

# Northeast Nigeria Rural Resilience Study Recurrent Monitoring Survey (RMS)

## Round 2 Findings: Summary Brief

March 2023



This brief presents findings from the second of four rounds of the Recurrent Monitoring Survey (RMS) of the Northeast Nigeria Resilience Study.<sup>1,2</sup> The study aims to understand if and how a portfolio of resilience interventions can mitigate the negative impacts of shocks and stresses, avert humanitarian need, and improve well-being in the context of protracted crises, including economic and climate shocks and high levels of internal displacement and conflict. The focal activity, Rural Resilience Activity (RRA), includes market-systems strengthening interventions layered with peacebuilding and a short-term humanitarian assistance COVID-19 response, primarily in the form of cash transfers.<sup>3</sup>

**RMS Round One (R1)** identified important components of household absorptive, adaptive, and transformative resilience capacities for RRA households, such as the ability to save, asset ownership, livelihood diversification, information exposure, and social capital. **Round Two (R2)** data analysis focused on statistical comparisons of key indicators to understand changes between R1 and R2 in household well-being and the key drivers of household resilience. Seasonal effects and differences in recall period account for some variations in indicator estimates between rounds. Other influences include recent flooding, inflation, the introduction of the new Naira, and general insecurity, which have impeded access to market services and the use of income- and productivity-enhancing practices and technologies promoted by RRA and other resilience-building investments in the region.

## Topline Findings

**Households continue to grapple with price inflation (food, fuel, inputs), general insecurity, and flooding.**

The shocks experienced most continue to be price inflation (of food, fuel, and inputs), extreme weather, and human disease. The percentage of households experiencing energy cuts and fuel shortages declined from R1 to R2, but more households are impacted by high fuel prices. Reports of theft, destruction of assets, and conflict

<sup>1</sup> The study is conducted by TANGO International in partnership with Binomial Optimus Ltd and commissioned by USAID's Bureau of Resilience and Food Security and Center for Resilience, in collaboration with the USAID Nigeria Mission, under the Resilience, Evaluation, Analysis, and Learning (REAL) Award.

<sup>2</sup> For more detailed information on the study methodology and findings, please see: Northeast Nigeria Rural Resilience Study Recurrent Monitoring Survey (RMS) Round 2 Report and Annexes.

<sup>3</sup> Note: in Year 3, RRA received an additional USD 15 million in funding to provide humanitarian assistance to households particularly hard-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Quick Facts

**Focal Activity:** Rural Resilience Activity (RRA)

**Implementation Period:** 5 Years 2019–2024

**Funding Source:** USAID Feed the Future, \$49 million

**Aim:** To facilitate and protect economic recovery and growth in vulnerable, conflict-affected areas and sustainably move people out of chronic vulnerability and poverty by expanding access to market services

**Implementors:** Mercy Corps in partnership with Save the Children International and the International Fertilizer Development Center

**Intervention Area:** Borno, Adamawa, Yobe, and Gombe

over natural resources fell between rounds, but qualitative interviews indicate that communities continue to experience kidnapping and robbery. Flooding has created a new wave of internally displaced persons (IDPs) sheltering within their communities or relocating to unaffected areas.

**Food insecurity remains pervasive and will likely persist into the coming months, if not worsen, as household food stocks dwindle. Inflation and declining purchasing power make it more difficult to acquire food and inputs.**

Food insecurity remained high in R2 despite R2's overlap with the main harvest for cereals and tubers. More than three-quarters of households in R2 are moderately-to-severely food insecure. Flooding, the high cost of agricultural inputs, and a ban on urea contributed to lower-than-average yields. Improved food access from the most recent harvest has resulted in fewer households scaling back the number of daily meals, but more households cannot eat preferred foods.

**More households are setting aside grains in anticipation of future shortages—exacerbating food insecurity.**

The most common strategies for coping with the impact of shocks remain a combination of reducing food consumption and diet quality, and borrowing food or money. A significantly lower percentage of households in R2 dipped into their savings to cope with shocks. But more households (over one-third) are saving grains in anticipation of future food shortages or to sell later when prices have increased.

**Households are reporting lower income diversity, which is likely to increase their vulnerability to future shocks.**

Fewer households are mitigating the impact of future shocks by diversifying their livelihoods, for example, by adding an agricultural activity, diversifying into a farming livelihood, or diversifying into a non-agricultural activity. The average number of livelihood activities in which households engage declined between rounds. Most households engage in farming and crop production, integrating those activities with livestock production and wage labor, but participation in agricultural wage labor and value chain production declined. The qualitative interviews show that some households are taking up petty trade to supplement their incomes. FEWS NET findings corroborate the widespread negative impact of flooding and macroeconomic conditions on farming, livelihood and market activities.

**Worsening macroeconomic conditions make it challenging for financial providers to extend credit.**

There is no change in the percentage of households borrowing cash, borrowing agricultural inputs in-kind, or saving. However, fewer R2 households borrow from banks or receive in-kind inputs from market vendors compared to R1. Instead, more households borrow cash or in-kind from friends and family. While demand for bank loans remains high, it has become more difficult for banks to issue new loans because the high default rate has reduced bank equity. Households default to cope with the loss of income resulting from flooding damage. Some divert loan funds intended as livelihoods investments to cover basic needs.

**Sustaining access to market services amidst macroeconomic pressures is likely to remain a challenge.**

The use of agricultural extension services and precision farming advisory services was low in R1 and declined to even lower levels by R2. Fewer households applied fertilizer or used improved seeds. While these declines may be attributable to seasonal effects, the qualitative data suggest that inflation has hindered farmers from acquiring inputs, particularly seeds and fertilizer. Although the survey did not pick up any changes in the use of livestock input services or other improved practices, such as using animal feed or raising improved breeds, livestock input suppliers and veterinarians frequently mentioned inflation and high prices as a challenge for acquiring products and distributing services.

**Access to price, weather, and market information can foster linkages to essential market services and productivity-enhancing practices.**

The decline in information exposure and training participation between rounds may reflect seasonal effects and differences in recall periods. The RMS analysis shows that households that receive information on borrowing opportunities or improved production practices are more likely to take out a loan, use input or output market services, and/or apply improved production practices.

**Household well-being was associated with several indicators of resilience, and with the adoption of services and practices promoted by RRA.**

The findings from exploratory analyses indicate that food-secure households are more likely than food-insecure households to save, accumulate assets, possess more social capital, receive information (e.g., weather, prices, and business opportunities), and prepare for shocks. In addition, food-secure households are more likely to use input and output market services and improved production practices.

**Social capital remains a crucial element for the exchange of critical services and financial support during emergencies, but continued economic hardship may lead to its deterioration over time.**

The average score on the bonding social capital and bridging social indices, which measure the degree to which households can give and receive support within and outside one's community, remained at moderate levels between rounds. Qualitative study participants commonly reported providing services or financial assistance through various local community groups or social networks. However, some community groups noted that they could no longer help others due to financial constraints. In addition, the low supply and high cost of materials hamper community efforts to repair infrastructure damaged by the flooding.

**DISCLAIMER**

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**ABOUT THE REAL AWARD**

The Resilience Evaluation, Analysis and Learning (REAL) Associate Award is a consortium-led effort funded by the USAID Center for Resilience. It was established to respond to growing demand among USAID Missions, host governments, implementing organizations, and other key stakeholders for rigorous, yet practical, monitoring, evaluation, strategic analysis, and capacity building support. Led by Save the Children, REAL draws on the expertise of its partners: Mercy Corps and TANGO International.