

Digital access, communication needs and community practices



How digital inclusion can improve
the protection of refugees, the
internally displaced, and stateless
people in West Africa



© UNHCR/Hugh Kinsella Cunningham

Research conducted as part of
the UNHCR C4C Regional Project
(Connectivity 4 Communication)





The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) works to ensure that all fleeing violence and persecution have the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge. UNHCR is mandated to lead and co-ordinate international action to protect refugees, safeguarding their rights and those of other forcibly displaced persons.

UNHCR believes that displaced people and the communities that host them have the right and choice to be part of a connected society and to have access to the technology that enables them to build a better future for themselves, their families and the world.

More information on: www.unhcr.org



SÉKOU is a consulting firm that supports impact entrepreneurs and change actors in West Africa with training in new media and digital tools to enable them to strengthen their activities.

In addition, SÉKOU has built up knowledge of localised approaches, specific to the realities on the ground, in information and communication technologies.

More information on: www.sekou.org



IT4LIFE is a social enterprise focussed on Digital Services, dedicated to supporting NGOs and social enterprises in Europe and Africa. The company helps the structures of the Social and Solidarity Economy to maximize their impact by accompanying them in their digital transformation.

IT4LIFE works with committed customers and partners for a more inclusive, responsible and inclusive digital environment.

More information on: www.it4life.org

Authors and Research Coordinators:

Morgane VANNIER, Sustainable Development Consultant, Co-founder of SÉKOU.
Axel BOEYKENS, ICT4D Consultant, Co-founder of SÉKOU.

Survey team:

Rose Delima N'GUESSAN, Focal Point Côte d'Ivoire
Ousmane TRAORE, Focal Point Mali
Arafat ABDOURAHAMANE, Focal Point Niger

UNHCR Contributors:

Vincent BRIARD, Research Supervisor
Mame Diarra TINE, Research Supervisor

IT4LIFE Contributors:

Evelyne Ines NTONGA, Project Manager
Guillaume DEFLAUX, Chief Operating Officer
Justin NDIAYE, Data Collection and Analysis Specialist

Graphic Design :

Julien HASENFRATZ, Artistic Director & UX Designer

Acknowledgements :

We would particularly like to thank Vincent BRIARD, Senior Community-Based Protection Officer and Mame Diarra TINE, Protection Associate, at UNHCR's Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, for their time and support, as well as the survey team that collected this data.

We would also like to thank the following people who actively participated in the preparatory discussions and the piloting of the field study: Gbetin Gildas Elisée DJISSA , Associate Community Services Officer (UNHCR Mali); Marie-Emilie DOZIN, Protection Cluster Coordinator (UNHCR Mali); Clarisse NTAMPAKA, Senior Protection Officer (UNHCR Mali); Daouda GUIROU, Public Information Officer (UNHCR Côte d'Ivoire); Rokya DIAKITE, Protection Cluster Coordinator (UNHCR Côte d'Ivoire); Daphne OUELLET, Stateless Officer (UNHCR Côte d'Ivoire); Monique SARAKA, Project Coordinator «Right to Nationality for All»; AFJCI Legal Clinics (Côte d'Ivoire); Zbigniew Paul DIME, Protection Officer (UNHCR Niger); Bachirou Ayouba TINNI (UNHCR Niger); as well as UNHCR teams in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and their partners. We would also like to thank the UNHCR Innovation Service, funded by the Government of Luxembourg, for their support with this translation.

Finally, we'd like to thank all the community members who engaged with us for their participation.

Contents

- p.6 ----- Glossary
- p.7 ----- Introduction
 - p. 8 ----- Research Objectives
 - p. 9 ----- Methodology Overview
 - p. 10 ----- Challenges and Research Limitations
- p.12 ----- Survey Contexts
 - p. 10 ----- Côte d'Ivoire
 - p. 16 ----- Mali
 - p. 20 ----- Niger
- p.26 ----- Information and Communication Needs
 - p. 26 ----- Communication Channels and Sources of Information
 - p. 28 ----- Information Needs
 - p. 30 ----- Communication with humanitarian workers
- p.32 ----- Mobile Phones and Internet
 - p. 32 ----- Mobile phones: access and use
 - p. 36 ----- Internet: access and use
 - p. 40 ----- Digital Technology in the Community
 - p. 41 ----- Barriers to mobile phone and internet use
- p.48 ----- Connectivity and Economic Inclusion
 - p. 48 ----- Informal Economy
 - p. 51 ----- Entrepreneurship: a lever for economic empowerment
 - p. 53 ----- Access to Financial Services
 - p. 55 ----- Promoting the economic empowerment of refugee women
- p.56 ----- Gender and Disability
 - p. 56 ----- Alarming Gender Disparity
 - p. 59 ----- Disability and access to technology
 - p. 61 ----- Importance of inclusive and accessible technology
- p.62 ----- Conclusion and Recommendations
- p.70 ----- Annexes



Find the summary of the study as well as community tools for leaders and humanitarian actors on:
<https://cwc.westafrica.exposed>

©UNHCR/Riccardo Gangale

1. Glossary

Stateless: The term «stateless» refers to a person whom no state considers to be its national by application of its legislation.

Mobile money: A service that allows unbanked people to make or receive transfers or payments using a mobile phone.

Asylum seeker: An asylum seeker is a person who has asked a third country to offer asylum – i.e. reception and protection from persecution – but whose procedure is not yet complete.

Informal Entrepreneurship : Businesses which create value without being formally recorded and – more broadly – underground production where productive activities are performed by registered firms but may be concealed from the authorities to avoid compliance with regulations or the payment of taxes, or are simply illegal.

Gender digital divide: The gap or inequalities between women and men in their access to and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs).

Financial Inclusion : Opportunity for individuals and companies to access a range of useful and tailored financial products and services at lower cost, offered by reliable and responsible providers (World Bank definition)

Livelihoods: activities that enable people to provide for their basic needs, such as eating, drinking, finding accommodation and clothing themselves. By carrying out these livelihoods activities, people acquire the knowledge, skills, social relationships, raw materials and other resources necessary to meet their individual or collective needs in a sustainable and dignified manner (UNHCR definition).

Sustainable livelihoods: an activity that generates a positive return on investment sufficient to generate income and finance the additional investments needed to continue this activity. (UNHCR definition).

Pay-as-you-go : A system to finance the acquisition of a product by paying part of the total amount for purchase and the rest in small payments of variable frequencies (daily, weekly or monthly). Once the total number of payments are met, the customer becomes the owner of the product.

Internally Displaced Person (IDP): The term IDP refers to people who have been forced to flee their homes to escape violence and conflict, human rights violations, natural disasters but remain. **Unlike refugees who cross the border in search of security, Internally Displaced Persons remain in their home country.**

Returnee : A returnee refers to a refugee who returns to his country of origin. The main condition for a return to the country of origin is that the persons concerned are well informed and voluntarily take this important decision.

Accountability: Refers to the commitment of humanitarian organizations to take responsibility and be accountable to the communities they serve. Also refers to the methods that these populations have to make humanitarian organisations accountable for their decisions, actions and impacts.

Refugee : Anyone with a justified fear of being persecuted because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a certain social group or political opinions, who is outside their country of nationality and who cannot or, because of this fear, does not want to claim the protection of their home country; or who, if they do not have a nationality and are outside the country in which they had their habitual residence as a result of such events, cannot, or because of the aforementioned fear, does not, want to return there.

Mobile penetration rate: The mobile penetration rate indicates the percentage of people with mobile phones, calculated in relation to all respondents (reference population).

2. Introduction

In the West and Central Africa (WCA) region, **4,166,125 people** are registered as asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons, returnees or other Persons of Concern (PoC) to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In addition, at the beginning of 2021, more than 7,242,545 internally displaced persons were added to these numbers. In the 21 countries in the region, these people, **often due to emergency situations, are extremely vulnerable to varying forms of exploitation and abuse, violence, and discrimination.**

■ Why is connectivity essential?

In times of crisis, when a person is forced to leave their country, maintaining connections with their family and community is an essential need. Connectivity can provide access to information about not only refugee's country of origin, but also about their host country, their rights and the services available to them.

UNHCR and its partners in the region make accountability to affected populations, inclusion and community engagement a priority in WCA's regional protection strategy. As such, displaced populations and the communities that host them must have the choice to be part of a connected society. **When technology is available, affordable and accessible, it can indeed prove to be a real lever for development and positive change for displaced communities and host communities.**

Accordingly, it is safe to say that internet access has become a 'right' for individuals in the same manner as other fundamental rights. However, for internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers, refugees and other PoCs, access to communication tools such as a phone or the internet is still often difficult, if not impossible.

■ The Connectivity for Communication project - C4C

Establishing strong and inclusive channels of communication is essential to ensure that affected communities are informed of their rights and available assistance. It is also essential to adapt assistance according to their care and preferences, especially through a system of feedback and accountability.

The Connectivity for Communication (C4C) project aims to implement, over several years, activities that give affected communities the ability to make their voices, priorities and information needs heard, in order to ensure that all perspectives are taken into

account when planning and implementing the protection and assistance response of UNHCR and its partners.

By establishing two-way communication that puts people at the centre of the response, humanitarian organizations can build a relationship of trust with the affected populations and guarantee their right to participate in all decisions that affect them. **It is an essential element of trust and transparency, but above all of humanitarian accountability.**

A. Research Objectives

The research was conducted in three countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger. For each country, several localities and different environments were selected: urban centres, rural areas, refugee camps, areas with high density of stateless persons, spontaneous sites of internal displacement etc. A total of 19 localities were covered during the study:

| CÔTE D'IVOIRE | MALI | NIGER |
|---|--|---|
| Abidjan (Abobo, Cocody, Port Bouet, Yopougon), Agboville, Boundiali, Daloa, Danane, Doropo et San Pedro | Bamako, Kayes, Menaka, Mopti et Tombouctou | Diffa, Maradi, Niamey, Tahoua (Tillabéri: annulation pour motifs de sécurité) |

In the West and Central Africa region, no assessment of this scale has ever been conducted on the most accessible and widely used information and communication channels used by internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, refugees, stateless persons and other affected groups.

The objective of this research is to build a common baseline base to further understand the communication needs of different population groups and to guide and improve UNHCR's strategies, interventions and tools to communicate with communities.

More specifically, the study revolves around three main objectives:

- 1

Determine the connectivity 'baseline': Costs, network status, available connection modalities.
- 2

Better understand communities' practices and habits when using digital tools in these countries.
- 3

Steer the implementation of a digital response adapted to each context

More broadly, this study also addresses themes such as:

- Digital inclusion in neglected areas with vulnerable populations;
- Alternative models of connectivity provision and innovative public-private partnerships;
- Diversity, youth and women's empowerment, reducing inequalities in digital access;
- The environment and access to clean energy to allow people to be connected effectively and sustainably.

This exercise was initiated and supervised by UNHCR has been carried out jointly by IT4Life, Sékou and their focal points, with the participation of refugees, internal displaced persons, stateless persons, returnees, host communities and the various UNHCR partners on the ground.

B. Methodology Overview

The research was implemented in several stages:



This research was based on a variety of tools, developed as part of a participatory process, including:

- A survey conducted both in the field and over the phone;
- semi-structured interviews conducted in close collaboration with community leaders;
- a connectivity test conducted at several times of the day and with different telecommunications operators.

Overview of the survey tools used:

| TOOL | CÔTE D'IVOIRE | MALI | NIGER | TOTAL |
|---|---------------|------|-------|-------|
| Survey with refugees | 119 | 174 | 234 | 527 |
| Survey with asylum seekers | 3 | 6 | 7 | 16 |
| Survey with Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) | 27 | 138 | 60 | 225 |
| Survey with Returnees | 48 | 18 | 0 | 66 |
| Survey with Stateless People | 128 | 0 | 0 | 128 |
| Survey with members of the host community | 14 | 9 | 8 | 31 |
| Semi-structured Interview | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Connectivity Tests | 49 | 24 | 10 | 83 |

With the exception of semi-structured interviews, these tools were designed in Kobo Toolbox, and implemented using an internet browser on a smartphone. In order to also reach areas not served or underserved by mobile networks, the tools were also available offline.

To carry out this assessment, focal points with experience in data collection and a good knowledge of local contexts were identified and grouped into three field teams, one for each country studied.

All persons participating in the survey did so anonymously, confidentially and voluntarily, taking into account their informed consent. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected in December 2020. A full explanation of the methodology is described in Annex 1, which includes details of the tools used in the survey.

C. Challenges and Research Limitations

In order to inform similar work in future, the main challenges encountered while undertaking the research were:

■ Languages

The surveys were administered in more than 10 different languages with interpreters, due to the great variety of nationalities and languages of use among the populations

surveyed. In some localities, the methodology had to be adapted and the researchers requested the support of a translator in order to reach the target populations.

■ Security environment and Accessibility

In some localities, high-tension environments created challenges in carrying out the assessment. In order to guarantee the reliability of the data collected, several sources were therefore solicited according to a sample that was intended to be as balanced as possible between quantitative and qualitative data.

In Côte d'Ivoire, the start of the assessment was delayed due to post-election violence that erupted in the country¹.

In Mali and Niger, the security contexts forced the adaptation of the methodology, in particular following armed attacks in the regions of Diffa, Gao, Ménaka and Tahoua (totalling numerous civilian casualties).

When access or security issues hampered the collection of data, other methods were used, such as working through UNHCR partners on site or by conducting surveys remotely by telephone.

1. "Côte d'Ivoire : more than 3,200 refugees in neighbouring countries for fear of post-election violence (UNHCR) », November 2020, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/11/1081342>



3. Survey Contexts

A. Introduction

This section presents the different contexts of the survey of refugees, internally displaced persons, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless people and members of the host communities of Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger.

However, the results do not represent the country as a whole because they are based on data collected within specific localities for each specific context.

B. Côte d'Ivoire

Despite past political tensions, Côte d'Ivoire has been welcoming to refugees and asylum seekers for a long time. In September 2020, the country had 1,734,155 refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, returnees and other persons of concern to UNHCR², mainly from Liberia and the Central Africa Republic.

Following the presidential election of 31 October 2020, more than 8,000 Ivorians fled post-election violence to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, including Liberia. More than 60% were children, sometimes unaccompanied or separated from their parents.



2. UNHCR, West and central africa - Persons of concern (September 2020)
3. <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2020/11/1081902>

■ Connectivity

Côte d'Ivoire is the West African country with the most developed infrastructure, with a 9.2-point increase over three years in the mobile connectivity index⁴.

The country has seen significant improvements infrastructure, accessibility and development of service offerings.

The telecommunications infrastructure in Côte d'Ivoire is well developed, with the presence of three main operators: Orange, MTN and Moove. The telephone penetration rate was 113% in 2016⁵, 90% of the population has access to 3G coverage and 53% to 4G coverage. Yet only 26% of the population used mobile internet in 2018, despite good network coverage⁶.

■ Statelessness

With 1.6 million people stateless or at risk of becoming stateless, Côte d'Ivoire is home to one of the largest populations of stateless people in the world¹⁰. For a long time the Ivorian nationality rules did not grant Ivorian nationality to children whose only connection was birth on the territory of Côte d'Ivoire. As a result, a large part of the population has been devoid of a clearly determined nationality. It was in the aftermath of independence that things changed legally, but it was noted that the practice was slow to reflect this change. The consequence is that **a significant part of the population born in Côte d'Ivoire was therefore never registered at the time of birth, as required by the amended law.**

For several years, UNHCR and the Ivorian government have been working to protect the rights of stateless people and are stepping up initiatives to bring solutions and end statelessness by 2024. Côte d'Ivoire was thus the first country in Africa to adopt a protocol for the identification and protection of

Mobile money is growing widely, with a higher penetration rate than the mobile internet (73,5%⁷). Côte d'Ivoire ranks fifth in the world in terms of penetration rates and first amongst countries in West Africa⁸.

In particular, the regulatory approach has facilitated the creation of a digital financial services (SFN) ecosystem in the country.

In 2015, the operator Moov launched the Cyberlab initiative to train 4,500 young Ivorians for free in computer skills and the use of digital tools to enable them to launch or develop economic activities on the internet⁹.

stateless persons. Two decrees of 2 September 2020 established the procedures that will regulate the status of stateless persons in order to protect the thousands of people without nationality in the country.

The official recognition of the status of stateless persons will allow people, who had no official legal existence until then, to exercise their fundamental rights, namely to receive identity documents, enrol in school, benefit from health services, hold formal employment, open a bank account or even own land.

Not having an official identity is one of the main barriers to mobile phone use and connectivity. Because SIM cards are only available to those with adequate identification, fake identities are commonly used as workarounds to this problem.

4. The Mobile Economy West Africa, GSMA, 2019
5. <https://www.artci.ci/>
6. "The Mobile Economy West Africa 2019", GSMA, 2018
7. Agence de Régulation des Télécommunications de Côte d'Ivoire (ARTCI)
8. World Bank (FINDEX 2014)
9. National Round Table : Côte d'Ivoire, GSMA
10. <https://www.unhcr.org/fr-fr/news/press/2020/9/5f5203dea/cote-divoire-premier-pays-dafrique-adopter-procedure-identifier-protger.html>



KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF THE RESEARCH IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

Most people have been present in Côte d'Ivoire for more than 5 years and live with their families (85%), mainly with their children (37%), spouse (27%) and/or parents (21%).

©Cyprien Hauser

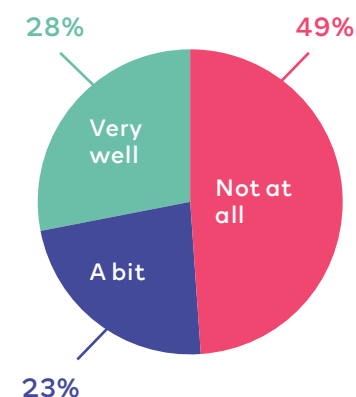
Survey Respondent Demographics

Between 9 and 18 December 2020, 339 people were interviewed across 6 regions in 10 localities of the country: Abobo, Cocody, Port Bouet, Yopougon, Agboville, Boundiali, Daloa, Danane, Doropo et San Pedro. These

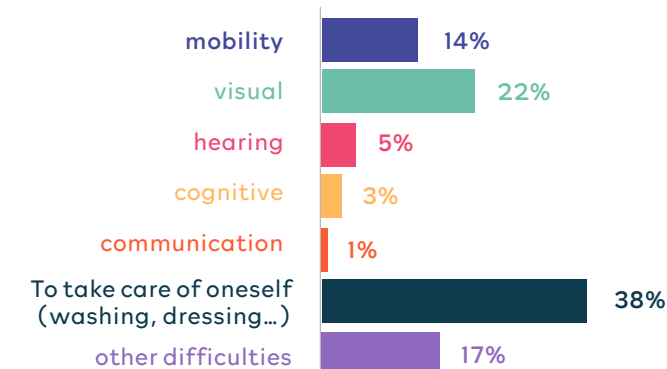
localities represent a large amount of variety of environments, also covering urban centres such as Abidjan and Doropo, located more than 600km from the capital.

Although almost half of the people encountered have never been educated, Côte d'Ivoire has the highest rate of literacy and level of education across all three countries. French is one of the most spoken languages.

Can you read / write?

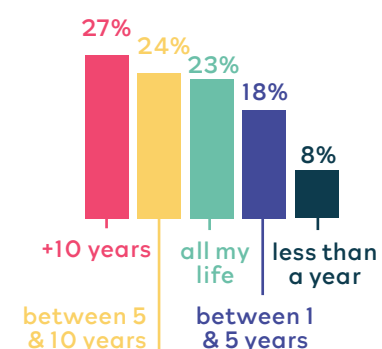


People with Disabilities



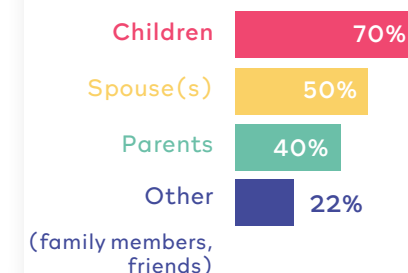
Most of the people interviewed reported having difficulties related to their physical or mental health, mainly to take care of themselves, see or get around. In addition, there were issues of stigma and a strong sense of insecurity amongst respondents.

How long have you been here?

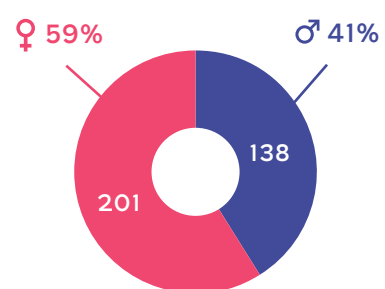


ONLY
17%
OF
RESPONDENTS
LIVE ALONE

Who do you live with?



Proportion men / women:

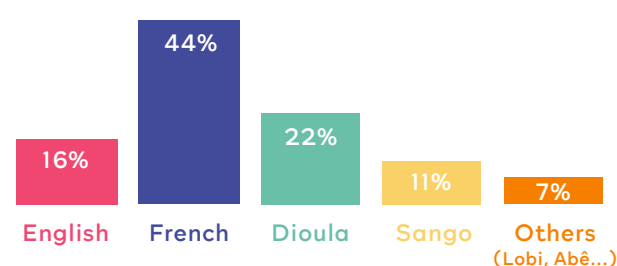


AVERAGE AGE

38
YEARS
OLD

19% of respondents said they did not know their age, the highest rate in all the countries studied.

Most spoken languages



Highest level of education:

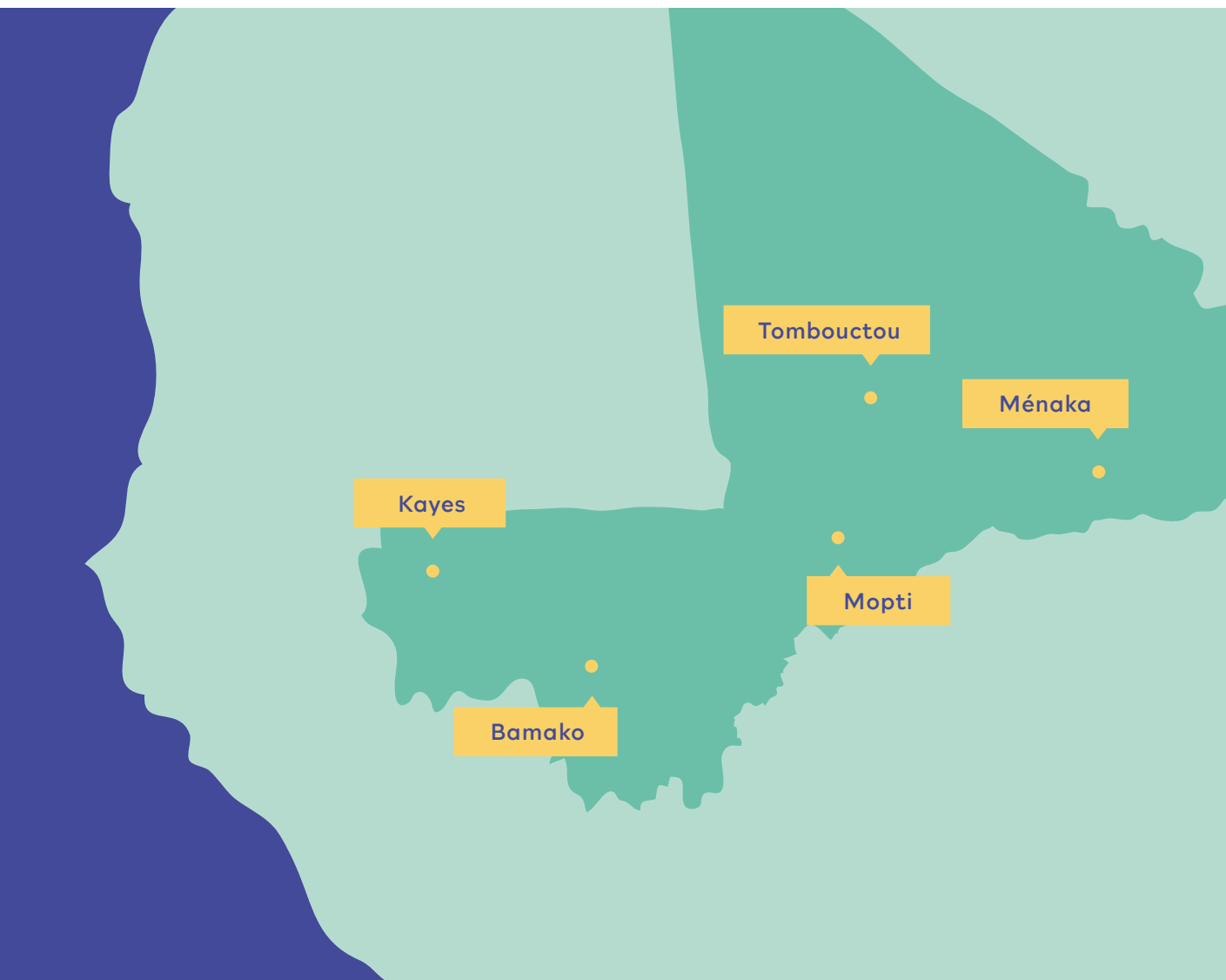
| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| I've never been to school | 49% |
| Primary School | 21% |
| College / High School (Secondary) | 18% |
| University (tertiary) | 12% |

C. Mali

Mali's security and humanitarian situation has deteriorated rapidly since 2019, making it the deadliest year for civilians since the crisis began in 2012. Numerous armed attacks in the north and centre of the country, as well as on the borders of Burkina Faso and Niger, have led to extensive displacement of populations. In the centre of the country, inter-communal conflicts and the creation of self-defence militias have resulted in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. The situation deteriorated further in March 2020, when a

coup was carried out by elements of the Malian armed forces.

As of November 2020, there were 287,496 internally displaced persons, 26,700 refugees and 973 asylum-seekers, mainly from Niger, Burkina Faso, and Mauritania. In one year, the number of internally displaced persons has more than doubled¹¹. The Menaka region is one of the poorest regions in the country, itself ranked 222nd out of 228 by the respective Human Development Indicator.



■ Connectivity

Mali's telecommunications sector is dynamic and growing. The infrastructure of mobile networks is omnipresent, covering 90% of the population. There are now three mobile phone operators: Orange Mali (initially Ikatel, a subsidiary of Sonatel of Senegal), Malitel (a subsidiary of Sotelma, the state-owned telecommunications company) and Telecel (Alpha Tele-Communications Mali - Atel-SA).

As Mali struggles out of the 2012 political and economic crisis, the country has an internet penetration rate of 13%, according to the World Bank. However, there is a large digital divide between the Bamako-Kayes region and the rest of the country. The regions of Timbuktu, Kidal and Gao, which have the lowest population density, are not covered by 3G¹².

This divide, primarily due to limited network coverage, service instability and access costs, is amplified by energy access problems.

In Mali, 26% of the population has access to electricity, leaving 11 million people without access to the grid, mainly in rural areas¹³. While the state has launched projects such as the national fiber optic network and initiatives under the Universal Access Fund, Mali is still experiencing a situation of digital isolation.

Mobile money has been in full development since Orange launched its service in 2010, but it is only really utilised in urban areas. The penetration of mobile money in rural areas is only around 30%¹⁴.

11. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/02/18/au-mali-le-nombre-de-deplaces-internes-a-plus-que-double-en-un-an_6029960_3212.html

12. "Broadband Development in Mali - State of play November 2017", the Malian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority, Information and Communication Technologies and Posts (AMRTP)

13. "The potential of mobile telephony for access to rural energy in Mali", GSMA, avril 2017

14. "Mali Evaluation rapide de l'état de préparation au commerce électronique", CNUCED, 2020



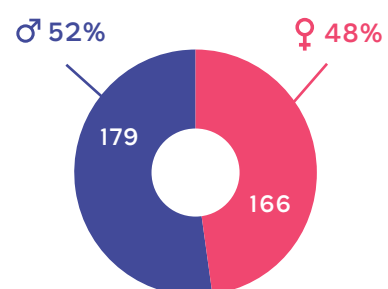
KEY DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS OF THE RESEARCH IN MALI

Survey Respondent Demographics

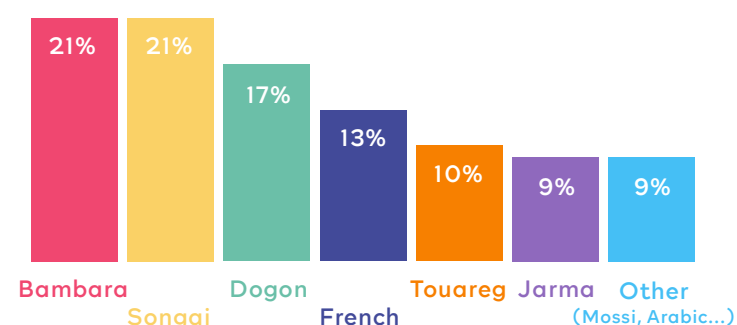
As part of this study, 345 people were surveyed through 5 different regions: Bamako, Kayes, Menaka, Mopti and Timbuktu. The survey took place in urban environments as well as in rural areas.

Of all the countries covered in the research, the level of literacy of Mali is the lowest. Most people encountered have never been to school or visited primarily Koranic school. French is not spoken there.

Proportion men / women:



Most spoken languages:



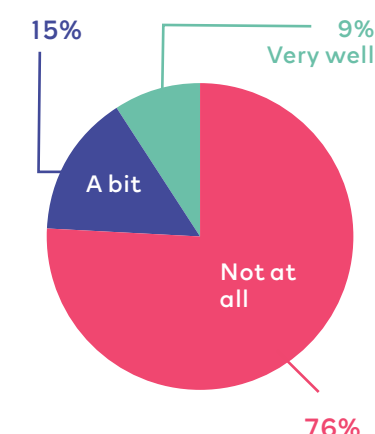
Highest level of education:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| I've never been to school | 68% |
| Primary School | 14% |
| College / High School (Secondary) | 9% |
| University (tertiary) | 1% |
| Other (Koranic school) | 8% |

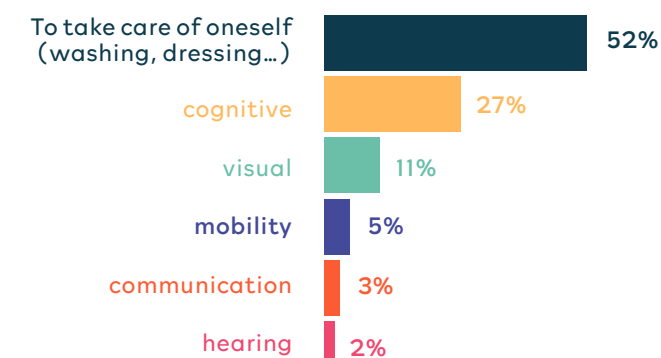
Religious education is culturally important in Mali. Many people surveyed only attended the madrasa (Koranic school).

AVERAGE AGE
35
YEARS
OLD

Can you read / write?

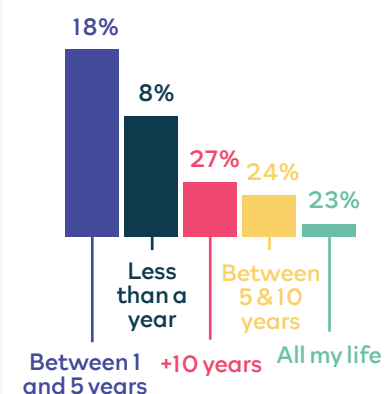


People with Disabilities



Most people encountered reported having difficulties related to their physical or mental state of health, mainly linked to being able to take care of themselves.

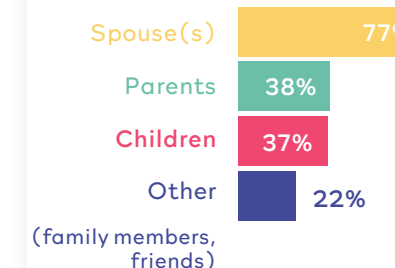
How long have you been here?



76%
OF
RESPONDENTS
DO NOT KNOW
HOW TO READ
OR WRITE

This is the highest rate of all the countries studied.

Who do you live with?



D. Niger

Despite the country's economic difficulties¹⁵, Niger continues to host asylum seekers and refugees fleeing different areas of conflict in the region, particularly in Libya, Mali and Nigeria. Recently, they are citizens of Burkina Faso who for the first time have crossed the border in search of protection. In October 2020, Niger had 229,509 refugees, 257,095 internally displaced and 3,671 asylum seekers¹⁶.

The security situation and targeted attacks, such as those carried out in the regions of Diffa, Tillabéré or Tahoua, continue to be the cause of significant displacement of populations within the country, also making it difficult for communities to return to their areas of origin.



■ Connectivity

The three main mobile operators are AIRTEL, Orange and Moov, which represent 56% respectively, 24% and 15% market units¹⁷. The Public Operator Niger Telecom has a market share of 5%. Access to the Internet recorded a leap, from less than 2% in 2012 to 24% in 2017¹⁸.

Despite the presence of several mobile network operators, telephone coverage in Niger is one of the lowest in Africa, due to the lack of sufficiently developed digital infrastructure. About half of the population does not have access to mobile broadband and a large digital divide is observed between urban areas and rural areas.

Because of its importance in the economy, the mobile telephony sector has been identified by the government as a key sector to support the economic development of the country in the medium term. In July 2020, the World Bank spent USD \$100 million to accelerate digital transformation in Niger as part of a program of modernization of the economy based on infrastructure and digital services.

Titled «Smart Villages», this program aims to improve access to mobile telephony and high-speed services in rural areas¹⁹. The goal is also to give people in these regions access to digital financial services, especially those targeting women.

15. 227th place according to the HDI ranking, the last country aside from Somalia.

16. <https://data2.unhcr.org/>

17. Digital inclusion and mobile sector taxation in Niger", GSMA, 2017

18. Annual Report of the Regulatory Authority for Electronic Communications and Post Office (ARCEP), 2019

19. <https://villagesintelligents.ne/>

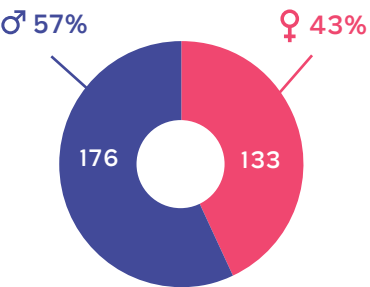


Survey Respondent Demographics

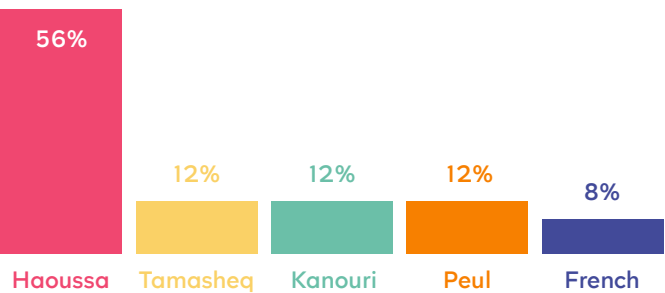
This research relied on survey responses collected from 309 refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and national residents. Despite the security situation, the

survey could be carried out in five of the seven regions in Niger: Diffa, Maradi, Niamey and Tahoua.

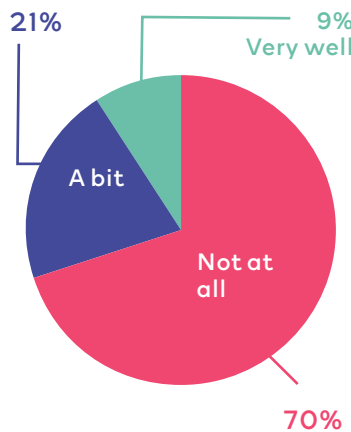
Proportion men / women:



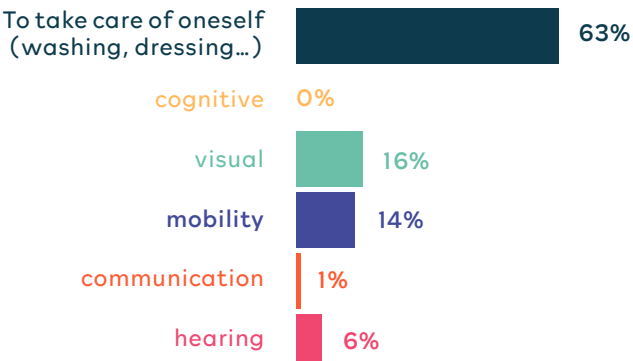
Most spoken languages:



Can you read / write?

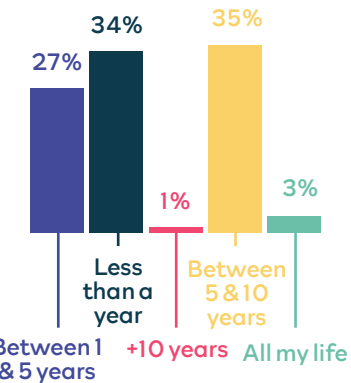


People with Disabilities



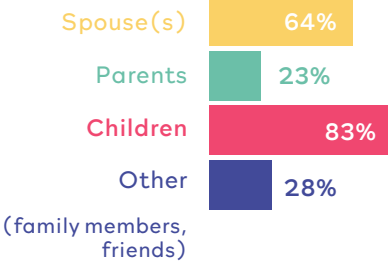
Most people surveyed reported having difficulties related to their physical or mental state of health, mainly to take care of themselves. Several people also mentioned health problems (headache, respiratory problems, malaria, epilepsy ...).

How long have you been here?



ONLY 9% OF RESPONDENTS LIVE ALONE

Who do you live with?



Highest level of education:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| I've never been to school | 71% |
| Primary School | 16% |
| College / High School (Secondary) | 9% |
| University (tertiary) | 4% |

AVERAGE AGE
40
YEARS OLD

E. Comparison of the three country contexts

The research, conducted in three countries, highlights the need to take into account the differences in context, especially between countries but also within each country,

between regions and localities. The table below gives a brief overview of the contextual differences across the three countries studied.

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger |
|---|---|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Persons of Concern to UNHCR ²⁰ | 1,734,155 | 335,488 | 494,082 |
| Primary countries of origin | Liberia République Centrafricaine | Burkina Faso Mauritanie Niger | Libye Mali Nigéria |
| Mobile penetration rate ²¹ | 145 % | 115 % | 41 % |
| Internet penetration rate ²² | 36 % | 13 % | 5 % |
| Connectivity index ²³ | Index score : 44 | Index score : 33.9 | Index score : 18.3 |
| Access to electricity ²⁴ | 67 % | 51 % | 18 % |

20. UNHCR 2020, <https://data2.unhcr.org/>

21. World Bank, 2019, Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)

22. World Bank, 2019, Individuals using the Internet (% of population)

23. The GSMA index measures connectivity according to four key elements: infrastructure, financial accessibility, consumer preparation and service content. The scores are located in a range of 0 to 100 <https://www.mobileconnectivityindex.com/>

24. World Bank, 2018, Access to electricity (% of population)



4. Information and Communication Needs

A. Introduction

Beyond seeking to improve understanding of the sources of information preferred by refugees, asylum seekers, returnees or other Persons of Concern to UNHCR, the research also aims to develop better understanding of the communication needs of these different groups.

The goal is to identify the best channels and formats for engaging in two-way communication with communities, to ensure they have the opportunity to meaningfully participate in the humanitarian programmes that deliver the assistance that they receive.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ 1 Most respondents access information through community leaders, their neighbours or humanitarian organizations.
- ▶ 2 Among the different formats, audio is the preferred format for receiving information.
- ▶ 3 Receiving assistance and better understanding rights and responsibilities are part of the most important information needs.
- ▶ 4 The most sought after information relating to administrative procedures relates to financial assistance, food assistance, employment or access to healthcare.
- ▶ 5 One in two people indicate that they can not easily engage with humanitarian workers or do not know how to get in touch with them.

B. Communication Channels and Sources of Information

Respondents look to the community and humanitarian organisations first for information

Among the sources of information preferred by the interviewees, face-to-face interaction with the community or humanitarian organizations remain the most common. Among traditional media channels, radio is more commonly used than

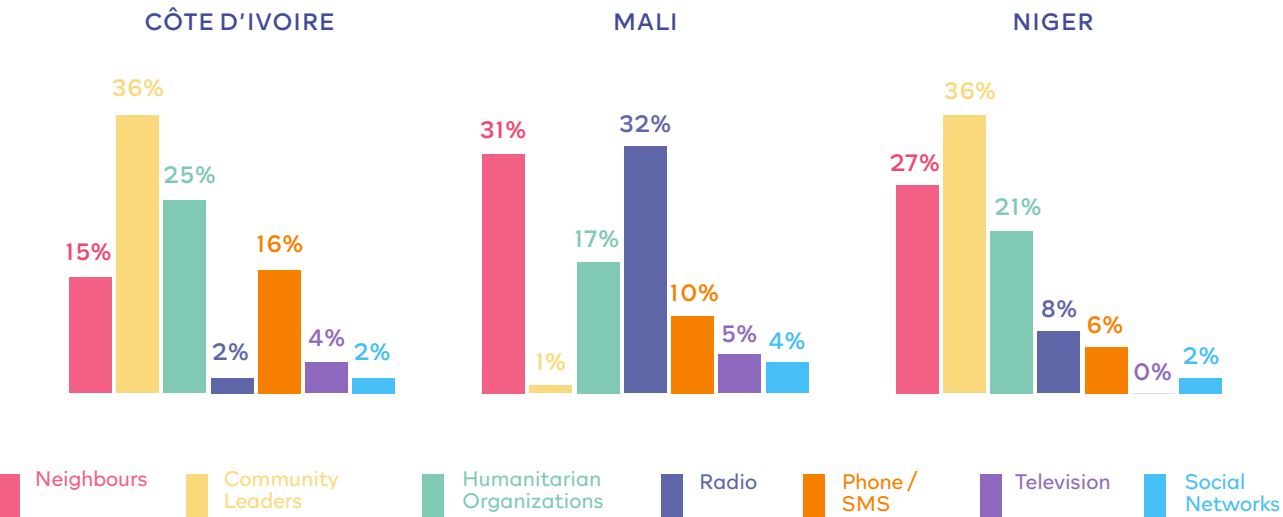
television, specifically community radios or international radios such as RFI. The Internet and Social Media are rarely cited as sources of information, mainly due to access challenges²⁵.

25. See the «Mobile Phones and Internet» section

In Mali, radio is one of the most used channels (32%) while it is not mentioned very often in Côte d'Ivoire (2%) and Niger (8%)²⁶. Community radios and RFI are the most listened to station. On the other hand, community leaders in Mali are not frequently cited as sources of information (1%) while they are one of the main sources in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger (36%).

Although not often a source of information in Niger and Mali, calls and texts via mobile phones represent a significant source of information for respondents in Côte d'Ivoire (16%). Television, on the other hand, accounts for a tiny share of barely 6% of all respondents.

How do you access information about your situation and support available?

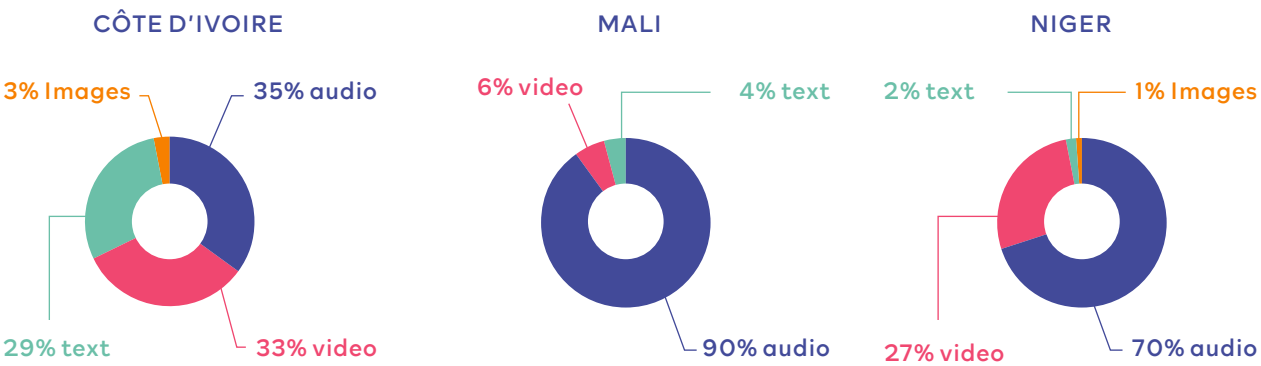


Audio is the preferred format for receiving information.

When receiving information, audio is the format preferred by 65% of respondents. While video is also widespread in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger (33% and 27% respectively), text content is only really preferred in Côte d'Ivoire

(29%)²⁷. Levels of illiteracy and bad internet connectivity that prevents access to video content impacts these findings.

In which format do you prefer to access information?



26. See Annexes for a list of radio stations

27. Of those surveyed, 51% said they know how to read (a bit, or very well) in Côte d'Ivoire, compared to 30% in Niger and 23% in Mali

C. Information Needs

There is a strong desire for information from refugees and internally displaced persons on their rights and responsibilities

Despite the efforts already made by humanitarian and governmental organizations, the need for information is still considerable and 75% of respondents said they would like to receive more information on obtaining assistance from UNHCR and its partners. 22% of the people surveyed indicated a desire to better understand their rights and responsibilities.

Refugees, returnees and the internally displaced would like to obtain more information on how to find a job (25%) as well as how to make suggestions or complaints to UNHCR, partners or authorities (19%). Knowing what is happening in the country of origin (19%) and that of the host country (12%) or information on how to regularize their migratory situation (17%) are also among the main information needs identified.

However, there are notable differences in the prioritization of information needs across countries. While learning about current affairs in the country of origin is a rather secondary need in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger, nearly 50% of those interviewed in Mali make it a priority.

In Côte d'Ivoire, better understanding rights and responsibilities is one of the most important needs (47%), while 36% of the refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons in Niger said that they need to be informed about how to provide feedback, making complaints or give suggestions to UNHCR, its partners or government authorities.

On which issues would like to receive more information?²⁸

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger | Total Survey Respondents |
|--|---------------|------|-------|--------------------------|
| Receive assistance from UNHCR and its partners | 77% | 64% | 84% | 75% |
| Search / Find a job | 32% | 12% | 31% | 25% |
| My rights and responsibilities | 47% | 5% | 13% | 22% |
| News from my country of origin | 6% | 50% | 1% | 19% |
| Make suggestions or complaints to UNHCR, its partners, or government authorities | 18% | 4% | 36% | 19% |
| How to regularise my migratory situation | 11% | 15% | 26% | 17% |
| News from my hosting country | 2% | 32% | 1% | 12% |
| How to access education | 11% | 11% | 14% | 12% |
| Information around health issues (COVID-19) | 12% | 18% | 0% | 6% |
| Find transport / how to travel to another country | 21% | 1% | 5% | 9% |
| Information about asylum | 5% | 2% | 1% | 3% |
| Other | 0% | 3% | 3% | 2% |

How to receive financial assistance, food and find work are the most sought after pieces of information

When asked the question “Which administrative procedures do you want to learn more about, as a priority?”, 45% of the people surveyed said they want to receive more information on obtaining financial assistance, followed by the need for information on ways to receive food (41%), how to find a job (37%) and find places to receive medical care (29%). Several people would also like to be better informed about how to start a business or engage in income-generating activity.

In Côte d'Ivoire, information about legal documentation and administrative documents is much more important than in other countries (45%). This is also the

case for information on how to receive a supplementary judgment (19%)²⁹ or a certificate of nationality (18%). In Niger, 78% of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons identify the need for information on how to receive food assistance as a priority.

When asked how to improve access to information, some respondents as part of semi-structured interviews stated their interest in playing a role in helping better share and exchange information within their community.

28. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

29. The supplementary judgment of the civil status act aims to supplement the absence of a civil status



©Muhammaddatana Ibrahim

Which administrative procedures do you want to learn more about, as a priority?³⁰

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger | Total Survey Respondents |
|--|---------------|------|-------|--------------------------|
| Receiving financial support | 47% | 42% | 46% | 45% |
| Receiving food | 10% | 37% | 78% | 41% |
| To find a job | 32% | 39% | 40% | 37% |
| Healthcare | 22% | 35% | 28% | 29% |
| Get legal documentation / administrative papers | 45% | 11% | 13% | 23% |
| To find accommodation | 23% | 36% | 9% | 23% |
| Receive a supplementary judgement | 19% | 0% | 0% | 7% |
| Receive support after an incident of violence or crime | 9% | 3% | 0% | 4% |
| Move locations | 12% | 3% | 23% | 9% |

D. Communication with humanitarian workers

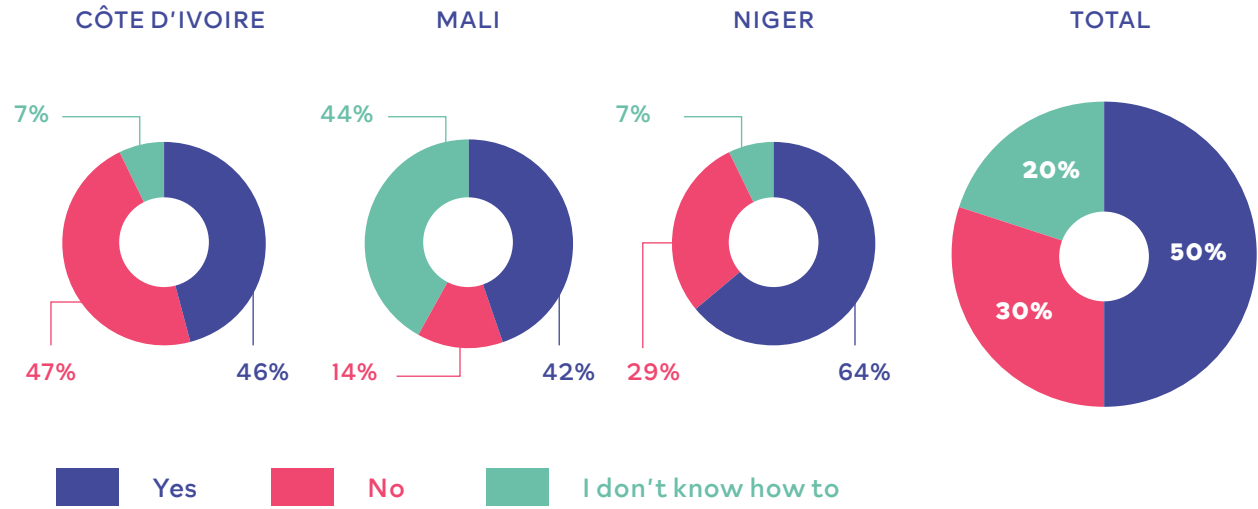
People find it easier to contact aid workers in Niger, while 47% say they cannot easily communicate with humanitarian organizations in Côte d'Ivoire. In Mali, 44% of those questioned indicated that they did not know how to get in touch with humanitarian actors. **In total, one in two people say that they cannot easily communicate with humanitarian staff or do not know how to get in touch with them.**

Feedback at all stages in program lifecycle is essential, from the design phase through to monitoring and evaluation, to understand how humanitarian actors are meeting the core expectations of communities. Maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the communities makes

it possible to verify that the targeting of the programs is correct, that the implementation is appropriate and that interventions are having the intended impact, from a community perspective.

Engaging with communities in all aspects of assistance delivery is a key success factor in building an inclusive and lasting partnership with forcibly displaced people, as well as with members of host communities. **Two-way communication is fundamental to a community-based approach, allowing humanitarian organisations to 'close the feedback loop' and strengthen humanitarian accountability to communities.**

If you need information, support or help, can you easily get in touch with humanitarian workers?



DATA COLLECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY: PROJECT 21

In order to facilitate feedback, the West Africa Regional Office and the UNHCR Center launched project 21, an innovative pilot supporting regular and systematic information collection and analysis.

The data is collected by field monitors equipped with tablets and smartphones during face-to-face interviews or by telephone when physical access is not possible. The data collected is continuously synchronized and centralized on the central KoBo server hosted in the UNHCR secure data center in Geneva.

The pilot phase of Project 21 focuses on the Liptako-gourma area ("zone des trois frontières"), that covers the borders Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, large portions of which are the locations of armed conflict and other security threats. In this very large and desolate area, the limited and intermittent nature of connectivity adds to the difficulties encountered in data collection. The project covers 429 villages in Burkina Faso, 855 villages in Mali and 1,947 villages in Niger.

30. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

5. Mobile Phones and Internet

A. Introduction

This section covers the use of mobile phones and the internet by refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, internally displaced persons and residents. The objective is to better understand

digital uses and the barriers to their use in the three target countries.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ **1** More than two-thirds of those surveyed have access to a mobile phone, with the largest proportion in Côte d'Ivoire.
- ▶ **2** Most people use the phone to communicate with loved ones, access social media, or follow the news.
- ▶ **3** Close-knit communities help facilitate broader access to mobile phones and can be a gateway to using the internet. Often there is only one phone in each household that is used by several family members.
- ▶ **4** Access to the internet is mainly via the mobile phone via top-ups; wifi technology is used very little.
- ▶ **5** Mobile internet use is often superficial and limited to a few applications
- ▶ **6** Members of the same community share digital content: listen to music together, and watch videos
- ▶ **7** Lack of finance, electricity, network coverage and digital skills are the main barriers to using mobile internet.

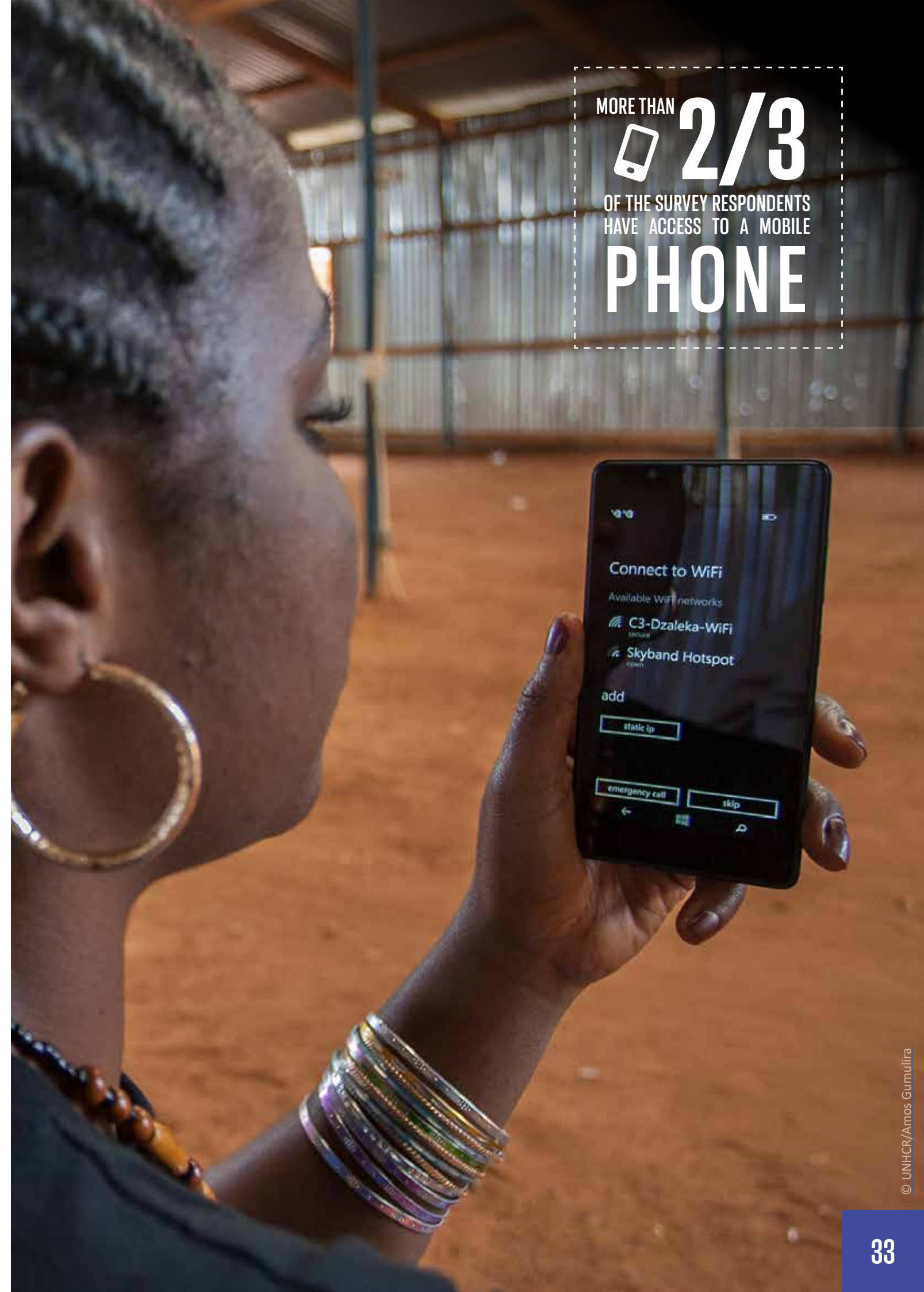
B. Mobile Phones: Access and use

More than two thirds of the people surveyed have access to a mobile phone.

The mobile phone penetration rate reached 77% for all refugees, displaced persons and residents surveyed in the three countries, with the largest proportion in Côte d'Ivoire (86%), followed by Mali (78%) and Niger (67%). Compared with national mobile penetration,

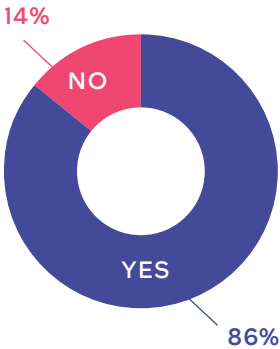
however, these groups seem to have less easy access to a mobile phone than the rest of the population, except in Niger where the mobile phone penetration of respondents is higher than that of the country³¹.

MORE THAN **2/3**
OF THE SURVEY RESPONDENTS
HAVE ACCESS TO A MOBILE
PHONE

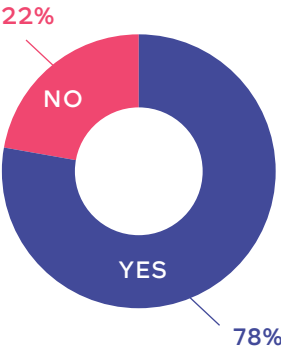


Do you have access to a mobile phone?

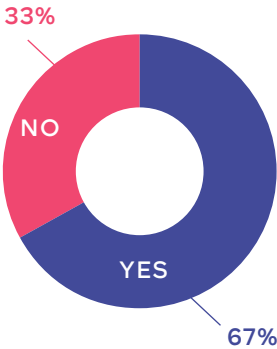
CÔTE D'IVOIRE



MALI



NIGER



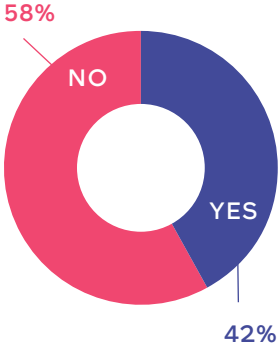
Having access to a phone does not mean owning a phone

Of all those surveyed with access to a mobile phone, 45% said they did not have a SIM card registered in their own name. **Workaround strategies can overcome some of these access barriers, for example by borrowing a**

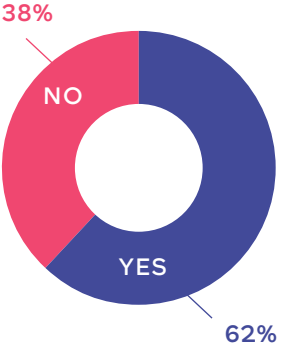
neighbour's phone or buying a SIM card under a false identity. Owning a phone is therefore not an essential prerequisite for using mobile services.

Do you have a SIM card registered in your own name?

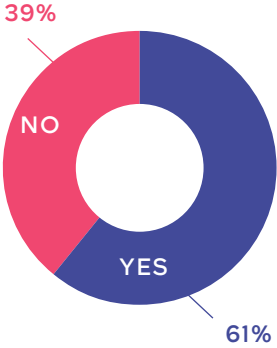
CÔTE D'IVOIRE



MALI



NIGER



31. The mobile penetration rate in Niger was 52.9% in 2019, according to the National Council for Regulation of Electronic Communications and Post (CNRCEP).

Communicating with loved ones, accessing social networks or following the news are the most common online activities

Most people use mobile phones to communicate with their loved ones (83%), access social networks (50%), read or listen to the news (27%). **The use of texting and sending e-mails remains infrequent (4%), in particular due to the required levels of literacy.**

Use of mobile phones also varies by age. Those under 20 tend to use it to listen to music or watch music videos, while those between 20 and 40 will use the phone to look for a job. Those over 40 seem more interested in online education.

It should be noted that the context greatly influences the different types of mobile phone use. In Côte d'Ivoire, mobile phones are frequently used to find a job (22%), share photos or videos (19%), for distance learning / education (17%), watching videos or listening to music (17%), while these types of use cases are rare in Mali and Niger.

What are you doing when using your phone or accessing the internet?³²

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger |
|--|---------------|------|-------|
| Communicate with family and friends | 83% | 92% | 59% |
| Access social networks such as Facebook or Twitter | 42% | 53% | 65% |
| Read or listen to the news | 23% | 29% | 40% |
| Looking for a job | 22% | 4% | 12% |
| Sharing photos / videos | 19% | 11% | 0% |
| Listen to music, watch videos | 17% | 4% | 9% |
| Education online | 17% | 1% | 3% |
| Business or trade | 3% | 7% | 3% |
| Send / receive SMS (text messages) | 8% | 3% | 0% |
| Send / receive emails | 7% | 0% | 3% |
| Play games | 3% | 0% | 12% |
| Listen to radio | 1% | 4% | 6% |

32. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

The main uses of the mobile phone by age

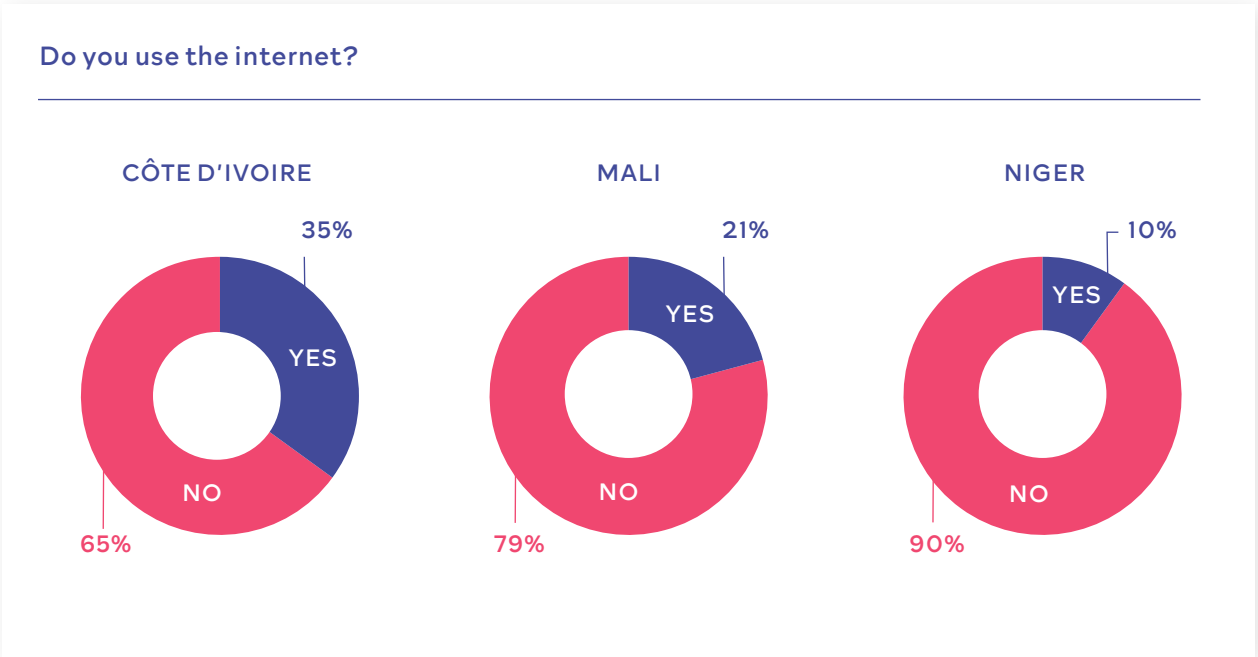
| Less than 20 years old | Between 20 and 40 years old | More than 40 years old |
|--|--|--|
| 78 % Communicate with family and friends | 85 % Communicate with family and friends | 82 % Communicate with family and friends |
| 68 % Access social networks | 50 % Access social networks | 41 % Access social networks |
| 16 % Read or listen to the news | 24 % Read or listen to the news | 36 % Read or listen to the news |
| 16 % Listen to music, watch clips | 17 % Looking for a job | 15 % Education online |

C. Internet: Access and use

A great digital divide between major cities and rural areas

Internet access for refugees, displaced people and residents is cited as less important than mobile phone access. The internet penetration rate is 22% for all the countries studied. In Niger, only 10% of respondents say they use the internet, followed by Mali (21%) and Côte d'Ivoire (35%).

There is also a large digital divide between capitals and regions. While 49% of people engaged in the cities of Abidjan, Bamako and Niamey say they use the internet, this number drops to 17% when leaving the capitals. Poor network coverage and lack of access to energy places people in rural areas in a situation of digital isolation.

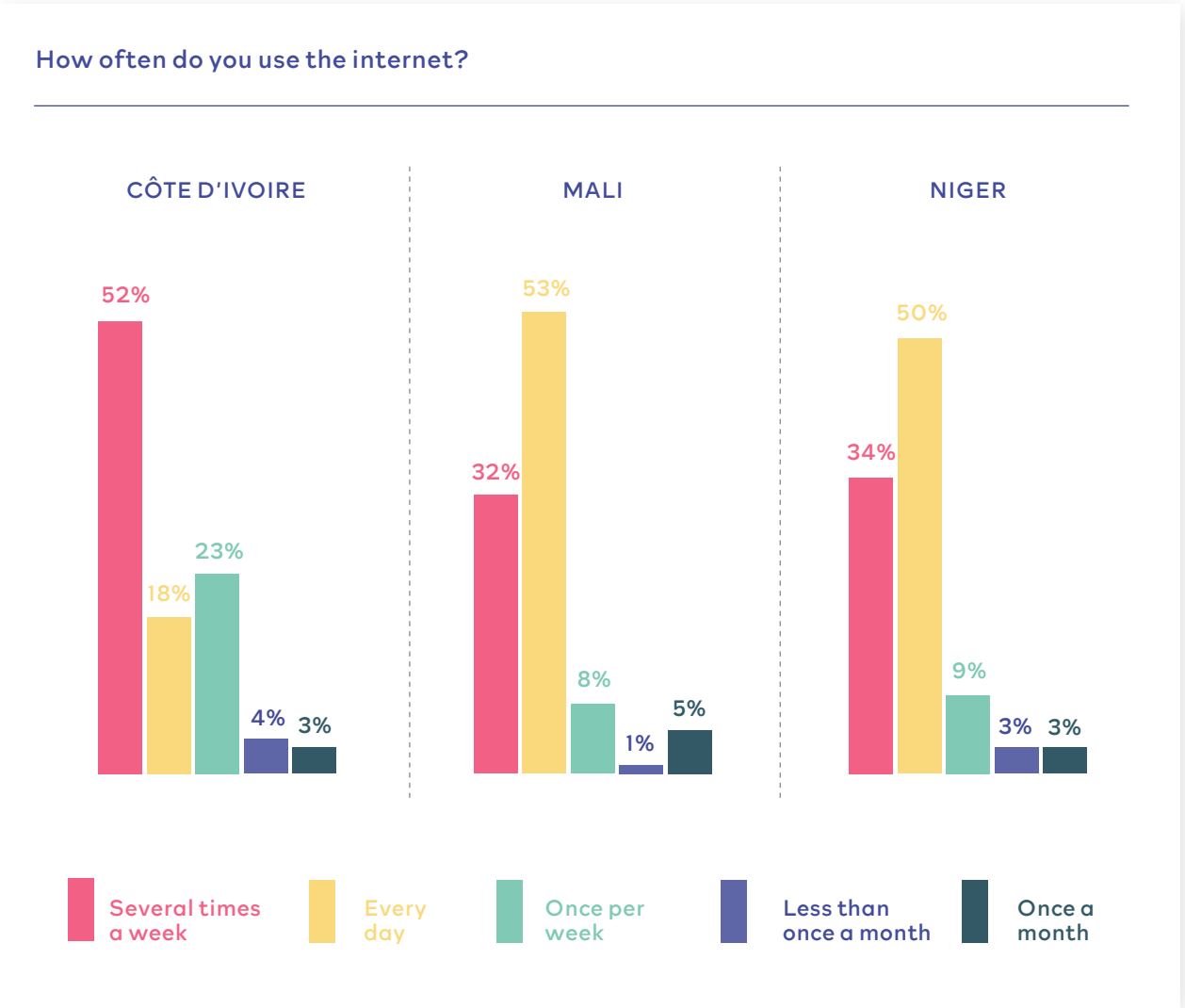


Most of the people who have access to the internet are active users

Among people with access to the internet, 43% say they use it several times a week and up to 34% go online every day. People often use it in the evening or at night to try to get better connection quality.

" I sometimes have to log on at 3 AM to get a good connection. During the day, there are internet bonuses, people use it more and the network is of lower quality. "

The most common form of internet access is mobile internet via a phone's cellular data connection. Only 2% of people using the internet connect using wifi technology from an internet café or public wifi spot. They are all in Côte d'Ivoire.



WhatsApp and Facebook are the most used mobile applications

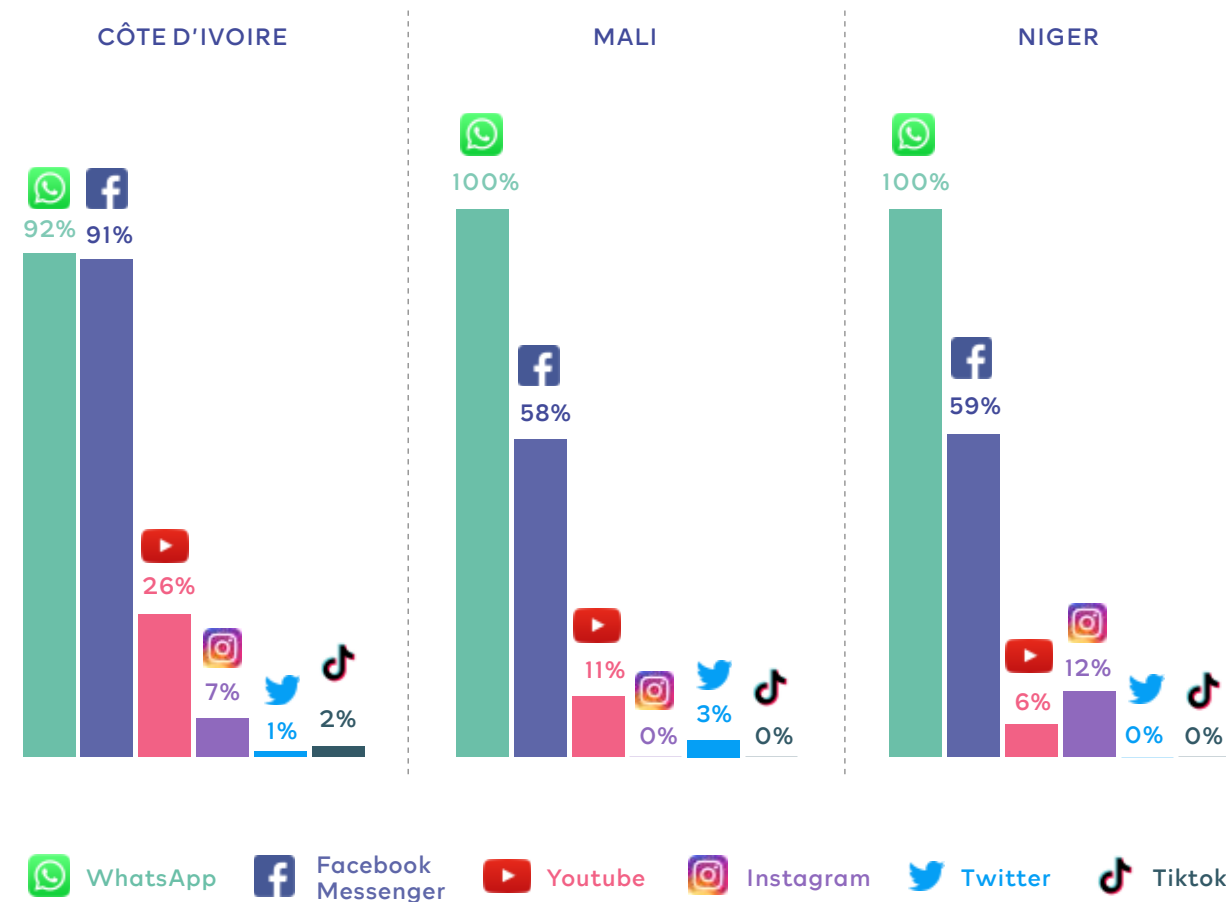
The most used applications across the three countries are WhatsApp (96%) and Facebook / Facebook Messenger (76%). These services meet the main needs mentioned above, namely to communicate with relatives access wider social networks. Youtube is used more frequently in Côte d'Ivoire (26%) than in other countries.

Most users seem to have limited knowledge of all the possible uses of the internet. For many of them, it was WhatsApp and Facebook that led them to use the internet. Together, these apps are a way to communicate, stay up-to-date, and be entertained. While a few people we met said they use Google to search for

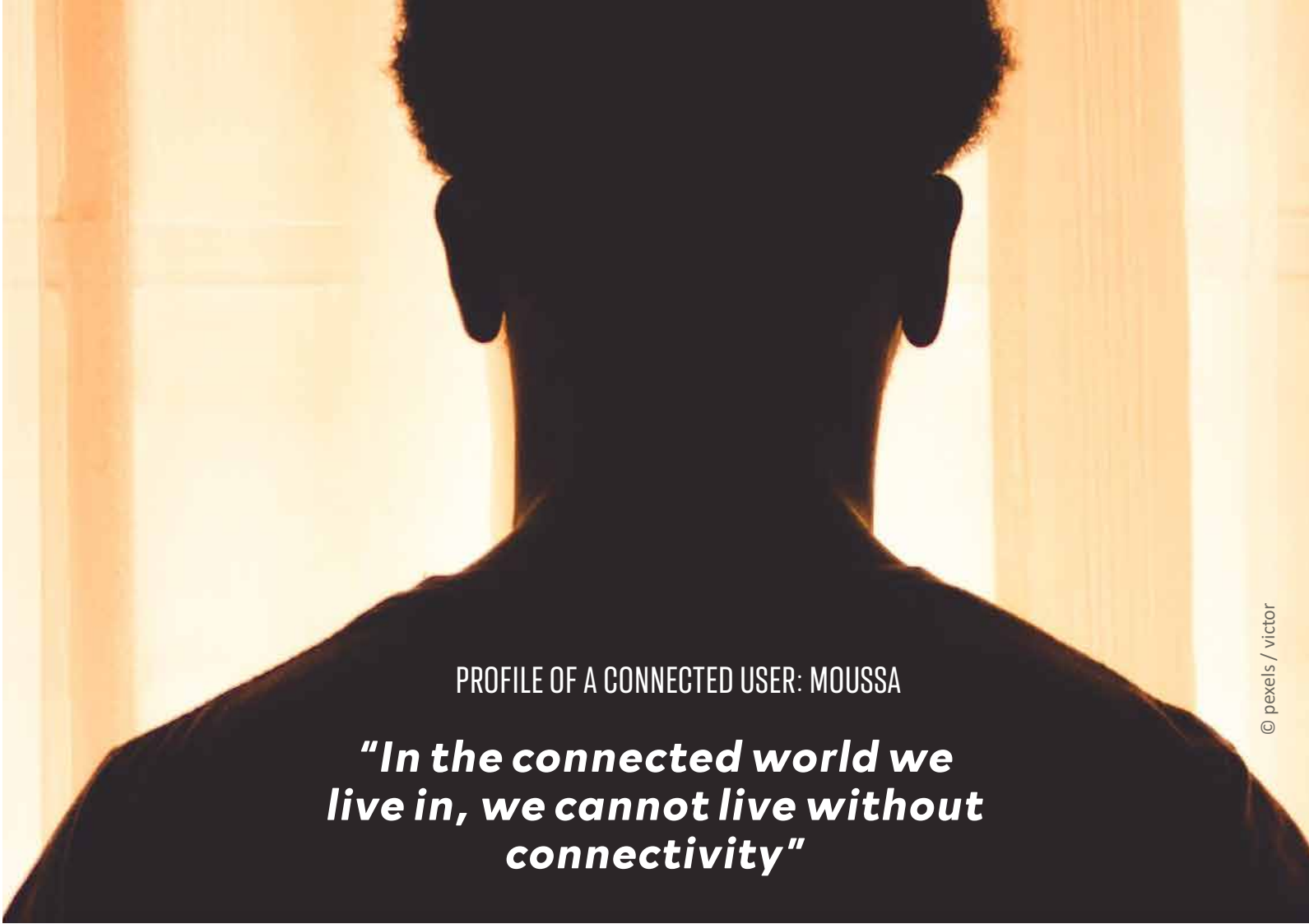
information, most are content with using the two aforementioned platforms and therefore have a limited vision of what is possible when using mobile internet³³.

As we see below, many refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons and residents are engaged in income-generating activity. However, they do not seem to use the Internet in their daily lives to find new customers or to promote their products or services.

Which apps do you use the most?



33. In its report "Boosting mobile internet use in Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania" GSMA speaks of "application islands" (2018)



© pexels / victor

PROFILE OF A CONNECTED USER: MOUSSA

"In the connected world we live in, we cannot live without connectivity"

Moussa is a 20-year-old Malian from the Dogon country. In 2012, Mali became the epicenter of a large-scale political and security crisis, triggered by the arrival of armed groups in the northern and central regions of the country. At 13, he had to leave his native village with his parents. He now lives in an IDP camp with his family. **For him, his phone is a means of accessing knowledge.**

"I use my phone to go on the internet, especially for accessing youtube. I download movies, watch music videos, listen to music ... I also watch online training videos. For example, at the moment I am learning accounting skills online. I also use the internet to learn things that I don't know about. For example, translation applications are helping me with languages. I also use maps to find my way around, when I'm going on a date, for example."

Moussa sometimes goes several days without being able to connect, when he has no more credit or the connection is too bad.

"Sometimes I have to log in at 3AM to get a good connection. During the day, there are internet bonuses, people use it more and the network is of lower quality. I often have network problems and have great difficulty charging my phone. In the cold season, there is not enough sun to use solar power and there are a lot of power cuts."

When asked about which topics he would like to receive more information on, he replies:

"Access to knowledge. I want to take English and Arabic lessons. English can help you wherever you go. In the connected world we live in, we cannot live without connectivity."

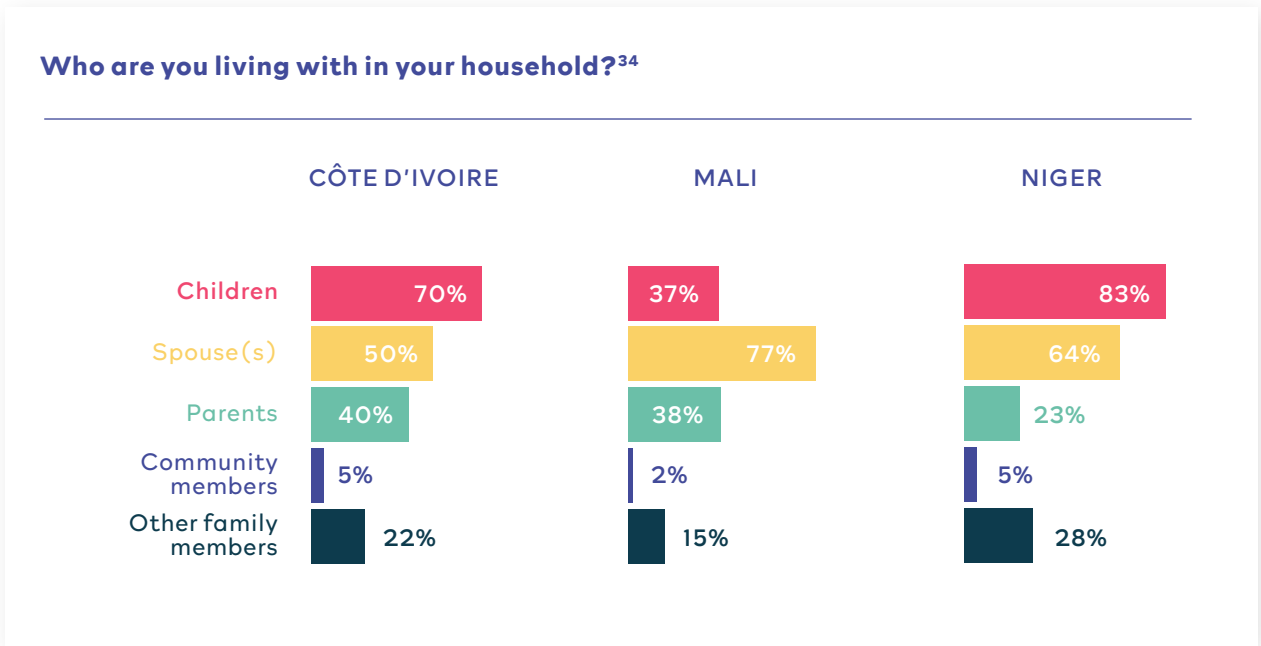
D. Digital Technology in the Community

Community life facilitates access to information and to mobile devices

About 80% of all respondents say they do not live alone. They are mostly living with their spouse(s), their child(ren) and / or their parent (s). On average, households consist of approx. 8 people in the three countries studied.

Among people with access to a mobile phone, 86% say they live with their family while only 12% live alone. **Close communities also facilitate access to mobile phones and is sometimes a gateway to using the Internet.**

The research shows that the community is a key source of information for refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons. **Most of the people we meet access information through community leaders or by talking to family members, friends or neighbours.**



Shared use of technology

In the uses of technology, too, the community plays a central role. 24% of people surveyed say that they share their phone or occasionally use the phone of another member of their community. Often there is only one phone in the household, and that is used also by spouse, children, parents, grandparents or another family member.

borrower replenishes the credit themselves. These loans are made within households, but also outside, for example when meeting at the market, in the fields or when meeting friends. **The semi-structured interviews also highlighted a shared consumption of digital content**, like listening to music together or watching videos.

Most of the time, this involves lending credit or lending their phone on condition that the

34. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

"
I top up their account and they call the people I want to communicate with for me. But no one gives me their phone without me putting some phone credit on it.
"

"
Usually at least one loved one has a phone and it is shared, like I do with my wife.
"

"
Every night when I meet with friends, we watch videos or listen to music together.
"

"
All my friends and relatives sometimes use my credit or help me by sending me some money when I need it. Sometimes I go a week without being able to connect to the internet because I have no more credit. It is not easy.
"

"
I live in my parents' house. We often share the phone and watch things together. During the holidays, I bought a special offer for 600 francs and shared the connection with friends. We help each other out. My parents have a phone too, but they don't use the internet. My father is an intellectual who prefers to listen to radio stations like RFI.
"

E. Barriers to mobile phone and internet use

One of the objectives of this research is to gain a better understanding of the barriers refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons face in accessing mobile phones and the internet. Understanding

these barriers is key to building more inclusive communication mechanisms, ensuring that all voices are considered and that no one is left behind.

The main barriers to accessing a mobile phone

Among the refugees, displaced persons, returnees and residents surveyed, 23% do not have access to a mobile phone. **The financial cost of acquiring a telephone is the primary obstacle encountered in the 3 countries.** The average cost of an entry-level smartphone in Africa exceeds 60% of the average monthly income³⁵.

A lost, damaged or broken phone is the second main obstacle to using a mobile (14%), and 10% do not know where to get one. Finally, 13% of people say they do not have the necessary knowledge to be able to use it.

The main barriers to accessing a mobile phone

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger | Total Survey Respondents |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|------|-------|--------------------------|
| I can't afford it / too expensive | 28% | 67% | 37% | 45% |
| I lost my phone | 23% | 16% | 8% | 14% |
| I don't know how to use a phone | 29% | 4% | 13% | 13% |
| I don't know where to get a phone | 2% | 0% | 20% | 10% |
| I sold my phone | 2% | 5% | 10% | 7% |
| Other | 6% | 7% | 5% | 6% |
| My phone was stolen | 4% | 1% | 7% | 4% |
| No network coverage | 6% | 0% | 0% | 1% |

The main barriers to using a mobile phone

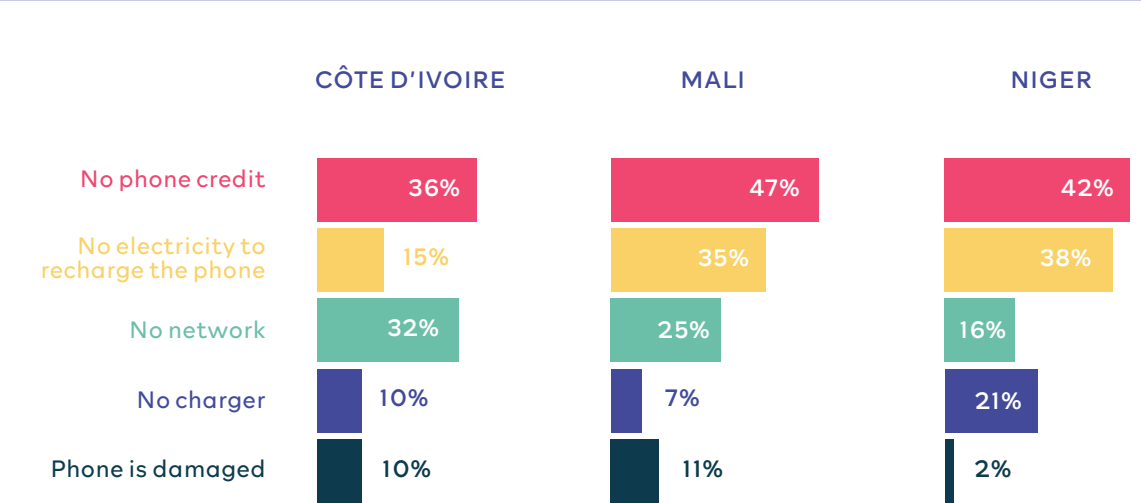
Even when people have access to a mobile phone, other barriers hamper its use. First, the cost of topping up pre-paid credit (42%), which sometimes means having to spend several days without being able to use your phone, while you need to find enough money to

buy credit. The lack of electricity is problematic (28%) and network coverage problems (25%) are also among the main problems cited³⁶.

35. Among the respondents, 34% have access to the electricity grid (Côte d'Ivoire with the highest figures), 25% access energy via a solar kit or lamp and 40% have no access to electricity.

36. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

The main barriers to using a mobile phone³⁷



The main barriers to using the internet

78% of refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and members of the host community said they do not use the internet. Most people do not have a device at their disposal (37%) and when they have access to a mobile phone, it is often a small basic phone without internet access. **Several people also said they did not know what the internet was.**

The lack of an internet-enabled device is the first obstacle encountered in the 3 countries studied. The quality of the connection is also frequently cited as a major obstacle to using mobile internet. In Mali, the region of Timbuktu, for example, is hardly covered by 3G networks³⁸.

" Our difficulties are mainly related to the connection and the data package. 500 francs top-up only lasts a few minutes and then it's over. It's used up way too quickly, that can't be normal. "

The lack of a minimum level of literacy and basic functional digital culture (knowing how to use a touch screen, knowing how to use an application, etc.) also hinders the use of

mobile internet and make it difficult to explore other uses such as online training or job search.

37. The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

38. «Development of Broadband in Mali - Progress report November 2017,» The Malian Regulatory Authority of Telecommunications, Information Technology and Communications and Posts (AMRTP)

Although 77% of respondents said they have access to a mobile phone, not all of them have the possibility of owning one and frequently borrow the phone of a family member (spouse, child, parent). The borrower is at a

disadvantage and must wait until the phone is available to use it. **When it is not accessible and affordable, digital technology seems to amplify inequalities.**

" A borrower will charge and uses their neighbour's phone, but it is sometimes quite difficult to find one available. "

" It's going well, more or less. There are days, though, when they refuse to lend me their phones to make a call. "

The main barriers to using the internet

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger |
|---|---------------|------|-------|
| I don't have a device (phone, computer) | 27% | 59% | 26% |
| I don't know how to use the internet | 51% | 15% | 27% |
| I can't afford it / it's too expensive | 11% | 8% | 31% |
| No connection or the connection is bad | 5% | 15% | 0% |
| Other | 2% | 1% | 10% |
| I don't need one | 4% | 1% | 6% |
| No electricity | 0% | 1% | 0% |

Lack of access to energy and lack of network among the main barriers to connectivity

Problems with access to energy are hampering the use of mobile phones and mobile internet. **Of the three countries studied, 40% of people have no access to energy, with the highest proportion in Mali (52%), followed by Niger (38%) and Côte d'Ivoire (31%).** These populations are deprived of essential services such as lighting and recharging mobile phones. They mostly use lighting modes that are often

expensive in the long run and dangerous, such as charcoal, kerosene lamps or candles.

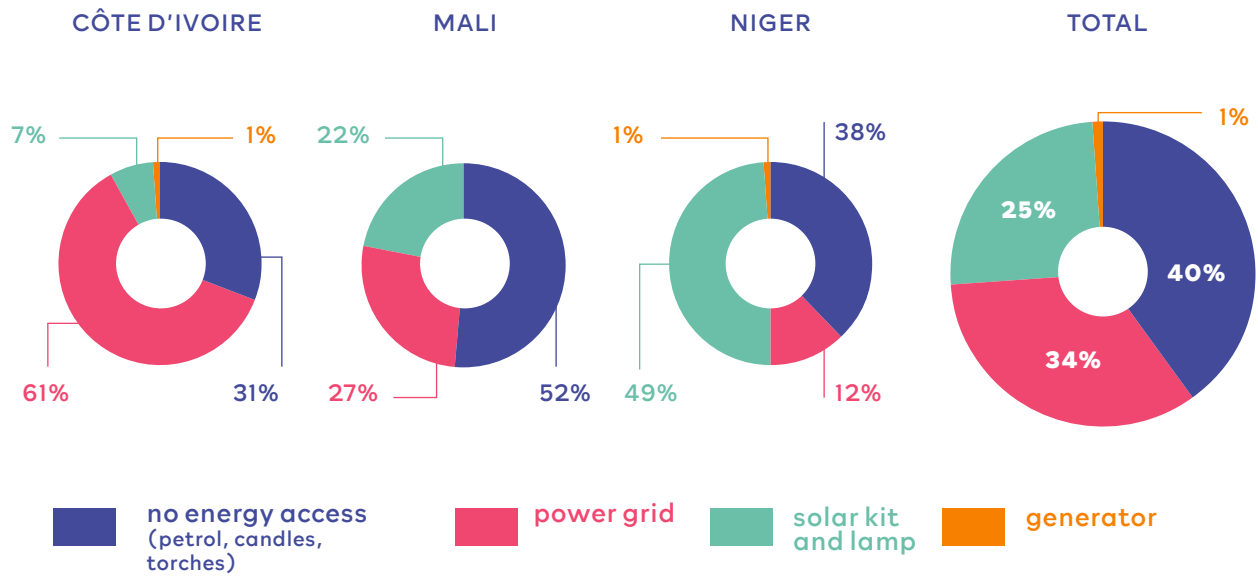
The gap between electrified urban areas (55%) and off-grid rural areas is evident. Almost all of the solutions for accessing solar energy are found in the regions (24%). Solar kits with lamps and batteries represent an energy inclusion solution for off-grid rural

areas³⁹. Linked to use of mobile phones, these solutions facilitate payment over time, or "Pay As You Go", supported by mobile payments.

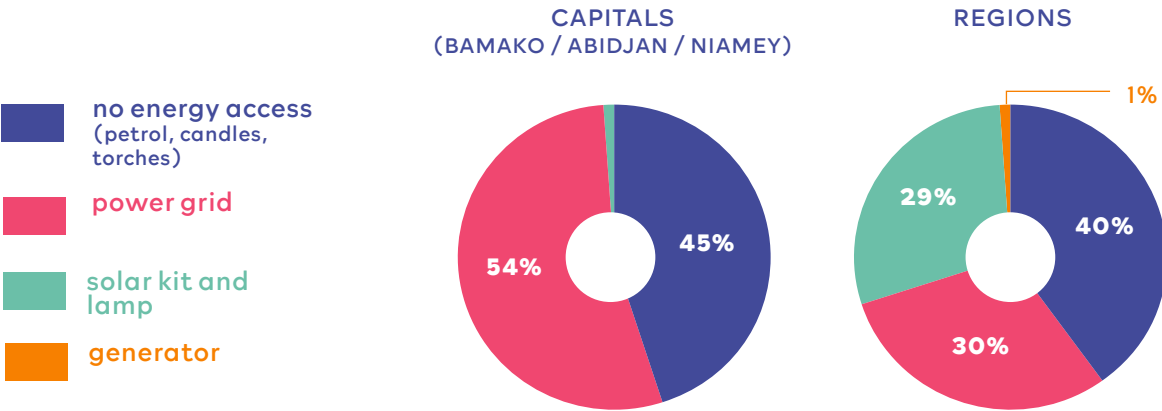
While access to the electricity grid is the lowest in Niger, it is interesting to note that solar energy in the country is the most developed

of the three countries studied. Programs initiated by the government and supported by donors have accelerated the development and prevalence of solar equipment in the country⁴⁰.

Access to different types of energy by country



Access to different types of energy - the difference between capitals and regions



39. The company MOON promotes energy inclusion, digital and financial through a solar kit including a smartphone, according to a 'paiement à la carte' (pay as you go), <https://moon.community/>
40. In 2018, a \$ 7 million line of credit was launched to stimulate the development of domestic solar kits (KSD). This line of credit is a component of the Niger Solar Electricity Project, implemented by the Government of Niger, with the support of the Lighting Africa Program, the National Center for Solar Energy (CNES) and of the Nigerian agency for rural electrification (ANPER).

THE NETWORK CONNECTIVITY TEST

This test focused specifically on the condition of the mobile network. It made it possible to measure the quality of the data connection of the networks of the main mobile operators in each of the countries studied, across several localities and at different times of the day (early in the morning, in the afternoon, in the evening).

Through the Speedsmart.net tool, three indicators were collected:

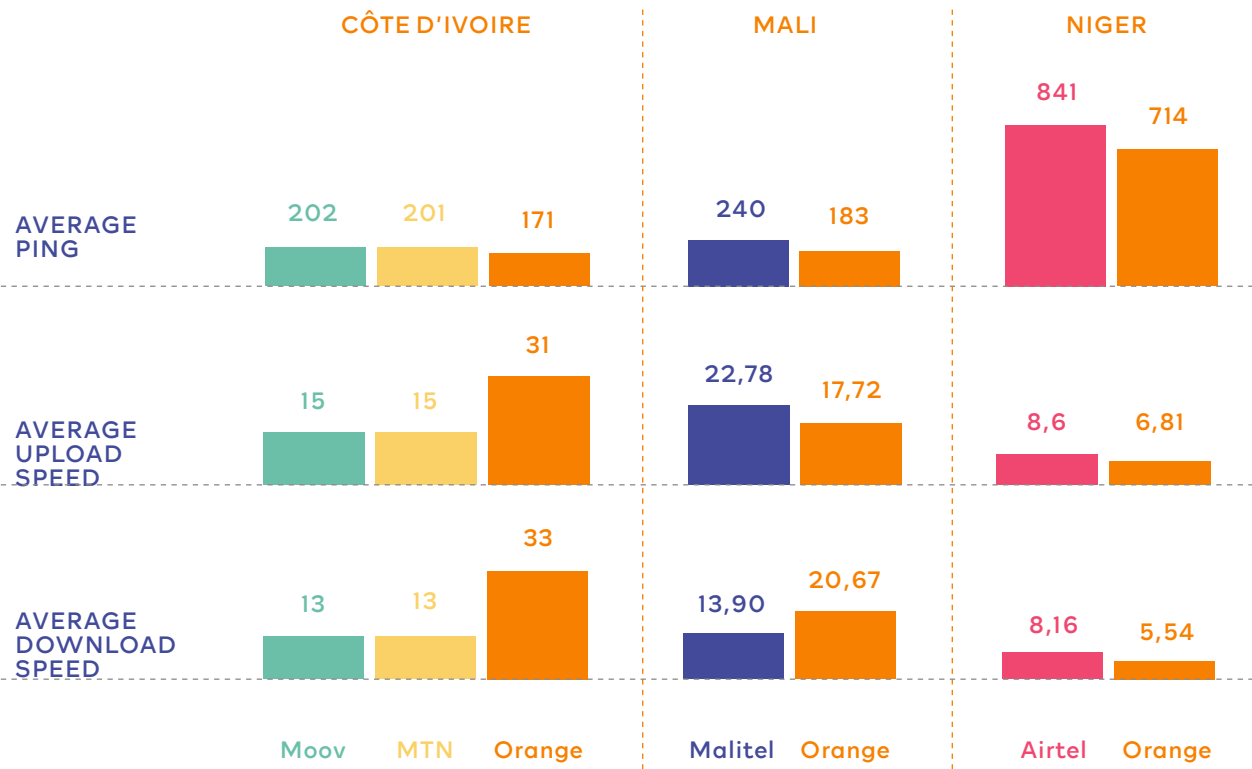
- Response time (ping): this value represents the time it takes for data to travel between the source and the destination (latency), it is measured in milliseconds (ms). The lower the ping, the faster the connection⁴¹ ;
- Data reception (download): this value represents the speed at which data from the Internet arrives on the device;
- Upload: This value represents the speed at which data is transmitted from the device to the Internet.

RESULTS:

In the three countries studied, all localities combined, the response times are very high, which translates to a bad connection with lots of latency.

The longest response time was measured in Niger (average ping of 809 ms), followed by Côte d'Ivoire (average ping of 198 ms) and Mali (average ping of 185 ms)⁴². The speed of data reception (download) and data sending (upload) is average in Mali (17 Mbps and 18 Mbps respectively) and in Côte d'Ivoire (15 Mbps and 17 Mbps), while in Niger (7.7Mbps and 6.9Mbps) speeds are almost twice as slow.

Network connectivity levels by country and operator:



The quality of the internet connection directly impacts the loading time of digital content. A poor internet connection affects the ability of people to study remotely, to stay in contact with their relatives or to develop income-generating activities. In a pandemic situation, such as COVID-19 or emergency situations (natural disaster, armed conflict, etc.), the continuity of distance education depends not only on access to connectivity, but also on a quality connection being available.

Populations are therefore faced with a compounded problem: one of the slowest mobile internet connections in the world, which is also one of the least affordable. According to a report by the Alliance for Affordable Internet (A4AI), the regions of the world where people on average pay the most for a mobile broadband internet connection in relation to their average monthly income are also those where the speed of download is slowest (in Mbit / s)⁴³.

Comparative table of the main barriers encountered:



| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger |
|---------------------------|--|--|---|
| Access to a mobile phone | 1. I don't know how to use a phone (29 %) 2. I can't afford it (28 %) 3. I lost my phone (23 %) | 1. I can't afford it (67 %) 2. I lost my phone (16 %) 3. I sold my phone (5 %) | 1. I can't afford it (37 %) 2. I don't know where to get a phone (20 %) 3. I don't know how to use a phone (13 %) |
| Problems with phone usage | 1. No phone credit (36%) 2. No network (32 %) 3. No electricity to charge the phone (15 %) | 1. No phone credit (47%) 2. No electricity to charge the phone (35 %) 3. No network (25 %) | 1. No phone credit (42 %) 2. No electricity to charge the phone (38 %) 3. No phone charger (21 %) |
| Internet Use | 1. I don't know how to use the internet (51 %) 2. I don't have a device (27 %) 3. I can't afford to (11 %) | 1. I don't have a device (59 %) 2. I don't know how to use the internet (15 %) 3. No connection, or the connection is bad (15 %) | 1. I can't afford to (31 %) 2. I don't know how to use the internet (27 %) 3. I don't have a device (26%) |

41. For example, a ping less than 30 ms translates an excellent connection response time while a ping between 60 and 100 ms translates a medium or low connection response time..
42. The locality of Menaka (Mali), was isolated from the average because connectivity is absent. The recorded response time is greater than 60,000 ms and the receiving and sending speeds are zero.

43. »Improving mobile broadband quality of service in low- and middle-income countries", Alliance for Affordable Internet, 2018.

6. Connectivity and Economic Inclusion

A. Introduction

Fostering the economic inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons by developing livelihoods is a key element of empowerment. Economic inclusion

includes access to decent work, financial services and entrepreneurship, among other things.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ 1 Many forcibly displaced and stateless people engage in income-generating activity, with a higher proportion among men, as well as in the Mali context.
- ▶ 2 The majority of activities are informal and focus around small businesses or manual labour.
- ▶ 3 The level of informality decreases as the level of education increases.
- ▶ 4 A third of those surveyed use money transfer services such as mobile money or money transfer agencies.
- ▶ 5 Women have less access to financial services.

B. Informal Economy

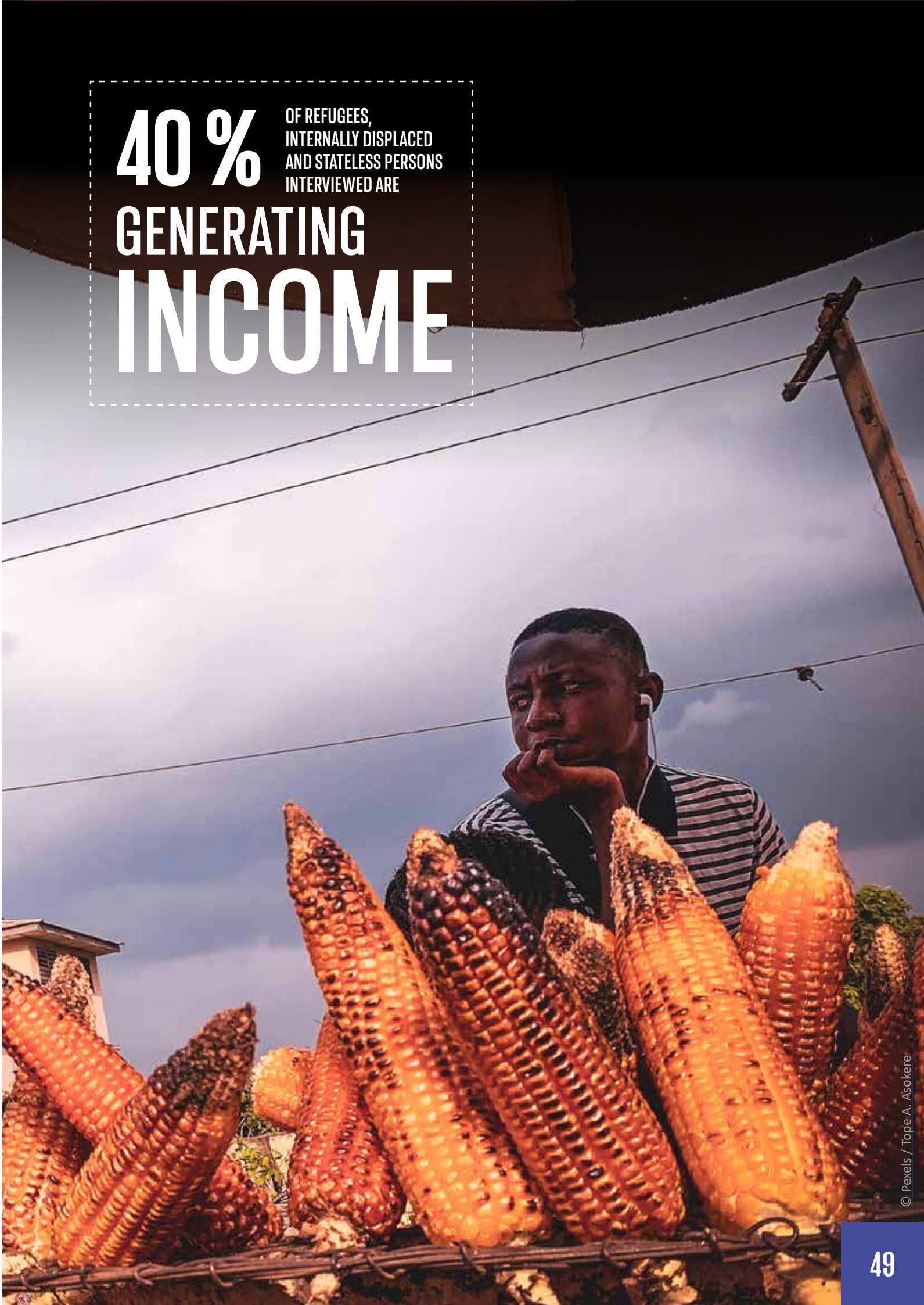
The prevalence of informal entrepreneurship among forcibly displaced and stateless people

Within the framework of this research, 40% of the refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons interviewed declare that they engage in income-generating activity, with a higher proportion in Mali (50%) and in Côte d'Ivoire (49%)⁴⁴. The majority of these activities are informal, with

only 7% saying they engaged in formal activity. Among the means of subsistence cited, manual labour or commercial activities were most common: masonry, sewing, hairdressing, laundry services, gardening, mobile phone sales, butchery, sale of charcoal, and sale of fruits and vegetables⁴⁵.

44. In Niger, 82% of the people surveyed do not engaged in economic activity.
45. The complete list of activities mentioned is available in Annex 3

40 % OF REFUGEES, INTERNALLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PERSONS INTERVIEWED ARE GENERATING INCOME



While there is still little comprehensive data on entrepreneurship, especially on the volume of enterprises and their size⁴⁶, the informal sector accounts for the majority of jobs in West Africa⁴⁷. **Very often, refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons**

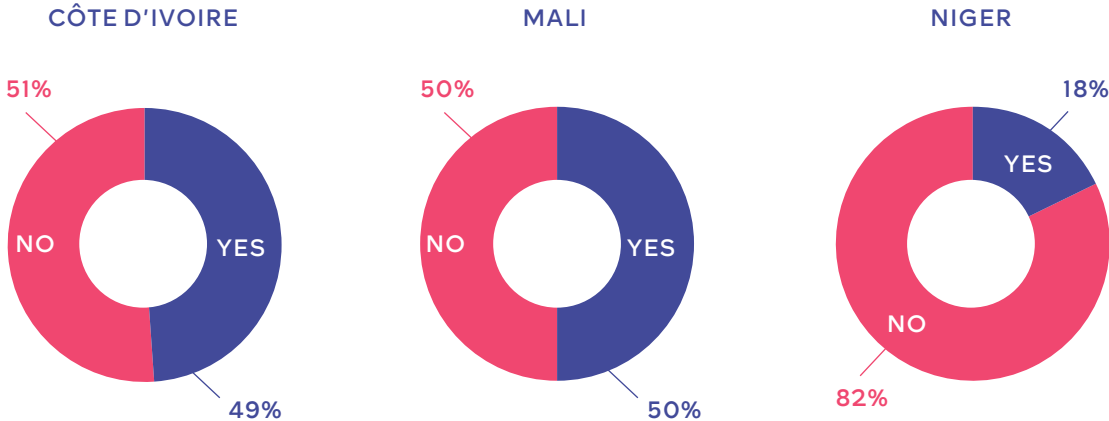
are excluded from the formal labor market, making them more vulnerable to economic exploitation and harmful survival activities such as prostitution or child labor. In addition, the informal economy is often characterized by its lack of social protections, workers rights and decent working conditions⁴⁸.

The level of informality decreases as the level of education increases

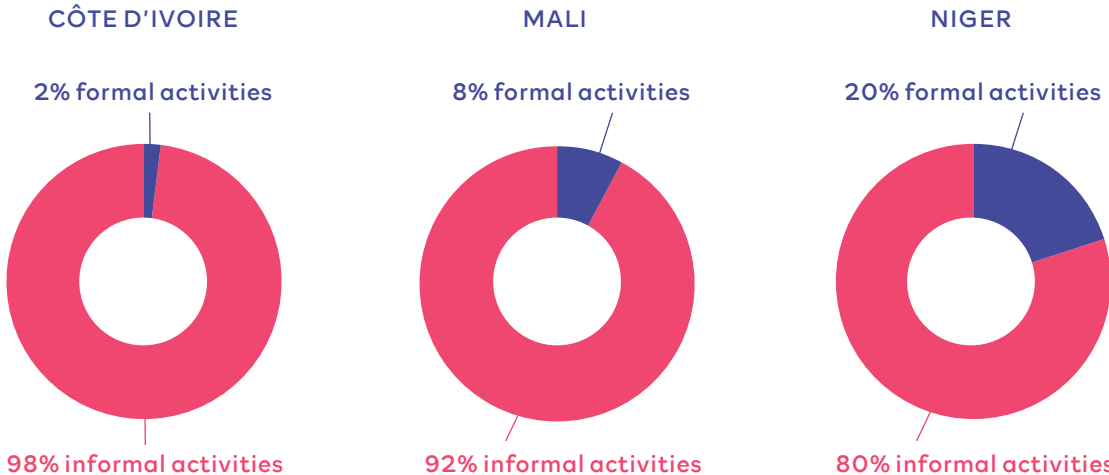
It is important to note that the level of education is a determining factor of the level of informality. Globally, when the level of education increases, the level of informality decreases⁴⁹. People with secondary or tertiary

education are less likely to be in informal activity than people who have never attended school or who have left school after primary level.

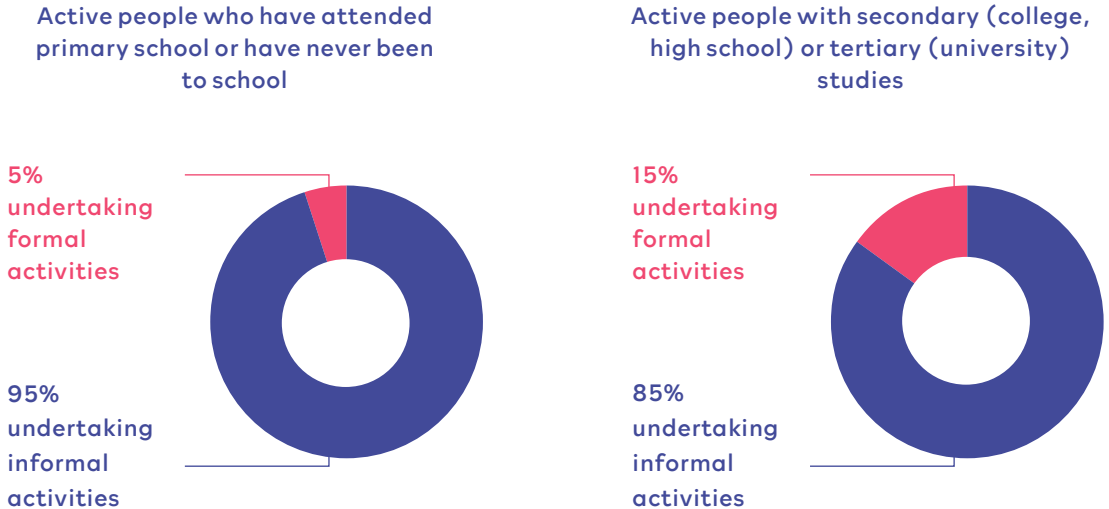
Are you engaged in economic activity?



The degree of (in)formality across the three research contexts



Level of informality to level of education



C. Entrepreneurship: a lever for economic empowerment

Several people we met shared their desire not to depend on assistance for a long time. Being able to provide for yourself and your family is an essential element of integration and empowerment. **Entrepreneurship becomes a lever for the economic and social inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons.**

It is important to note that the countries most affected by forced migration often themselves face problems of unemployment and lack of economic opportunities. Accessing opportunities to develop sustainable livelihoods contributes to economic and social development in hosting countries. **The socio-**

economic participation of refugees, displaced persons and stateless persons thus generates positive impacts both for themselves and for members of host communities.

In this context, connectivity plays an essential role in promoting employment opportunities and supporting the development of income-generating activities. Some digital tools, for example, allow farmers to obtain real-time information on the prices of agrifood products⁵⁰ or to better manage their livestock in order to improve their milk production and therefore their income.

46. Some studies provide a general trend, such as World Bank's investigations or the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM). But World Bank surveys do not use the same variables from one year to the next. GEM investigations include more subjective variables and there are only approximately 6 or 7 African countries each year.
 47. Informal firms of Francophone West Africa: size, productivity and institutions, World Bank, 2012.
 48. The International Labor Organization (ILO) notes the transition to the formal economy as a fundamental to improving the standard of living for people in developing countries. «Recommendation on the transition from the informal economy to the formal economy», 2015, <https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/employment-promotion/informal-economy/lang-fr/index.htm>

49. "Women and men in the informal economy: A statistical picture.", International Labour Office, 2018.
 50. The Myagro mobile platform allows small farmers in West Africa to use their mobile phones to buy seeds and fertilizers by small quantities, increase their crops and therefore, their income. <https://www.myagro.org/>

CONNECTIVITY AT THE HEART OF ECONOMIC INCLUSION: AMADOU

"It's absolutely essential for my business today."

Amadou was born in Gao, Mali. After graduating from high school and attending vocational school, he worked in a transit company until the crisis hit. In 2012, the city of Gao was attacked. Amadou fled with his family to Niger, where he applied for refugee status. Today he runs a gas distribution business. **His business means he is able to provide for his family.**

"I tried to integrate into social life, make friends, make connections, all in order to start a business. First I began with the sale of fresh water and sweets. I went into domestic gas sales later, in 2017.

I had to take a loan when I was selling fresh water. I was having trouble saving money. A woman who worked in microfinance told me about a tontine and I joined, paying 1000 francs a day. After this, I was able to open an account and I was able to get a loan for the longer term. They gave me all the money

in my tontine and I was able to invest in a refrigerator to sell ice cream. Afterwards, I saw that gas was in great demand and I got into this business.»

He uses his phone on a daily basis to develop his business.

"The phone helps me in my business, for delivering gas to my doorstep, for example. When I'm on the move, it also allows me to contact customers and make arrangements. I had started selling online on Facebook but quit because it hasn't developed much yet. On the other hand, on my Whatsapp status I post the quality of the different gases that I have and some customers place their orders there, then I deliver to them at their homes. I also use the phone to call my provider. It's absolutely essential for my business today."

D. Access to Financial Services

35% of respondents said they use money transfer services, whether mobile money or through money transfer agencies. Among the most cited agencies are Wari, Moneygram, Western Union, NITA, Al Izza Transfert and BNIF Afuwa.

The preferred way to receive or send money are mobile transfer services (or mobile money). We also note that 43% of people with access to a mobile phone use a mobile money service and several people declared using the account of a member of their community. Mobile financial technology, or "finTech", facilitates access to

financial services for populations difficult to reach by traditional institutions.

"I use other people's mobile money accounts."

"I use my little sister's mobile money account to receive money."

"I use my husband's mobile money account."

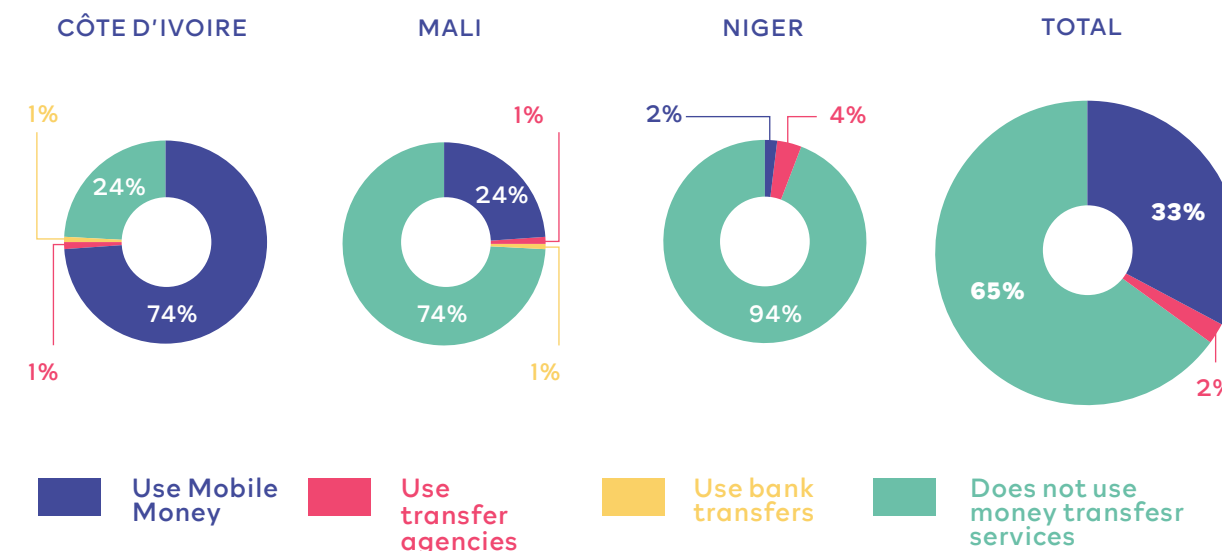
Forcibly displaced and stateless people are less likely to use money transfer services

Of the refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons surveyed, 35% use money transfer services, while 48% of members of host communities use these services.

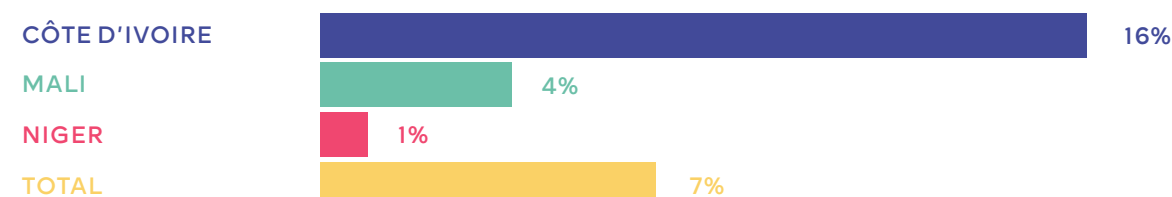
While banking is often synonymous with integration into the formal economy, forcibly displaced and stateless people may find it difficult to access the necessary funding to

start or develop a business. They often do not have the necessary administrative documents or guarantees to obtain credit from banks or microfinance institutions. They are also more easily excluded from community lending groups such as tontines.

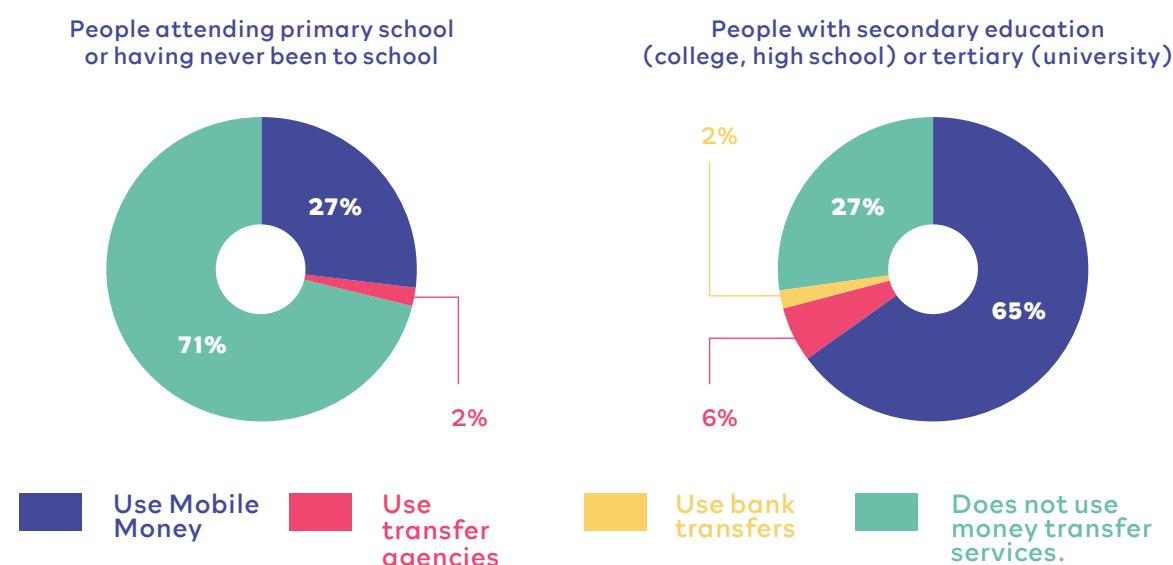
Use of money transfer services by country



Rate of access to banking by country



Use of money transfer services by level of education



Rate of access to banking by level of education:



Mobile money, a driver of financial inclusion

Financial inclusion rates in West Africa are relatively low⁵¹ but continue to grow. With

the high penetration of mobile phones, mobile money has the potential to transform

51. According to the Central Bank of the States of West Africa (BCEAO), the rate of banking was 19.3% in 2018, the highest rate was observed in Togo (26.8%), and noting Mali (23.3%), Benin (22.5%) and Côte d'Ivoire (21.6%). Niger, on the other hand, has a strict cabinet rate of 5.8%. Report on the situation of financial inclusion in the UEMOA during the year 2018

the financial lives of populations generally excluded from the traditional banking system such as women, rural populations and internally displaced persons.

Access to financial services such as money transfers, credits or microinsurance is a key element in developing sustainable

livelihoods. They allow people to diversify their sources of income to meet their needs and thus, strive for economic independence. They also facilitate access to essential services such as education, healthcare or employment.

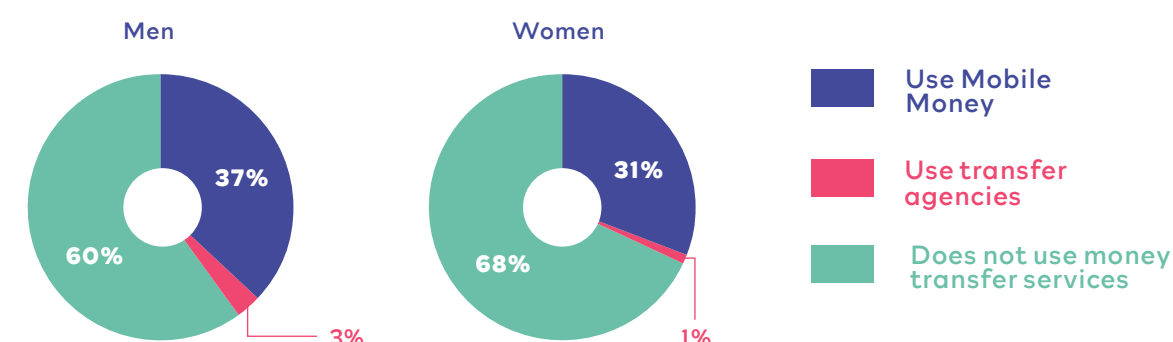
E. Promote the economic empowerment of refugee women

The study reveals a significant gap in economic activity between women and men. 45% of the men questioned declared having a means of subsistence compared to only 35% of women.

However, studies show that women invest up to 90% of their income in their family and community (compared to 30 to 40% for men)⁵². They are in fact most often responsible for household expenses, both in terms of daily purchases and payment of bills. Women's economic empowerment therefore has a positive impact on the level of education and income of future generations⁵³.

Women are also more likely to be financially excluded. Of those surveyed, 68% of women do not use any money transfer service, compared to 60% of men. Yet the financial inclusion of women is a key prerequisite to their participation in the labour market, and is often a first step in their transition to the formal economy.

Use of money transfer services by gender



9% OF MEN HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT

6% OF WOMEN HAVE A BANK ACCOUNT

52. "Connected Women - The gender gap in mobile money: the teachings of Côte d'Ivoire and Mali", GSMA, 2017

53. "Does female empowerment promote economic development?" Centre de politique économique de l'université de Chicago, 2011, https://economics.uchicago.edu/sites/economics.uchicago.edu/files/uploads/PDF/Tertilt_Female_Empowerment.pdf

7. Gender and Disability

A. Introduction

This section addresses the topic of equal access to information and communication technologies among refugees, internally

displaced persons, stateless persons and members of the host community, focusing primarily on two factors: gender and disability.

KEY FINDINGS

- ▶ **1** There is a digital gender divide in mobile phone access and internet use, and the biggest divide in the three contexts is in Côte d'Ivoire.
- ▶ **2** The gender gap is even greater in the regions than in the capital cities.
- ▶ **3** There is one exception: women educated to at least secondary level use the Internet more than men.
- ▶ **4** Almost half of the people surveyed reported difficulties related to their health in their daily life. Among them, one in two people is limited in their main functional capacities.
- ▶ **5** The lack of digital skills and financial means are the main obstacles to accessing technology for people with disabilities.

B. Alarming Gender Disparity

Main drivers of the digital gender divide

While 87% of men surveyed have access to a mobile phone, only 66% of women use a mobile phone. And the gap is even greater in the use of the internet, where the gender gap is 50%. The most significant gap is in Côte d'Ivoire, where 50% of men use the internet, compared to only 36% of women who have access to it⁵⁴.

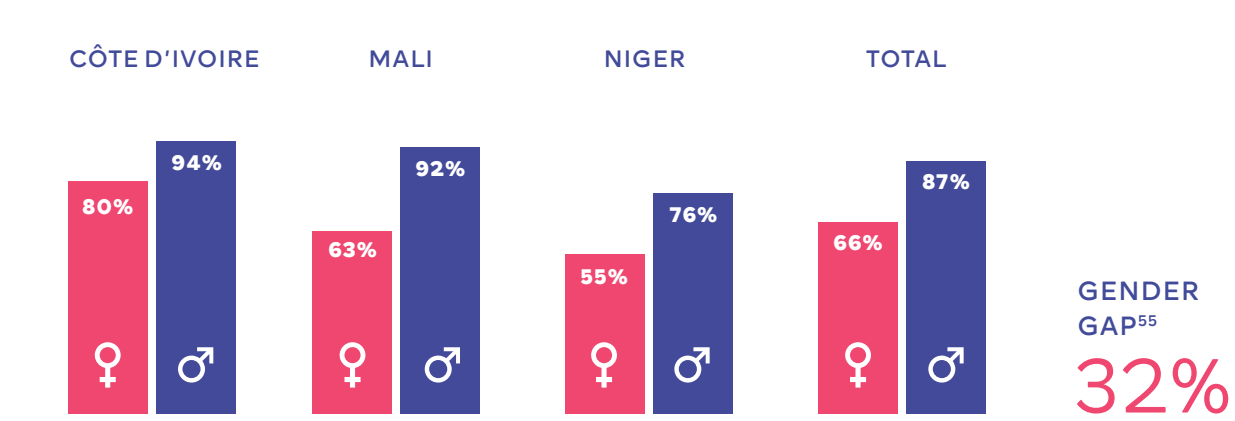
Gender directly impacts the use of mobile phones and the Internet, especially because women have less access to paid work. They are therefore more likely to depend on those around them for access to technology. This can be seen in particular through the lower SIM card registration rate for women (24%) than for men (31%).

54. Côte d'Ivoire and Mali demonstrate a very low Gender Equality performance, Ranked 139th and 142nd (out of 153) in the 2019 Annual Report of The Global Economic Forum on Gender Parity (No Data for Niger).

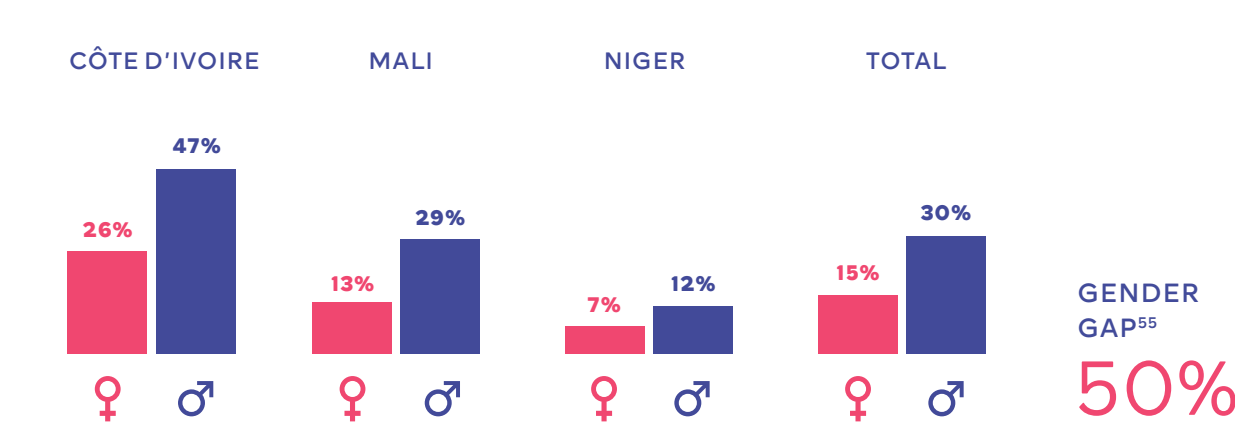
DIGITAL
DIVIDES



Rate of access to a mobile phone by gender:



Internet use rate by gender



Women also tend to have a lower level of literacy (76% of women surveyed cannot read or write, compared to 55% of men) and are more likely to have never been to school (37% compared to 26% for men). Often, they do not have the digital skills to use a phone or the internet.

The local environment also has an impact: **the gender gap is more pronounced in rural areas than in capital cities, whether for access to a mobile phone or for internet use.**

There is, however, one exception: women who have studied through to at least college or other secondary education level use the Internet more than men.

Women with secondary (college, high school) or tertiary (university) studies are:

89% HAVE ACCESS TO A MOBILE PHONE

68% ARE ABLE TO USE THE INTERNET

Men with secondary (college, high school) or tertiary (university) studies are:

98% HAVE ACCESS TO A MOBILE PHONE

63% ARE ABLE TO USE THE INTERNET

55. Gender Gap = (% of male users - % of female users) / % of male users

Impact of the digital gender divide

Accessing technology and the internet is one way to actively participate in increasingly digital societies. The fact that women do not benefit from this access equally means they not only miss out on the opportunities that these technologies can bring for their users, but also the potential for enhanced socio-economic development.⁵⁶

Lack of access to information and communication technologies impacts all aspects of their life, such as education, training, health, etc. It also affects their ability to express themselves on issues that concern them and to take part in the search for suitable solutions. **Technology can therefore become an important indicator of gender inequality.**

C. Disability and access to technology

Strong prevalence of disability in the contexts explored

It should be noted here that disability is not an inherent characteristic of a person, but rather one aspects of an individual's life context. Thus, half of the people interviewed declared having difficulties related to their health in their daily life, rather than defining it as a disability specifically.

However, when focusing only on the main functional capacities (sight, hearing, motor skills, communication or cognition⁵⁷), 13%

of people are considered - according to the Washington Group criteria - to have a disability, with a prevalence in Côte d'Ivoire where one in three are limited in their basic functional capacities, followed by Niger (25%) and Mali (14%). Many people also say they find themselves in a situation of stress and anxiety related to their situation: difficulties in eating, looking after themselves, feelings of insecurity, stigma, or depression.⁵⁸



Health problems can also be a cause of disability, sometimes permanently. Ulcers, malaria, osteoarthritis, headaches or stomach aches, breathing difficulties or heart problems are the examples most frequently cited by those interviewed as disabling in nature.

The emergency situations in which refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons or stateless persons often find themselves make it more difficult for them to access healthcare services.

56. A report by Intel mentions that if 600 million more women were connected to the Internet, this could result in an increase in annual GDP between 13 and 18 billion US dollars across 144 developing countries («Women and the Web», 2013) <https://www.intel.la/content/dam/www/public/us/en/documents/pdf/women-and-the-web.pdf>

57. To address the subject of Disability, the research utilised the Short Set of Questions on Disability of the Washington Group. The methodology is detailed in the annexes.

58. The complete list of difficulties mentioned is available in the annexes.

The main health-related difficulties encountered in everyday life:

| | Côte d'Ivoire | Mali | Niger | Total |
|---|---------------|------|-------|-------|
| To take care of yourself (washing, dressing...) | 60 % | 50 % | 64 % | 59 % |
| To see well | 34 % | 10 % | 16 % | 22 % |
| To get around easily | 22 % | 4 % | 13 % | 15 % |
| To remember things easily, to concentrate | 5 % | 25 % | 0 % | 7 % |
| To hear well | 8 % | 8 % | 6 % | 6 % |
| To understand others, to make yourself understood (even in your own language) | 2 % | 3 % | 1 % | 2 % |
| Other difficulties (headache, malaria, stress...) | 27 % | 35 % | 37 % | 32 % |

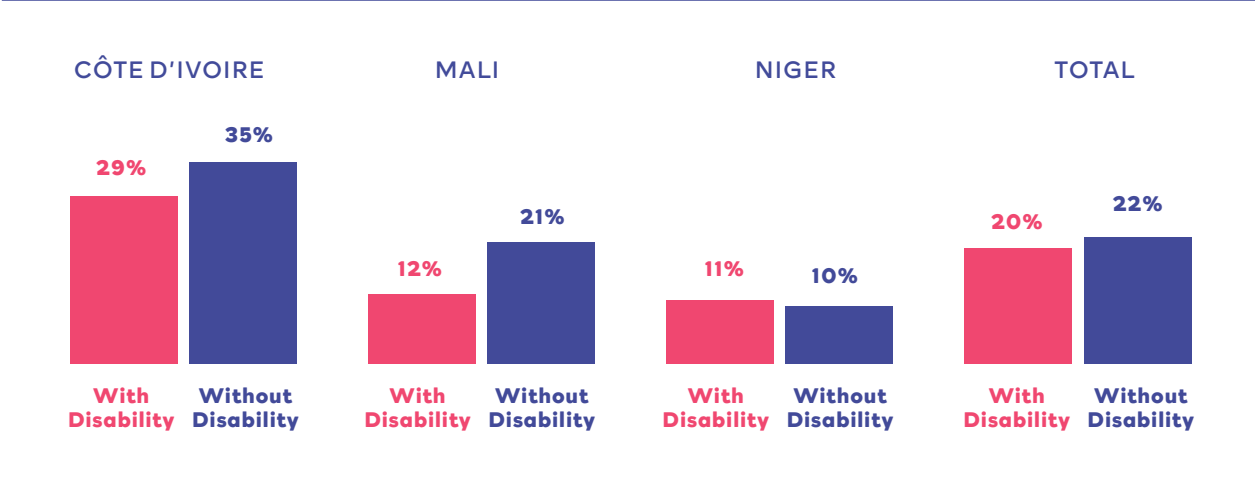
The data was captured using a multiple choice survey with a maximum of 3 responses. Results are calculated based on the total number of respondents. Totals may not equal 100%.

Although the disability rate is higher in Côte d'Ivoire and Niger, it is in Mali that people with disabilities have the most difficulty using the internet.

While disability is strongly present in the contexts of refugees, internally displaced persons and stateless persons, covered in the study, it seems to have little impact on access to technology overall. Among people with difficulties in their main functional abilities (sight, hearing, motor skills, cognition), 80% have access to a mobile phone and 20% use the internet⁵⁹.

On the other hand, there is a greater gap in internet access for refugees, displaced and stateless people with disabilities in Mali and Côte d'Ivoire. The first obstacles faced by the people concerned are the lack of skills («I don't know how to use it»), accessibility («I can't afford it») or availability («I don't have a device»).

Internet use rate by Disability



59. Access to mobile phones for all refugees, displaced and stateless people surveyed is 77%, and Internet use stands at 22%.

D. Importance of inclusive and accessible technology

In the contexts studied, access to technology is mainly via mobile phone and mobile internet. As the world becomes more connected, certain marginalized groups such as women are still less likely to have use of digital technologies. This in turn means that they are less likely to be able to access essential services such as cash assistance, health information, educational content or job opportunities.

Facilitating digital access for marginalized or vulnerable people helps to promote their social inclusion. From the data derived from this research, it is clear that digital technology has become a means of expression, information-seeking, discovery and work. Technology helps to reduce inequality and acts as a lever for development.

In many areas, such as agriculture or health, technology can have significant positive impacts on the quality of life of communities. Mobile applications, for example, allow people who are victims of gender-based violence (GBV) to alert authorities and find support⁶⁰, people with reduced mobility to work remotely or women to develop income-generating activities⁶¹ or to take part in the digital economy.

The use of new technologies in education offers many possibilities for non-formal education, which can have important repercussions on the training of women with low literacy skills or people with disabilities. Used in distance

education, these applications can deliver «home lessons» to people unable to access formal institutions or face certain barriers to formal education (travel, literacy level).

In the field of health, new technologies can also play a crucial role. The use of networked information exchange systems and offline computing tools such as removable media such as flash storage, databases and mobile devices can strengthen public health services. They can enable the dissemination of information and education programs for health, sexual health, bring communities closer to health services through systematic and regular exchange of information. They offer simple solutions for the collection and analysis of information on diseases such as HIV / AIDS and capture local attitudes and approaches to health issues so that interventions are more locally appropriate.

Refugees, internally displaced and stateless people have the right to access information in real time, enabling them to effectively contribute to decision-making.



60. Launched in Senegal, the application «App-Elles» allows women who are victims of violence to call for help. https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2019/10/28/violences-facts-aux-femmes-l-application-app-elles-lancee-au-senegal_6017219_3212.html
61. The Isahit platform promotes women's emancipation in developing countries by offering digital micro-tasks, <https://isahit.com/>

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research made it possible to take stock of the connectivity of refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless persons and members of host communities across three contexts. It also demonstrated the importance, for the operations of UNHCR and its partners, and beyond, for the entire humanitarian community, of better understanding people's habits and use cases for digital technology. Communication channels, formats and access to information are equally as vital to understand.

This research highlights the main barriers to accessing and using technology which, when not available, accessible and affordable, exacerbates social inequalities.

Populations across the three contexts are faced with two key challenges: one of the slowest mobile internet connections in the world, which is also one of the least affordable.



MAKE ACCESS TO AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY MORE AFFORDABLE

In the contexts studied, the first digital experience is mainly via phone and mobile internet. However, financial cost is one of the main barriers to access and use. It is essential to make data and internet-enabled devices more affordable.

- ▶ Utilise community-based initiatives such as savings groups to **facilitate the acquisition of mobile phones**
- ▶ Promote **access to mobile phones through "pay-as-you-go" payments plans** through external providers such as solar providers.
- ▶ **Subsidize or distribute internet-enabled devices**, including high value-added content tailored to the information and communication needs of refugees and members of host communities.
- ▶ Sharing infrastructure, promoting competition in the market, reducing network operating costs, supporting public access are all examples (on a more "macro" scale) of **making Internet access more affordable for consumers, including Persons of Concern to UNHCR.**
- ▶ Amend the regulatory framework to make it easier for refugees and stateless people to **obtain a SIM card and register it in their own name.**



62. "In Africa, we are not 'Mobile First', we are 'mobile only'", Interview with Rebecca Enonchong, Chair of the Afrilab Board of Directors and Founder of the Africa Technology Forum, <https://www.orange.com/en/newsroom/actualites/20/Le-Numerique-en-Africa-A-Priorite-For-a-Conomie-Inclusive-et>

2



EXTEND NETWORK COVERAGE AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CONNECTIONS

A poor internet connection affects the ability of people to study remotely, keep in touch with loved ones or develop income-generating activities.

- ▶ Define a national plan for the development and distribution of high-speed and very high-speed broadband, **particularly in rural areas.**
- ▶ Invest in infrastructure to provide high quality broadband
- ▶ to unconnected populations and **reduce the digital divide between capitals and regions.**
- ▶ Fund and implement initiatives promoting equitable digital access such as public Wi-Fi, **providing low cost services.**



ADAPT DEVICES AND CONTENT TO CONTEXTS

- ▶ Determine the **most suitable communication channels**, taking into account demographics and people's preferences (languages, format, preferred application, etc.)
- ▶ Design **digital content and services that consume less data and energy**, more suited to regions with poor network coverage and / or difficulties in accessing energy.
- ▶ Develop **partnerships with manufacturers of Internet-enabled devices** suited to challenging contexts (greater battery life, more robust devices, water / dust resistant etc.).
- ▶ Promote **access to clean energy** like solar to enable people to be connected in an efficient and sustainable way.

3

4



INCREASING COMMUNICATION AND **FACILITATING** COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

This research shows a lack of information on essential topics such as rights and responsibilities as well as a strong need to facilitate contact with humanitarian actors. This communication is a key part of a community-based approach and strengthens accountability to communities.

- ▶ **Strengthen the engagement and participation of communities** at each stage of the programme cycle
- ▶ **Promote accountability mechanisms** to proactively collect feedback from a sufficiently representative sample of the community.
- ▶ **Improve feedback** to ensure that people can easily get in touch with humanitarian actors (complaints, suggestion, etc.)
- ▶ **Identify groups among refugees and in host communities** to systematically listen to beneficiaries.



INVEST IN **EDUCATION** AND **DIGITAL CULTURE**

The study shows that the level of education impacts the use of the internet and mobile financial services. Women with at least college education use the internet more than men. However, the lack of digital skills hinders access to technology and its use.

- ▶ **Invest in education and the development of digital skills, especially for women and people in rural areas.**
- ▶ **Adapt training programs to the profiles of beneficiaries and their needs**
- ▶ **Work to define a national digital skills training program.**

5

6



SUPPORTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS

The study highlights the prevalence of the informal economy in the contexts studied, which makes people more vulnerable to economic exploitation, harmful survival activities, lack of social protection and unacceptable working conditions. Fostering the development of sustainable livelihoods is a key element of economic inclusion and social empowerment.

- ▶ **Adapting the legal framework** to promote the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced and stateless persons in the formal labour market
- ▶ **Adapting the Business creation process for refugees** and improving access to services for refugees.
- ▶ **Develop entrepreneurial spirit and build capacity** by combining technical and vocational skills training with training in soft skills
- ▶ **Facilitate access to the necessary financing to start a business**, and develop it with seed capital and micro-credit to help build economic opportunities.
- ▶ **Promoting financial Inclusion** through adapted and more accessible financial services
- ▶ **Design digital products** and services that help people develop their professional skills and create new opportunities
- ▶ **Push for the economic empowerment of women**, an affective lever for fostering inclusive and sustainable growth

Annexes

Annex 1 Complete Methodology (Survey...)

The survey

Based on information gathered from UNHCR country teams and their field staff, a survey was developed collaboratively. This survey was designed to build a better understanding of technology and access to information practices, as well as communication needs

The aim was to collect a minimum of 300 responses per country, in order to obtain a sufficiently representative and relevant

Disability within the scope of the research

Disability is a dynamic and complex topic. To address it appropriately, the research utilised the Washington Group Short Set on Functioning (WG-SS), a six-question approach developed and tested by The Washington Group⁶³ to identify people with disabilities.

Studies show that the use of the word «disability» can skew responses because people may be reluctant to address their limitations for fear of stigma. Researchers have therefore avoided the use of the term «disability» in the context of the survey.

The questions focus on six basic functional areas: mobility, vision, hearing, cognition, personal care and communication. The Washington Group advocates including two optional questions about anxiety and depression. These two questions were not

sample. For the three countries, sampling between different types of target groups was generated by UNHCR (refugees, asylum seekers, internally displaced persons, stateless people and members of the host community), consistent with the work of the various national offices and the contexts of each country.

included in the study questionnaire, but the subjects of stress, anxiety and depression often appeared when posed the question «Do you face any other difficulties?».

The information gathered through these questions:

1. Covers the majority of people with disabilities with limitations in basic activities, though not all;
2. Covers the most common areas of disability in the three countries studied;
3. Identifies people with similar problems.

Semi-structured Interviews

The semi-structured interviews were conducted utilising an interview guide developed from an in-depth research study that covered all the topics to be addressed in the form of open questions. This form of interview allows for capturing speech freely where the survey emphasises anonymity and flexibility.

These open conversations provide a better understanding of the various issues, obstacles or opportunities around community engagement and communication channels, across the different countries and the different segments of the target population.

The network connectivity test

In order to better understand the technical realities of connectivity, a qualitative test specifically focused on the state of the mobile network was deployed. The objective of this test was to measure the quality of the data connection of the main mobile network operators for each country and for each locality within the country.

and 100ms translates an average or even low connection speed;

- Download: This value represents the speed at which data from the Internet arrives on the device;
- Upload: This value represents the speed at which data is transmitted from the device to the Internet.

Through the online tool Speedsmart.net, three indicators were collected:

- Response time (ping): This value represents the time it takes for data to travel between source and destination (latency), measured in milliseconds. A ping of less than 30 ms reflects an excellent connection speed, while a ping between 60

This connectivity test was replicated at different times of the day (very early in the morning, late morning, afternoon, evening) and with several different mobile network operators.

Annex 2 List of the most listened to radio stations by country

| Côte d'Ivoire : | Niger : | Mali : |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Radio Agnebi | Community Channels | Community Channels |
| Fréquences 2 | BBC | Jamana |
| Radio Côte d'Ivoire | RFI | Orona |
| RFI | | RFI |
| | | Sindiéré |

63. Created in 2001 by the United Nations Statistical Commission

Annex 3 List of the main livelihoods given

Formal Activities:

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sale and recharge of domestic gas• Sale and recharge of LPG and accessories• Sale of mobile phones and accessories• Sheep seller• Small spices on a very small scale• Trade• Small business | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Embroidery• Learning to sew• Sweeping and cleaning activities in the city but it is very precarious• Barbershop man• Work at the place of care• Professional masonry• Workforce• A few small dock work | <p>but these days it's complicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastry maker• Photographer• Education• Traditional medicine |
|---|---|---|

Informal Activities:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Purchase and sale of miscellaneous items• Washing and sanitation in the city• Carrier• Agriculture• Laundromat• Phone seller• Roofman help• Laundromat• Saleswoman• Beverage depot porter• Clothes washer• Banana saleswoman• Butcher's shop• Masonry• Coal saleswoman• Driver• Quranic master• Condiment saleswoman• Dressing table | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trainer• Food vendor• Shopkeeper• Market gardening• Salad saleswoman• Trade• Mechanical• Fruit seller• Rope for sale• Cleaning• Cake saleswoman• Sewing• Building painting• Sale of ice water• Farmer• Small business• Sale of illegal timber• Docker• Small food business• Diaper sale | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Breeding• Planter• Sale of communication credit• Breeder• Spare part dealer (bike and motorcycle)• Sale of thrift stores• Maid• Welder• Galette sale• Cold and air conditioning• Tailor• Sale of meat• Gardener• Technical area• Sale of Stone |
|--|--|--|

Annex 4 List of 'other difficulties' given

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Osteoarthritis• Chronic stomach pain• Speaking well, I had a stroke• Do not talk• Temporal cavernoma• We have dumb deaf children• Complication during the cesarean that I still feel• Malaria• Chronic muscle aches Paralysis• Sometimes the children are sick, stomach aches• No freedom of expression and movement• Depression• Wound on the body• Difficulty accessing work• Asthmatic problem• Difficulty accessing health care• Problem with lower limbs• Financial and food difficulty• Heart or respiratory problem | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty expressing yourself (stuttering)• Joint problem• Discrimination• Liver problem• Pain in the chest (heart) and foot• Possession problem Toothache, swelling of the mouth• Tension problem• Back pain and hip level reducing mobility• Problem related to childbirth because I have had several miscarriages since our trip• Muscle pain• Urinary problem• Pain in the chest• Mental Health• General fatigue Stigma in work related to nationality• Goitre• Stigma and death threats against Liberians considered to be mercenaries• Infection• Stoma | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insecurity linked to nationality• Tension• I had breast surgery I still have pain• Trauma related to the seizure• I have a bullet in my left arm• Trauma related to the loss of all my belongings• I think about what's happening to us all the time and it traumatizes me• Ulcer• Vertigo• Fear of heights• Heart diseases• Victim of an accident• Chronic headaches |
|--|---|---|



UNHCR

L'Agence des Nations
Unies pour les réfugiés

SEKOU

i4life

UNHCR Website

<https://www.unhcr.org/>

UNHCR Regional Website West Africa

<https://reporting.unhcr.org/wca>

UNHCR's Community Awareness and Community Engagement Platform around Gender-based Violence (GBV)

<https://gbv.westafrica.exposed/>

UNHCR Digital Platform on Communication and Community Engagement (CWC)

<https://cwc.westafrica.exposed/>