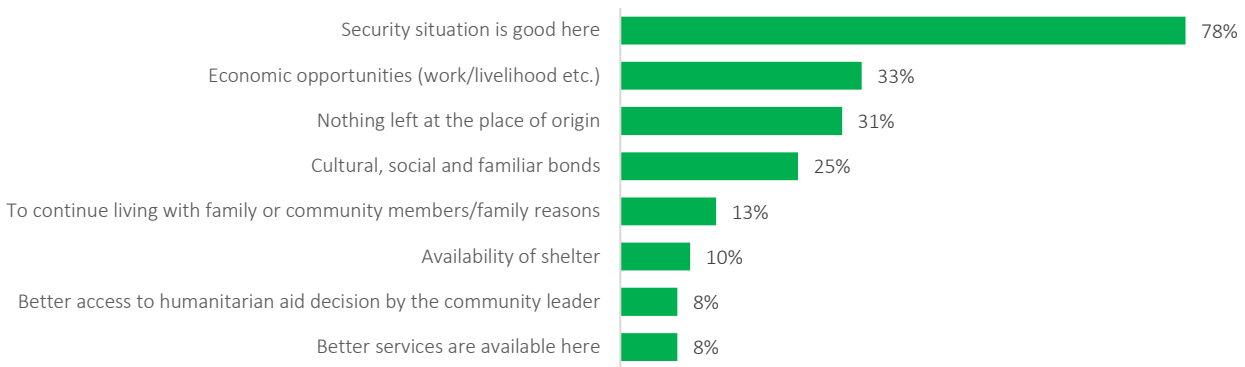
INTENTION TO INTEGRATE (STAY AT CURRENT LOCATION)

MAP 2: LGA OF INTEGRATION



The successful integration of displaced households into host communities depends on several conditions. The most important factor is the presence of a good security situation, cited by 78 per cent of respondents. This is followed by the availability of economic opportunities such as work and livelihoods (33%), and the reality that nothing is left at their place of origin (31%), making return less viable. Additionally, cultural, social, and familiar bonds with the host community play a significant role (25%), as well as the desire to continue living with family or community members for family-related reasons (13%). These top five factors highlight that both practical needs and social connections are critical to long-term integration.

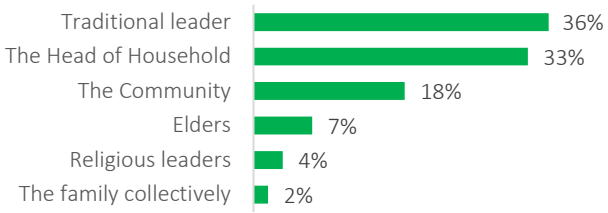
Figure 9: Conditions to Ensure Integration*



Multiple options selected

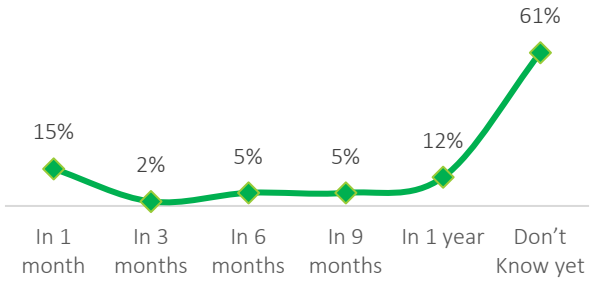
INTENTION TO INTEGRATE (STAY AT CURRENT LOCATION)

Figure 10: Who Makes the Decision to Integrate?



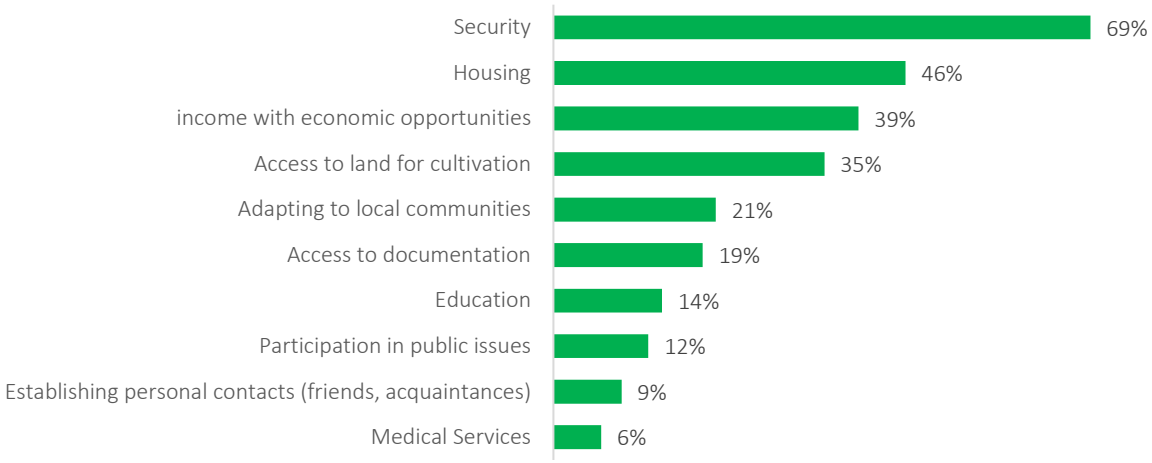
For households that wish to integrate into the host community, the decision is primarily influenced by traditional and household leadership. Traditional leaders play the most significant role, accounting for 36 per cent of decisions, followed closely by the head of household at 33 per cent. The community also contributes to the decision-making process (18%), while smaller roles are played by elders (7%), religious leaders (4%), and the family collectively (2%).

Figure 11: Intended time to Integrate



Among displaced households intending to integrate into the host community, the majority (61%) are uncertain about the timeline, indicating they do not know when integration will occur. However, 15 per cent plan to integrate within one month, and 12 per cent within one year. Smaller proportions intend to integrate in three months (2%), six months (5%), or nine months (5%).

Figure 12:Reasons to Integrate*

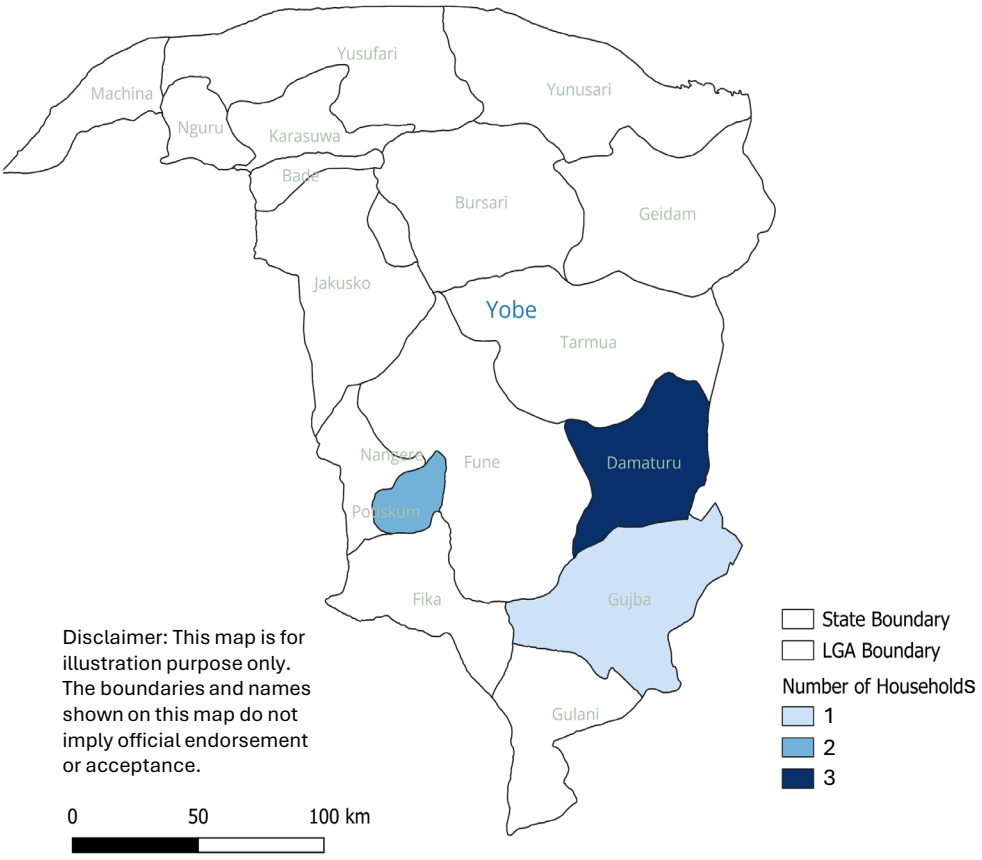


For IDP households who intend to integrate into host communities, the decision is strongly influenced by the availability of fundamental living conditions and long-term stability. The leading factor is security, cited by 69 per cent of households, reflecting the importance of safety and protection in shaping integration decisions. Following security, access to housing (46%) and income-generating activities (39%) are important factors for integration. Additionally, access to land for cultivation (35%) plays a significant role, particularly for those with agricultural backgrounds, as land access provides both food security and a means of income. Social and administrative factors also influence integration. About 21 per cent of households cited the ability to adapt to local communities, and 19 per cent emphasized the importance of accessing documentation, which is often necessary for accessing services, employment, and legal protections. Other contributing factors include education (14%), participation in public issues (12%), and building personal connections (9%), which support long-term community inclusion and belonging. While medical services were cited by six per cent, access to justice and perception by locals as a "non-stranger" were not reported as reasons, suggesting these are less immediate concerns compared to livelihood, shelter, and security.

**Multiple options selected*

INTENTION TO RELOCATE OR RESETTLE ELSEWHERE WITHIN NIGERIA

MAP 3. AREAS OF INTENDED RELOCATION/RESETTLEMENT



Among the IDP households that expressed an intention to relocate to another location within Nigeria, the majority indicated a preference for relocating to Damaturu LGA, the capital of Yobe State. This strong preference is likely driven by the relative stability, access to services, and greater availability of economic and livelihood opportunities often found in urban centers such as Damaturu.

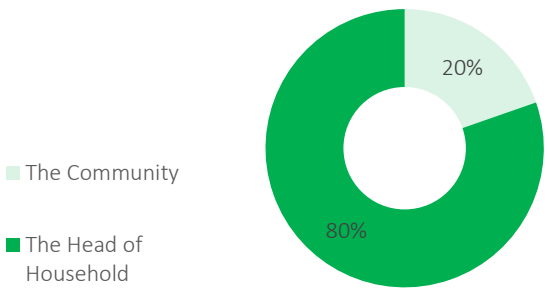
The second most preferred destination was Potiskum LGA. As one of the state's major commercial hubs, Potiskum offers promising prospects for employment, trade, and improved living conditions, which may appeal to IDP households seeking to rebuild their lives and secure long-term stability.

In addition, a number of IDP households also identified Gujba LGA as a desired relocation site. Although less prominent than Damaturu or Potiskum, Gujba may be seen by some households as a viable option due to cultural or familial ties, perceived safety, and the opportunity to return to familiar environments with potential for recovery.

These relocation preferences highlight the importance of supporting host communities in key LGAs such as Damaturu, Potiskum, and Gujba, to ensure they are equipped with the necessary infrastructure, services, and resources to absorb new arrivals and promote sustainable integration.

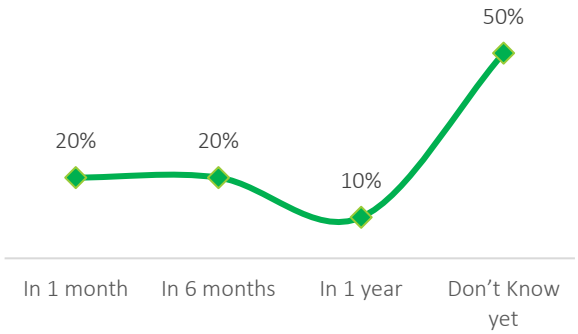
INTENTION TO RELOCATE OR RESETTLE ELSEWHERE WITHIN NIGERIA

Figure 13: Who Makes the Decision to Relocate?



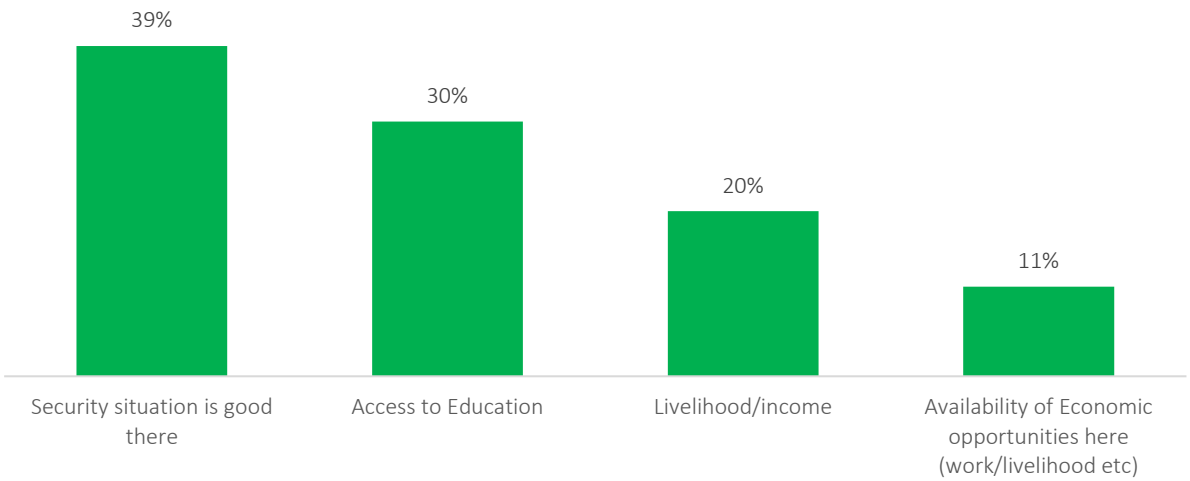
For internally displaced persons (IDPs) who intend to relocate to another location within Nigeria, the decision is predominantly made by the head of household, accounting for approximately 80 per cent of the cases. In contrast, the community plays a decision-making role in about 20 per cent of instances. This indicates that relocation decisions are largely individual or family-based, with household heads taking primary responsibility, while community influence remains limited.

Figure 14: Intended Time to Relocate



Among internally displaced households intending to relocate to another location within Nigeria, the majority (50%) are uncertain about when they will relocate, indicating they do not know when they intend to relocate. Meanwhile, approximately 20 per cent plan to relocate within one month, and a similar proportion within six months. A smaller percentage (10%) intend to relocate within one year.

Figure 15: Reasons to Relocate Elsewhere in Nigeria



Internally displaced households intending to relocate elsewhere within Nigeria are primarily motivated by the security situation in potential new locations, cited by 39 per cent of respondents. This reflects the ongoing importance of safety in influencing displacement-related decisions. In addition to security, access to education (30%) and livelihood or income opportunities (20%) are also key drivers of relocation, highlighting the need for stability, economic survival, and the pursuit of a better future for their children.

Interestingly, only 11 per cent cited the availability of economic opportunities at the intended location, suggesting that while income is a motivating factor, households may prioritize general safety and long-term prospects like education over immediate job availability. Overall, the decision to relocate is shaped by a combination of protection, future opportunities, and the potential for rebuilding sustainable lives in a more secure and supportive environment.

CONCLUSION

The IDP Intention Survey conducted in Yobe State highlights the pressing need for a comprehensive, context-specific approach to achieving durable solutions for displaced populations. While many internally displaced persons (IDPs), particularly in Damaturu LGA, have found relative stability and are leaning toward local integration, a significant portion remain undecided, reflecting the evolving nature of displacement and the persistent challenges surrounding return or relocation.

Among the key barriers to return are the lack of accessible housing (72%), limited livelihood opportunities in areas of origin, continued insecurity, and legal or administrative obstacles.

For those considering local integration, the most influential factors are the availability of economic opportunities, a secure environment, and strong social ties. In contrast, households considering relocation are mainly motivated by the search for better economic prospects, often within Yobe State itself.

The findings underscore the importance of enhancing local integration frameworks, ensuring that returns are voluntary, safe, and informed, and creating sustainable relocation pathways. They also point to the need for tailored outreach to undecided IDPs, ensuring their perspectives and needs are at the heart of response efforts.

Additionally, the survey revealed that heads of household were central to decision-making, emphasizing the importance of targeted engagement strategies that account for intra-household dynamics. Overall, the results reaffirm the Yobe State Government's commitment to durable, dignified solutions and offer clear guidance for humanitarian and development partners to align their efforts with the priorities and realities of displaced communities.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Support Local Integration:
- Strengthen access to livelihoods, housing, and services in preferred LGAs (e.g., Gujba, Damaturu).
- Promote social cohesion and inclusion programs.

2. Facilitate Voluntary Return:
- Address housing reconstruction and property restitution.
- Improve security and service delivery in areas of origin.

3. Enable Informed Relocation:
- Provide information on viable relocation destinations.
- Support economic reintegration and housing access in new locations.

4. Target Undecided Populations:
- Expand counseling, legal aid, and community dialogue.
- Ensure IDPs have access to updated information on all durable solutions.

5. Engage Decision Makers:
- Tailor communication and programming to heads of households.
- Involve elders and community leaders in outreach and planning.

LIMITATIONS

- The findings presented in this report represent weighted results, and due to rounding off, some percentages may be slightly above or below (+/-1%) 100 per cent.
- The results in this report represent a 95 per cent confidence level with a 5 per cent margin of error at the state level (Admin II).
- Due to accessibility issues, three camps in Fune, Nguru and Yunusari were not surveyed reducing the number of household interviewed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Yobe State Government would like to acknowledge the participation of the following ministries and agencies in the data collection and processing stages. Your contributions have made this report possible. We look forward to this collaboration again in the near future.

Collaborators

1. **YOSEMA:** Yobe State Emergency Management Agency
2. **NEMA:** National Emergency Management Agency
3. **RUWASA:** Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Agency
4. **YoGIS:** Yobe State Geographic Information Services
5. Yobe SOLID Project
6. Ministry of Agriculture
7. Ministry of Basic Education
8. Ministry of Budget
9. Ministry of Environment
10. Ministry of Health and Human Services
11. Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning
12. Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs
13. Ministry of Information
14. Ministry of Justice
15. Ministry of Wealth Creation and EEG
16. Ministry of Women Affairs
17. Ministry of Works
18. Ministry of Youth, Sport and Social Development.
19. Yobe State IDP Chairman
20. Host Community Representative – Gujba Emirate Council
21. Host Community Representative