

Onward Bound: Evaluating Cash and Voucher Assistance for Migrants on Sahel's Migration Trail

*Research and learnings from the Sahel
region*

ANNEX I. List of mapped stakeholders

Stakeholder	Type	Good practice identified	Assistance				Country presence		
			CVA	CVA to migrants	Migration	Protection	BFA	TCD	MRT
ACF - Action Contre la Faim	International NGO		x				x		
ACORD	Regional NGO								
ADES - Association pour le développement économique et social	International NGO					x		x	
ADRA - Adventist Development Relief Agency	International NGO		x					x	
AEDM Association Enfant et Développement en Mauritanie	National NGO				x				x
AJUEMOA - Action Jeunesse UEMOA	National NGO		x				x		
Alerte Migration	National NGO				x		x		
ALPD/Assistance pour les réfugiés	National NGO				x		x		
AMDH Association Mauritanienne des Droits de l'Homme	National NGO				x				x
Arsim World	National NGO				x		x		
Association Femmes Cheffes de Familles	National NGO				x				x
Belgium Red Cross	RCRC Movement		x	x	x		x		x
British Red Cross	RCRC Movement	Assistance to migrants through national RC, including CVA and route-based approach (AMIRA)		x	x		x	x	
CARE	International NGO					x		x	
CARITAS	International NGO				x				x
CB - Children Believe	International NGO		x				x		
CERMID - Centre d'étude et de recherche sur la migration et le développement	Regional NGO				x		x		
CIAUD-Canada / UNHCR	International NGO	Asile et mouvement mixtes Assistance and referrals to migrants, including through border monitoring	x	x	x		x		
CICR - Comité International de la Croix-Rouge	RCRC Movement					x	x	x	x
CRBF - Croix Rouge Burkinabè	RCRC Movement	Assistance et protection des migrants les plus vulnérables Programme, funded via EUTF	x	x	x	x	x		
Croissant rouge Mauritanien	RCRC Movement	Capacity-building on CVA	x		x				x
CRT - Croix Rouge Tchadienne	RCRC Movement		x			x		x	

CSA - Commissariat à la sécurité alimentaire	Governmental body		x						x
DPGSNFAH - Direction Provinciale du genre, de la solidarité nationale, de la famille et de l'action humanitaire	Governmental Body		x				x		
DRC - Danish Refugee Council	International NGO		x		x	x	x		
Emmaüs Solidarité	National NGO				x	x	x		
FAO	UN Agency							x	
French Red Cross	RCRC Movement		x	x	x			x	x
GIZ	International NGO							x	
Help Tchad	National NGO					x		x	
HI - Humanité et Inclusion	International NGO		x					x	
INTERSOS	International NGO		x		x		x	x	
IOM	UN Agency		x		x		x	x	x
IRC - International Rescue Committee	International NGO		x		x		x	x	
JRS - Jesuite Refugee Services	International NGO				x			x	
Le TOCSIN	National NGO				x		x		
LWF - Lutheran World Federation	International NGO		x					x	
MASEF (Ministère des affaires sociales, de l'enfance et de la famille)	Governmental body				x				x
NRC - Norwegian Refugee Council	International NGO		x			x	x		
OCADES - Caritas Burkina	National NGO		x			x	x		
OCHA	UN Agency		x				x	x	x
Organisation des migrants de Nouadhibou (OMN)	National NGO				x				x
Oxfam	International NGO		x					x	x
Plan International	International NGO		x				x		
PUI - Première Urgence Internationale	International NGO		x				x		
Save the Children	International NGO				x				x
UNHCR	UN Agency		x			x	x	x	x
UNICEF	UN Agency		x				x	x	x
World Food Programme	UN Agency		x				x	x	x

ANNEX II. Overview of Respondents (Qualitative)

Key Informants Interview – Overall

Code	Organisation or affiliation	Position	Category
KII_BF_1	CRBF (Croix Rouge du Burkina)	Migration Focal Point	Practitioner
KII_BF_2	CRS	Cash Working Group Co-Lead	Practitioner
KII_BF_3	CIAUD-Canada	Protection Officer	Practitioner
KII_CH_1	CRT (Croix Rouge du Tchad)	Migration Project Manager - Ati	Practitioner
KII_CH_2	Oxfam	Cash Working Group Co-Chair	Practitioner
KII_MAU_1	CRM (Croissant Rouge Mauritanien)	Cash Focal Point	Practitioner
KII_MAU_2	WFP	Cash Working Group Contact/ Programme Policy Officer Cash-Based Transfers	Practitioner
KII_WCA_1	British Red Cross	Regional Cash-Based Programming Delegate - West and Central Africa Region	Practitioner
KII_WCA_2	Calp network	Regional Representative - West and Central Africa	Expert
KII_WCA_3	FCDO	Humanitarian and Regional Adviser	Donor
KII_WCA_4	IOM	Regional Reintegration Officer	Practitioner

Semi-structured Interviews – Burkina Faso

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin
SSI1_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	31	Burkina Faso
SSI2_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	58	Mali
SSI3_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	37	Mali
SSI4_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	26	Niger
SSI5_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	M	77	Mali
SSI6_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	F	49	Burkina Faso
SSI7_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	F	54	Togo
SSI8_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	M	35	Chad

Focus Group Discussions – Burkina Faso

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin
FGD1_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	M	30	Burkina Faso
		M	31	Burkina Faso
		M	27	Senegal
		M	19	Côte d'Ivoire

		M	21	Burkina Faso
		M	50	Côte d'Ivoire
FGD2_Ouagadougou	Ouagadougou	F	42	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	33	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	33	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	54	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	40	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	33	Burkina Faso (IDP)
		F	36	Burkina Faso (IDP)
FGD3_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	34	Burkina Faso
		M	36	Burkina Faso
		M	37	Benin
		M	34	Burkina Faso
		M	35	Burkina Faso
		M	22	Niger
		M	28	Niger
FGD4_Bobo-Dioulasso	Bobo-Dioulasso	M	19	Mali
		M	20	Mali
		M	26	Burkina Faso
		M	24	Burkina Faso
		M	37	Mali
		M	28	Burkina Faso

Semi-structured Interviews - Chad

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin	Status
SSI1_Ati	Ati	F	20	Gabon	None
SSI2_Ati	Ati	M	27	Sudan	None
SSI3_Ati	Ati	M	26	CAR	None
SI4_Ati	Ati	F	34	Cameroon	None
SI5_Abeche	Abeche	F	25	Nigeria	None
SI6_Abeche	Abeche	M	26	Nigeria	None

SI7_Abeche	Abeche	M	27	Sudan	Refugee
SI8_Abeche	Abeche	F	23	Nigeria	None

Focus Group Discussions - Chad

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin	Status
FGD1_ABECHE	Abeche	F	30	Nigeria	Transit Migrant
		F	25	Nigeria	Transit Migrant
		F	40	Nigeria	local community
		F	30	Chad	local community
		F	20	Chad	local community
		F	26	Democratic Republic of Congo	Transit Migrant
FGD2_Abéché	Abeche	M	25	Sudan	Refugee
		M	27	Sudan	Refugee
		M	23	Sudan	Refugee
		M	22	Nigeria	Transit Migrant
		M	43	Nigeria	Transit Migrant
		M	39	Nigeria	Transit Migrant
FGD3_Ati	Ati	M	70	CAR	Returnee, host family
		M	65	Sudan	Host Family
		M	39	CAR	Transit Migrant
		M	22	Gabon	Transit Migrant
		M	32	Niger	Host Family
		M	20	Libya	Transit Migrant
FGD4_Ati	Ati	F	34	Cameroon	Transit Migrant
		F	31	Cameroon	Host Family
		F	34	Cameroon	Transit Migrant

	F	41	Sudan	Host Family
	F	50	CAR	Transit Migrant
	F	20	Gabon	Transit Migrant

Semi-structured Interviews - Mauritania

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin
SSI1	Nouakchott	M	41	Mali
SSI2	Nouakchott	M	30	Senegal
SSI3	Nouakchott	M	28	Nigeria
SSI4	Nouakchott	F	46	Cote d'Ivoire
SSI5	Nouadhibou	M	42	Togo
SSI6	Nouadhibou	F	39	Cote d'Ivoire
SSI7	Nouadhibou	M	48	Cote d'Ivoire
SSI8	Nouadhibou	F	36	Guinea / Sierra Leone

Focus Group Discussions - Mauritania

Code	Location	Gender	Age	Country of origin
FGD1	Nouakchott	F	20	Mali
		M	20	Mali
		M	27	Mali
		F	40	Cote d'Ivoire
		H	33	Guinea
FGD2	Nouadhibou	F	26	Burkina
		F	45	Sénégal
		F	36	Sierra Léone
		F	38	Mali
		F	46	Cameroun

		F	46	Sénégal
FGD3	Nouakchott	F	31	Mali
		M	34	Togo
		M	27	Mali
		F	46	Cdl
		M	29	Cdl
		F	34	Cameroon
FGD4	Nouadhibou	M	37	Mali
		M	38	Cameroon
		M	36	Mauritania
		M	32	Nigeria
		M	42	Togo
		M	32	Togo

ANNEX III. Profiles of the selected locations

Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso constituted the two research locations selected by the research team in Burkina Faso.

Ouagadougou is the largest city of the selection, with around 2,4 million inhabitants, and hosts transit migrants including refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). As the capital of the country, it is well connected and has a relatively booming economy which makes it an important commercial hub in the country. Two neighbourhoods, Dapoya and Patte d’Oie, were indicated as priorities to help identify transit migrants. Dapoya hosts more transit migrants, including long-term migrants, and migrants who settled in the city; while Patte d’Oie has more short-term migrants. Ouagadougou receives less aid through cash transfer than other regions, however the Burkinabé Red Cross delivers cash assistance in the city. Bobo-Dioulasso is the only non-capital large city of the selection (although smaller than N’Djamena and Ouagadougou, it houses more than 900,000 inhabitants). Its level of development relative to the country is similar to Nouadhibou, however the city’s size is very different, as well as the profile of migrants: Bobo-Dioulasso counts more internally displaced people, and Burkina Faso is situated earlier on the transit routes as compared to Mauritania.

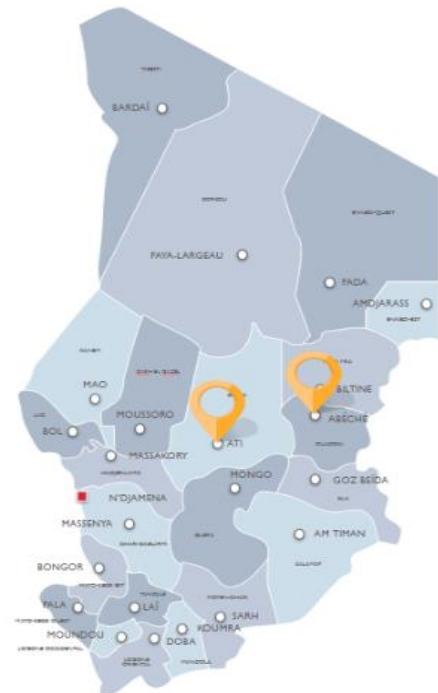


Chad

In Chad, the research team determined that Abeche and Ati were the most relevant locations for the study.

Ati is a medium-sized city with just under 200,000 inhabitants in the centre of the country, Ati is on the crossroads of migration routes and was developed through the settlement of transit migrants. It has a low level of development but daily markets and infrastructures are available. Interactions exist between migrants and the host community. Little assistance programmes have reached transit migrants in the location, including a project implemented by the Red Cross of Chad in 2022.

Abeche is the second economic centre of Chad, although its size remains similar to that of Ati with around 200,000 inhabitants. Abeche hosts transit migrants on their way to the Arabian Peninsula and offers medium to good infrastructures and connectivity. However, there are very little interactions between transit migrants and the host community, despite the presence of long-term migrants. Many humanitarian actors implement activities in Abeche, including members of the cash working group and food security cluster.



Mauritania

For Mauritania, it was determined that the cities of Nouadhibou and Nouakchott were the most relevant locations. With a population of around 150,000 inhabitants, Nouadhibou has grown with the settlements of transit migrants; it is a major transit point (to the Canary Islands) and migrants (short and long term) have interactions with the host community. However, it presents a higher level of development and infrastructures, as well as more political stability, than what Ati does. A project led by the British Red Cross and Mauritanian Red Crescent delivered cash assistance to transit migrants in 2022, but the cash working group in Mauritania is understood to be inactive. Nouakchott is the capital city of Mauritania with more than 1,3 million inhabitants. The migrant profiles in Nouakchott - short- and long-term transits as well as refugees - are similar to Nouadhibou, but in a much more urbanised context. Nouakchott is often a transit location for transit migrants who intend to continue towards Nouadhibou, and beyond. The city is more developed, well connected and presents a high level of infrastructures. Most humanitarian actors are present in Nouakchott, including the Red Crescent, and cash assistance to migrants is provided in the city - with the same limitations as mentioned for Nouadhibou.



ANNEX IV. Sample breakdown

1. By Gender

	OVERVIEW		AGE					WITH DISABILITY	
	Total	%	18-25	26-40	41-55	55-65	65+	Yes	No
M	290	72%	91	131	50	12	6	11	279
F	111	28%	30	45	31	4	1	4	107
Total	401	100%	121	176	81	16	7	15	386

	TYPE OF MIGRATION							FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
	Refugee	Asylum seeker	Returnee	IDP	Seasonal	Other	Prefers not to say	Yes	No	Prefers not to say
M	58	11	14	33	86	82	6	138	149	3
F	10	1	3	28	33	36	0	40	70	1
Total	68	12	17	61	119	118	6	178	219	4

2. By locations

	OVERVIEW		GENDER		AGE					WITH DISABILITY	
	Total	%	M	F	18-25	26-40	41-55	55-65	65+	Yes	No
Ouagadougou	77	19%	46	31	13	33	25	5	1	2	75
Bobo-Dioulasso	72	18%	50	22	29	24	10	7	2	2	70
Ati	50	12%	42	8	23	17	8	0	2	2	48
Abeche	53	13%	23	30	26	21	6	0	0	0	53
Nouadhibou	75	19%	59	16	6	40	25	3	1	5	70
Nouakchott	74	18%	70	4	24	41	7	1	1	4	70
Total	401	100%	290	111	121	176	81	16	7	15	386

	TYPE OF MIGRATION							FORCED DISPLACEMENT		
	Refugee	Asylum seeker	Returnee	IDP	Seasonal	Other	Prefers not to say	Yes	No	Prefers not to say
Ouagadougou	0	0	8	15	33	21	0	38	39	0
Bobo-Dioulasso	9	2	1	5	22	33	0	28	44	0
Ati	8	0	4	0	7	30	1	26	24	0
Abeche	10	0	1	7	26	9	0	0	53	0
Nouadhibou	10	1	3	33	3	20	5	45	26	4
Nouakchott	31	9	0	1	28	5	0	41	33	0
Total	68	12	17	61	119	118	6	178	219	4

ANNEX V. Typology of transit migrants who participated to the research

This annex presents the results of the typology approach - the profiles of migrants based on their experience, i.e. in relation to space, time, and interactions). It can be used to give depth to the results of the reports on the needs, preferences and most adapted modalities to assist transit migrants - from their own perspective. The profiles presented here result from the survey which targeted above 400 migrants in total, focus group discussions, and semi-structured interviews, all conducted in the 6 locations of the study. They informed both quantitative trends at regional and local levels, and qualitative focus on drivers and conditions of migration and transit. Considering the limited sample surveyed, this section does not aim to provide a representative picture of the profiles of migrants in transit in the Sahel area, but rather to report and put into analytical perspective the profiles and needs of the respondents, among whom a high number of transit migrants.

1. Respondents' profiles

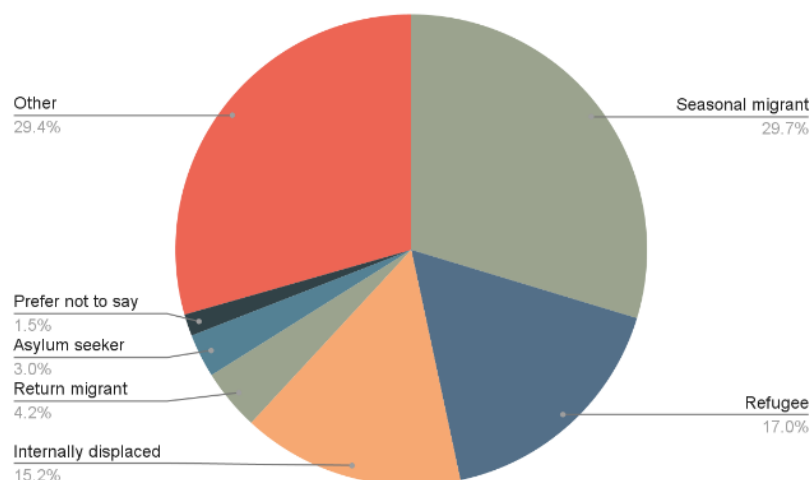
A majority of survey respondents are 18-40 years old men (72% of respondents are men, and 74% in this age category) **originating from West and Central Africa**. Although the collected data has been influenced by the availability of respondents, field observations as well as consultations with experts and practitioners tend to confirm this result. The survey also aligns with the available literature on the importance of regional travels.

There are differences between locations, especially when it comes to the presence of female transit migrants. Migrant groups in Ouagadougou and Abeche are more mixed than in Ati, Bobo-Dioulasso and Nouadhibou, while Nouakchott counts the smallest number of female transit migrants surveyed.

When looking at categorization, most respondents do not fall under the categories of refugee, returnee, IDP or asylum seeker. In fact, 59% identify themselves as seasonal migrants (30%) or other (29%) - see Chart 1. This aligns with a perception and general definition of transit migrants moving for periods of time and not necessarily with the intention to remain in an alternate location, opposed to migrants falling under the UNHCR mandates registered officially under protection. There are several factors, including:

- Geographic: refugees are mostly in-camp, and not always with access to free movement. Camps were not the target area, and IDPs might be more represented close to the location of origin;
- Semantic / cultural: using community leaders and NGOs, including the Red Cross, as intermediate to identify respondents, their perceptions and definition of transit migrants might have influenced the target groups;
- Intentional: as migrants who fall under the UNHCR mandate are registered and receive more regular assistance, funding dependent, than other non-registered and more invisible migrants, and although they were part of the target group, the field teams were asked not to focus mainly on them;
- Subjective: people can have subjective reasons not to categorise themselves, especially in the case of returnees or economic migrants and may not have the same understanding or use of definitions.

Chart 1. Repartition of respondents per status they identify to



Moreover, the number of refugees, IDPs and returnees is still higher than expected, which coincides with the expressed causes of migrants. Within this region, **results on migration drivers show a surprisingly high percentage of forced**

migration (44%) - which coincides with individual (qualitative) testimonies and the number of protracted crises in the region. Respondents express the lack of opportunity, search for a better life, and violence and conflict as the main reasons for their displacement - mentioned by respectively 50%, 45%, and 38% of respondents. The percentage of respondents displaced due to (recent) violence or persecution is much higher in Abeche (58%) and Nouakchott (47%).

Although less represented in the survey as a main driver, the qualitative data point to the **influence of family on migration drivers**; whether in the case of participants following family, pushed / retained by them, or escaping them. Finding that align perfectly with the relevant literature, which highlight the social pressure that individuals can face to emigrate.¹

2. The three dimensions of transit and their impact on migrants' experience

In order to better grasp the diversity of transit migrants' situations, the research team adopted a typological approach, which allowed for a deeper exploration of the profiles and needs of transit migrants along three main dimensions, time, space and social interactions, and how these influence the displacement experiences of migrants.

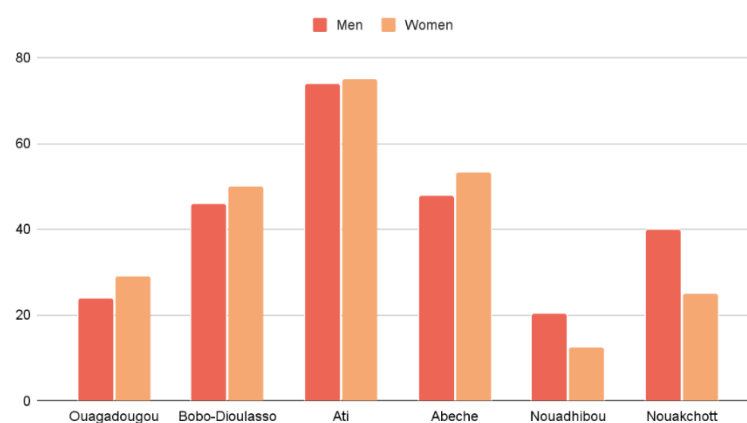
Through surveys, group discussions and interviews, we embarked on a journey to uncover the intricate stories that make up the lives of migrants in transit in the three research countries. By exploring their migration history, the conditions they encountered in the places they passed through, and their interactions with communities along the way, we gained a clearer understanding of their challenges and needs they face along their journey.

2.1 The time dimension of transit: migration history, duration and intentions

The time dimension of transit reflects past experience of migration; transit duration; and future intentions - all are temporal aspects which inform the profiles of migrants. Information on this dimension is one of the key findings of this typology, with a majority of the sample staying in one location of transit for over a year, contrary to common representation. Nuancing the representation of transit migrants as individuals staying for short periods in different locations along a journey to Europe, **results show both a longer duration of stay, and non-linear intentions**. Time is not only an experience in itself, it is also weighted by experiences - including traumatic experiences.

Quantitative data show that **displacement history and experience vary: while a majority of respondents (63%) were displaced once, the number of displacements goes as high as 20** (almost 7% were displaced at least 5 times). 51% were displaced in at least one other country. Semi-structured interviews allowed us to go deeper into the experience of past migration in itself, by providing anecdotal cases of what migration experience can be. In particular, these individual cases show **moving profiles, statuses and causes of displacement**. Examples include individuals who experiences economic migration and return before being forcibly displaced due to conflicts; migrants moving to a new location every two years in average, to improve their economic situation; and others in a perpetual state of waiting since their displacement - whether forced or not -, willing to move again or return when their security and financial situation allows it.²

Chart 2. Percentage of migrant who arrived in the transit location less than a year ago



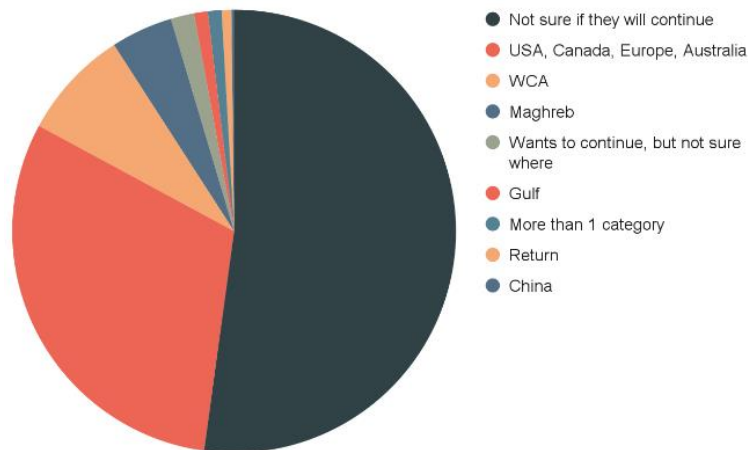
While the long duration of displacement (over one year for 64% of survey participants) is not surprising, **the duration of transit, also predominantly above one year, contradicts the representation of transit migrants**. Only 14% have been in their transit location for less than a month, and 26% between a month and a year. 60% of respondents have been in transit for more than a year, with major differences between locations and little differences between gender (see Chart 2). These results, especially collected in a high season of migration which implies a more important number of short-term transit migrants than in other seasons, challenge the perception of transit migrants as staying in a location for a few days or

¹ University of Birmingham, 2021. International Development interventions and migration choices. The final report of the Migchoice project.

² SSI_CH5_F_Abeche

weeks. **More importantly, it nuances the line between “on the move” and “not on the move” individuals**, which is also reflected in the literature - the CaLP network recently developed a scale of staged between mobility and immobility.³ In the case of transit migrants, it shows how complex the categorisation is, as it includes realities of people passing through a city for two days as well as temporarily settling for several years, whether this stay was intended or not. This has impacts in terms of needs and in terms of access to assistance targets. A differentiation would be needed within programmes to assist transit migrants blocked in a place (willingly or not) as well as those moving quickly.

Chart 3. Future destinations



The uncertainty of transit duration is reflected in migrants’ intentions. In Ouagadougou, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Nouakchott, above 75% do not know for how long they will stay - for an average of 59% in all six locations. It’s in Ati that respondents intend to stay the shortest, with 25% under one month - in other locations, only a negligible number of respondents intend to stay less than a month. It is interesting to note that, beyond knowing when they would move, **52% of respondents are not sure if they would continue their migration at all; 30% mention they would like to stay.**

This also challenges the representation of transit migrants as a flow on the way to Europe. While the survey shows that respondents who have a destination in mind mostly intend to go to Europe or America, the qualitative data and experiences of migration nuance these findings on migration routes, showing that migrations, including intentions, are mostly within West and Central Africa - with the exception of Mauritania. Qualitative data also shows that **intentions are moving, particularly influenced by unexpected events and opportunities, but also by the conditions of transit**; livelihoods are a major driver of their intention (whether staying, returning or going further). A majority of participants to semi-structured interviews express unclear intentions or the intention to continue; less intend to return or stay.

These results show that both time and trajectories are non-linear, and challenge representations and common definitions of transit migrants. The definition of “on the move” itself needs to be nuanced, as the majority of migrants settle for over a year, with no specific intention, for many, to continue their journey and settle in a specific “destination”. The duration of displacement not only informs the profile of migrants, it also translates in terms of needs and experience, including potential negative ones - such as exclusion and violence. Quantitative and qualitative data also show that intention is not a defined element, but varies with experience and time.

2.2 The spatial dimension of transit: living conditions in the transit location

According to the opinions collected from respondents, **the choice of place of transit seems to be influenced by several factors.**

When confronted with a list of possible reasons, respondents indicated better economic and employment opportunities as the main reason (51%), followed by the security situation (32%), which reflects the motivation to migrate. Other reasons include facilitating factors, such as proximity and access (16%), the presence of relatives or friends (15%) and recommendations (9%), ethnic ties (5%) and access to services (5%); and the migration journey, including the opportunity to save money 12% or to travel to another destination 6%.

“ I intend to return, because I didn’t find what I was looking for: a job that would allow me to cover my needs and send part of the money to my children and parents who stayed behind. ”

³ CaLP, 2022. Systemic Framework on Human Mobility and Vulnerability.

According to the literature⁴, these reasons are often complemented by reasons more closely related to the regulatory environment and the attitudes of the population in the transit location. For example, inflammatory and racist political narratives may lead to increased vulnerability of migrants, who are then more likely to face harassment, threats or abuse by police, army and racist groups.⁵

The living conditions in the location of transit vary, and don't always meet migrants' expectations. The survey measured these conditions in terms of housing situations; access to services and markets; access to livelihoods:

- **Housing conditions:** 68% of survey respondents rent a place, 17% are staying with a host family, 9% in a shelter; 6% have either no accommodation or another type, which includes sleeping in their shop, stations, car or truck, as well as on campus. The qualitative data, field observations and key informants bring locality-specific information. In Ati, most short-term transit migrants stay with host families from their community of origins; in Abeche, a transit neighbourhood was developed where most respondents live. In Nouakchott, there were major differences between migrants in the city centre - mostly migrants who fall under the UNHCR mandate - staying in shelters - and the outskirts of the city, where illegal migrants would rent a housing unit in poor neighbourhoods. In Burkina Faso, while there are shelters for transit migrants, the majority of respondents were living in independent units or with family.
- **Access to services and markets:** the average walking distance to the market varies from 21 minutes in Nouakchott to 45 minutes in Abeche; in Abeche, 15% of respondents have to walk more than one hour to access the closest market. The distance to the market can have an impact in terms of CVA modality preferences, as well as economic integration. Transit migrants' access to services varies significantly between locations - also impacting their potential needs. While a majority of respondents indicate having no restrictions on access to services in Bobo-Dioulasso and Ati, above 75% have restricted access to drinking water in Abeche, and to both drinking water and housing in Nouadhibou (see chart 5). This translates in terms of experience - in Abeche for instance, many participants to the qualitative data collection express disillusion, difficult living conditions, and desire to return.⁶
- **Livelihoods:** 15% of respondents to the survey mention having a restricted access to livelihoods. The importance of livelihoods is reflected upon by the SSIs and even more in the FGDs, as central in their intention and in the reasons behind participants' migration decisions in many cases. Among all survey respondents, 62% tried to find a job in the last 4 weeks; a smaller number attempted in Ouagadougou and Ati. Among those who did not, 12.2% already had a job.^{7,8}

“

I just want stability and better conditions [of life].
If I find this here, I will not continue traveling

”

⁴ Üstübeci A. et al, 2022. Comparative experiences of transit migration management. MIGNEX Background Paper. Oslo: Peace Research Institute Oslo.

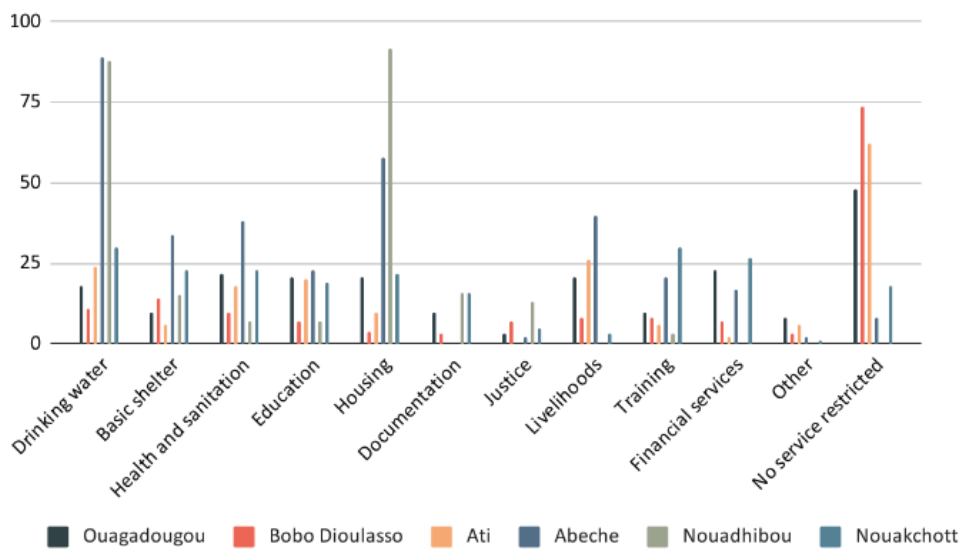
⁵ SSI_CH 5_F_Abeche

⁶ SSI_CH8_F_Abeche

⁷ SSI_BF8_M_Ouagadougou

⁸ SSI_CH4_M_Ati

Chart 4. Overview of the services to which respondents have the most difficulty in accessing⁹



2.3 The interaction dimension of transit: family and local communities

The qualitative data show that **interactions are a central element of transit; they impact living conditions, including access to livelihoods (through networks) and housing; they also impact intentions and are a significant driver** in both migration decision, and choice of transit location. Added to economic factors and conflict, family relations had an influence in SSI's participants' decision to move (to follow or look for family members; or on the contrary escape from them), return, or stay.

The main groups that participants evoke in terms of interaction are:

- Relatives who can be present or absent (from their journey or in the transit location)
- Diaspora communities in the location of transit
- Local host communities

62% of respondents have been travelling without relatives or friends since their departure; others travelled with friends or family members, and 22% are still with family - 8% were separated along the way. They are staying among various communities - 29 communities are represented as the main local community in the neighbourhood of transit, which include both host and foreign communities; 20% of respondents live in a mixed community. Transit migrants' living conditions vary in terms of interactions: 37% stay with close family, 31% with other migrants, 11% with other relatives and 9% with local people; 11% of respondents are staying alone. There are differences between countries and locations: for example, in Ati, more participants are staying with host families, while in Abeche with other migrants, indicating a greater tendency to transit through the city, as opposed to a more long-term stay.

“

At first, every migrant feels excluded. Progressively, he will start engaging in activities to make a living. That's when he will be socially included. That's what happened to me when I had just arrived here.

”

Both the quantitative and qualitative data indicate that **migrants have an overall good relationship with the local communities they transit in**. There are variations between locations and communities.

In Abeche, 91% of surveyed migrants find the local community 'welcoming' to 'very welcoming', however focus group discussions show that their interactions are mostly with local foreign communities, relations with the host community being less frequent but perceived as good. In Ati as well, the quantitative data also point to transit migrants having more relationships with and support from local foreign communities. Social inclusion is facilitated by community leaders and by the Red Cross, including exchanges with the host community. In terms of economic inclusion, there is a difference between both locations, especially in terms of access to the market, as all participants in Abeche indicate that prices are higher for migrants, which is not the case in Ati, leading FGD participants to not feel economically included - although several have access to livelihoods, which they see as facilitating their social inclusion rather than economic one as they struggle to meet their needs.¹⁰

⁹ Respondents were asked the question "Which services do you have a restricted access to?"

¹⁰ FGD_CH2_M_Abeche

In Burkina Faso, both quantitative and qualitative information shows that migrants are socially included - this is true in both Bobo-Dioulasso and Ouagadougou - focus group discussions indicate both shared social places, and welcoming behaviours from Burkinabès. In terms of economic inclusion, qualitative data show that access to employment is difficult, especially in Ouagadougou, and point to an overall difficult economic situation rather than specific to migrants. Forced displacement makes it harder for individuals and families coming from rural areas, whose livelihoods are based on lands and livestock, to find income-generating activities. However, there seems to be little differentiation between migrants and host communities in both prices and access to employment, also facilitated by the presence of multiple ethnic groups in the cities.¹¹

“

Local needs to understand that there can be natural calamities, earthquakes, war... And that they can also end up in the situation others are facing. We are brothers and sisters and there shouldn't be any discrimination, regardless of your origin

”

In Nouakchott, only 62% of respondents find the local community welcoming or very welcoming - the lowest rate of all six locations -, versus 89% in Nouadhibou. This trend is confirmed by semi-structured interviews, but nuanced by focus group discussions. Three out of the four SSI participants in Nouakchott have experienced, or are still experiencing, gender-based violence and discrimination including because of sexual orientation, leading to exclusion from and fear of the community. FGD participants express an overall good relationship with the host community, but a need for awareness-raising to improve the cohabitation and reduce discrimination. Both social and economic inclusion is better in Nouadhibou, which FGDs participants explain by the important diaspora community. It coincides with the literature's indication that numerous transit migrants finally settle in Nouadhibou.¹²

The relatively good relationship between migrants and host communities can be related to a regional sense of cohesion which the Economic union ECOWAS may contribute to. This capacity of integration is specific to the region, and not true for transit migrants originating from West and Central Africa transiting through North Africa.

¹¹ SSI_BF2_M_Bobo-Dioulasso

¹² FGD_MAU1_M_Nouakchott

ANNEX VI. Detailed overview of protection needs

In addition to transit migrants' basic needs and the challenges they face in accessing them, the research showed concerningly high levels of protection needs. These needs emerge from potentially traumatising events transit migrants experience during their migration and transit.

Migrants face a number of protection issues related to their displacement, including traumatic events and physical threats during migration. Data collected in this study show that 44% of participants faced forced displacement due to conflict, violence or persecution. Moreover, while only a third of survey respondents indicated having experienced mild to severe threats or harm during migration - a figure which is already high -, **the majority of participants to semi-structured interviews expressed at least one event which could imply traumas, either in the country of origin or along the way** which are reflected in table 2¹³.

“

"We migrants need protection above all, we are persecuted all day long. The UNHCR can't even help us, we want places to live, I've been rejected twice because I'm gay or because I'm a Christian

”

These traumatic events can have a significant impact on migrants' mental health and well-being, including their need for protection and psychological and social support.

Table 2. Traumatic events expressed by SSI participants (total number of participants: 24)

	Conflict / terrorist attack	Gender-based violence (women and LGBT+)	Other types of violence	Family separation
In the location of origin	SSI_BF2 SSI_BF3 SSI_BF6 SSI_BF8 SSI_CH3 SSI_CH7 SSI_MAU4	SSI_MAU2 SSI_MAU3 SSI_MAU4 SSI_MAU6	SSI_BF5	SSI_CH8 SSI_CH5
On the move	SSI_BF6	SSI_MAU2 SSI_MAU3 SSI_MAU4 SSI_MAU8	SSI_BF1 SSI_CH1	SSI_CH4 SSI_CH6 SSI_MAU4

Gender-based violence (GBV), mostly in the form of physical and sexual violence, but also domestic abuse and forced marriage, is also an important concern as it was reported by several women and the LGBTQ+ community during the qualitative data collection¹⁴. GBV can occur within the community in the location of origin or transit, at the household level as well as along the migration route. During the data collection, both NGOs working with migrants and migrants themselves have reported cases of sexual violence, highlighting the need for protection-oriented support.

With regard to health and protection, the two main concerns and needs that emerged from the research appear to be **the physical and sexual violence experienced by migrants while on the road and in transit locations and the lack of access to healthcare**, partly due to a lack of documentation and, in some cases, status recognition¹⁵.

“

At 18 I came out and told my family that I am gay. My family and neighbours almost killed me, I finally fled for my life. I escaped with serious injuries. [...] I finally left Nigeria for Senegal. [...] Since I'm in Mauritania I almost lost my life 4 times just because I'm gay. I can't even find a room to live in, nor a job because I'm gay.

”

Additionally, the data collected reveal a number of protection risks related to the provision of cash assistance to migrants in particular, including the risk of exploitation, discrimination and security threats - as well as a risk of stigmatisation linked to the receipt of cash assistance, which can put migrants at risk. Moreover, some of the transit migrants voiced fears of being stopped by police or other security forces, especially those who wished to migrate further.

¹³ SSI_MA3_M_Nouakchott

¹⁴ SSI_MA3_M_Nouakchott

¹⁵ SSI_MA3_M_Nouakchott

Box 3. Strengthening referrals mechanisms for transit migrants

During the fieldwork and in the analysis of the data collected in the field, several cases emerged of people in need of assistance, humanitarian and in terms of protection, for whom the field team asked if there was a referral process. From this, a notable lack of effective feedback and complaint mechanisms to address protection concerns of migrants in transit can be deduced.

Listening to the stories of interviewed migrants and the concerns of practitioners, coupled with the relevant literature, it can be inferred that several factors contribute to this gap. First, the vast and often remote nature of the region, together with limited infrastructure and resources, hampers the accessibility of services for migrants and makes it difficult to establish communication channels. Secondly, the complex and dynamic nature of migration routes in the Sahel increases the difficulties of creating a unified and coordinated mechanism across borders. Moreover, the unstable security situation and lack of trust in the authorities and concerns about legal repercussions may deter migrants from using existing mechanisms. In addition to these challenges, migrants in transit are often unaware of their rights and the mechanisms available to report protection problems. This lack of information further inhibits their ability to seek assistance or provide feedback.

Addressing these gaps in feedback and complaint mechanisms requires concerted efforts by governments, regional organisations and international stakeholders. Communication infrastructures and networks need to be strengthened, cross-border cooperation needs to be promoted, transit migrants need to be made aware of their rights and the support mechanisms available to them, and protection of those who come forward with complaints needs to be ensured.

Moreover, efforts should be made to implement reporting mechanisms for transit migrants that are gender-responsive and thus designed to address the unique protection concerns and vulnerabilities experienced by individuals of different genders during migration. Such mechanisms are important because they ensure that feedback and complaints mechanisms take into account gender-specific issues, provide specialised support services, and promote the active participation and representation of all genders, ultimately enhancing the effectiveness of protection measures and promoting gender equality.