

“I ask you to involve us, because without us, it will not succeed.”

What communities have taught us about effective and accountable humanitarian aid.

Bulletin | Chad | December 2025

Introduction

Chad is experiencing a severe and worsening humanitarian crisis. In 2025 alone, nearly 7 million people, some 40% of the population, needed assistance. The number of people requiring aid is expected to increase significantly in the coming years driven by growing food insecurity, climate-related shocks, health emergencies, conflict, population movements and protracted displacement and refugee crises.¹ As overall humanitarian funding declines, these factors are placing additional strain on effective response. As of October 2025, only 21% of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Chad was funded. As needs increase and funding shrinks, humanitarian organisations in Chad are looking for ways to deliver assistance more effectively and efficiently.

This report aims to lead to concrete improvements in the quality of humanitarian and early recovery programming based on how communities define quality and the conditions they identify for aid to respond meaningfully to their priorities and realities. It is intended for the entire humanitarian and development community, including national and international actors, technical and financial partners, and seeks to inform strategic thinking, operational programming and funding decisions based on feedback and the lived experiences of people affected by crisis.

Rather than offering yet another needs assessment, this report highlights cross-cutting factors that determine the impact and acceptability of responses in a resource-constrained context from the community perspective. According to communities, aid quality is determined by its ability to meet essential needs at the right time, its contribution to autonomy and resilience, the meaningful involvement of communities in the decisions that affect them, and clear, regular and transparent communication.

This report is intended as a decision-making tool to support choices that are more coherent, accountable and better aligned with the expectations of affected communities.

¹ UN OCHA. January 2025. “Chad: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan.”

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About the process

Since 2018, Ground Truth Solutions (GTS) has been listening to the perceptions of people affected by crises in Chad, including on how they experience humanitarian assistance and what they see as priorities for action. Its purpose is to bring community voices into humanitarian decision-making and to encourage more accountable and effective responses. Over time, the findings have consistently shown a gap between what people expect from aid and how it is performing in practice.

In 2025, GTS and Concern Worldwide in Chad developed a joint project to move beyond the analysis of perceptions towards supporting concrete action anchored in people's views and priorities. This partnership created a structured framework that not only listens to community views, but also enables them to be discussed, prioritised, and translated into practical solutions, taking into account the constraints faced by humanitarian actors. This approach was implemented in the provinces of Sila, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Lac.

One of the core components of this project was the organisation of community dialogues with refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), returnees and members of host communities in the eastern provinces (Sila, Ouaddaï and Wadi Fira) and in the Lac province. These dialogues aimed to better understand:

- Community perceptions of the quality of the response and how well it addresses their most urgent challenges.
- The issues and actions that people consider to be priorities for humanitarian actors.

These community dialogues were followed by feedback workshops bringing together representatives of the dialogue groups, Concern Worldwide's provincial teams and other humanitarian organisations operating in the same areas. These sessions enabled participants to discuss and prioritise the solutions proposed by the communities during the dialogues and to co-create realistic community action plans to improve the quality and local impact of humanitarian assistance.

This report summarises the reflections shared during the community dialogues and feedback workshops in each of the four provinces.

The community dialogues and feedback workshops were held between July and September 2025 and were organised by GTS and the Centre de Recherches en Anthropologie et Sciences Humaines (CRASH), a Chadian research institute that promotes research in support of national development.

Aid quality as defined by communities

During the community dialogues, participants were invited to reflect on the factors that determine aid quality. While perceptions naturally vary according to individual aspirations, vulnerabilities and challenges, four key factors emerged consistently across all discussions. According to the community members we spoke with, the quality of humanitarian aid is determined by its ability to:

1. Meet essential and immediate needs;
2. Promote autonomy and resilience;
3. Involve community members to ensure aid is adapted to their local context; and
4. Provide clear and transparent communication.

Overall, while the importance of humanitarian aid in saving lives and preserving livelihoods is widely recognised, many participants highlighted persistent gaps in the response's ability to meet these four criteria, especially in a context of protracted crises and limited resources. These reflections align closely with the data that GTS has been collecting in Chad for several years.

Criteria 1: Meet essential and immediate needs

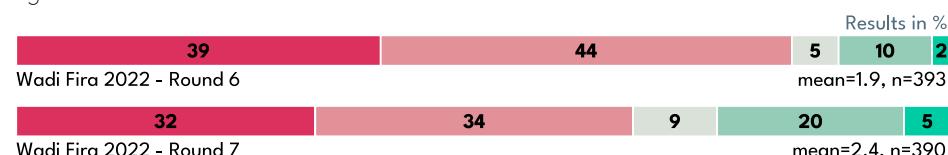
In a context where crises are worsening and funding is declining, it is more important than ever that humanitarian aid is relevant, effective and able to address the urgent needs of affected populations. However, during this year's dialogues, many people in the eastern (Sila, Wadi Fira and Ouaddaï) and Lac provinces reported that the support they receive often fails to meet their basic needs and does not always arrive when it is needed the most. These observations are consistent with quantitative data collected by GTS in the same provinces since 2018.²

Does the aid you receive cover your most important needs?

Figure 1: **Sila 2025**



Figure 2: **Wadi Fira**



² The detailed analyses of GTS's quantitative data collections in the provinces of Lac, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila since 2018 are available [here](#).

Figure 3: **Ouaddaï**

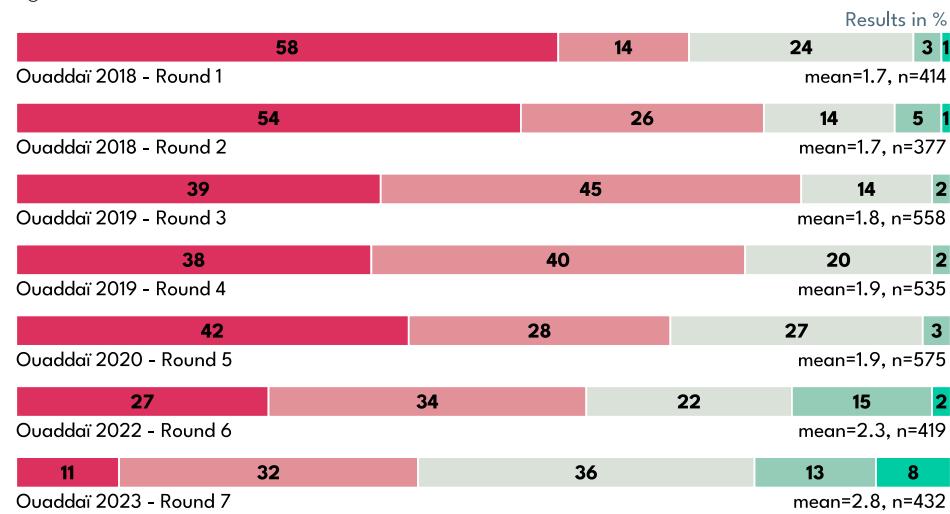
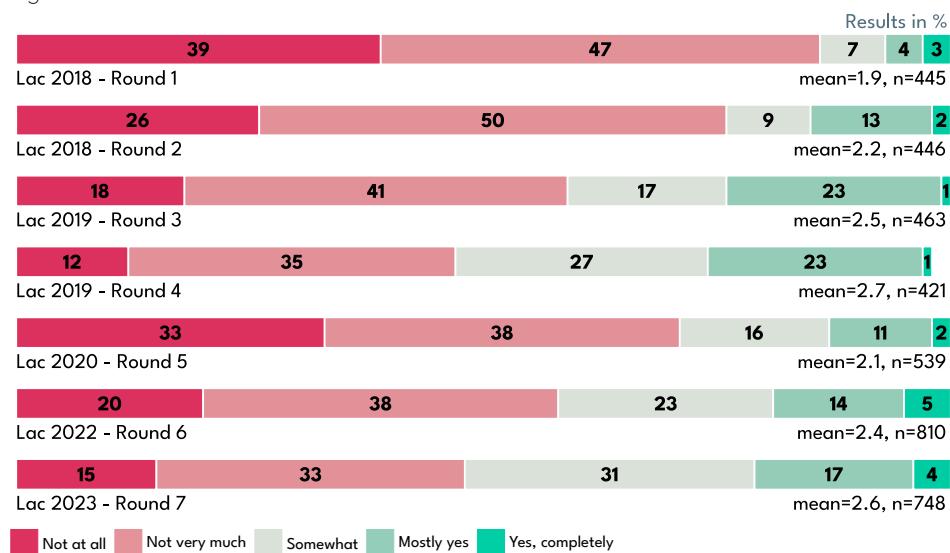


Figure 4: **Lac**



In the last six months, did you receive aid and services when you needed them the most?

Figure 5: **Sila 2025**

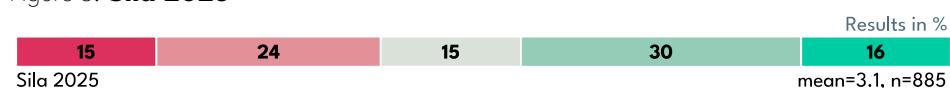


Figure 6: **Wadi Fira**

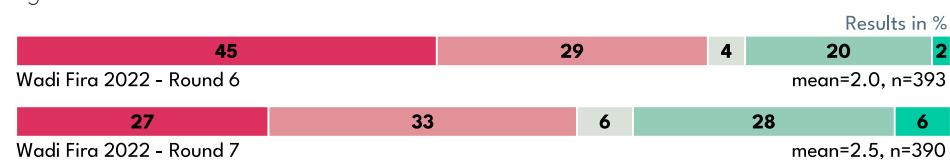


Figure 7: Ouaddaï

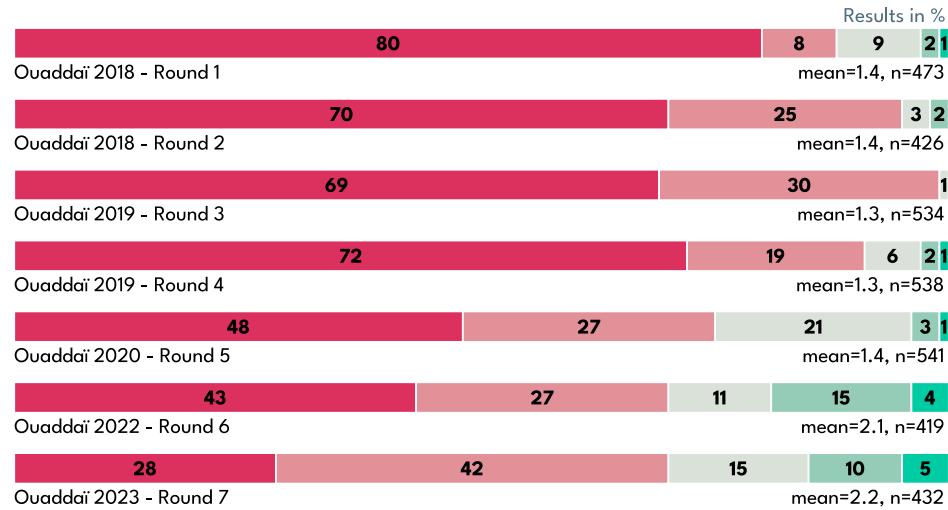
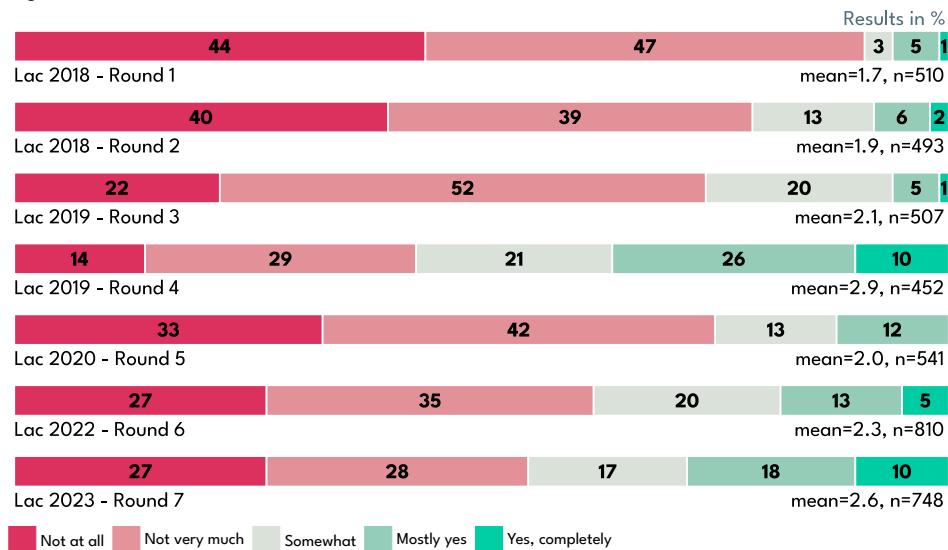


Figure 8: Lac



To ensure that humanitarian aid better meets people's essential and immediate needs, community members have proposed two main solutions:

1. Give people affected by crisis a choice by promoting cash-based assistance where possible

The protracted humanitarian crisis in Chad is linked to a variety of shocks and challenges, reflected in the diverse priorities expressed by community members. During the dialogues, some groups prioritised access to shelter, others food distributions, and others access to health services. Participants also recognised the constraints faced by humanitarian actors in providing aid and services that are fully aligned with all the priorities they expressed.

To address these challenges, participants emphasised the importance of letting them choose what would help them most by prioritising cash distributions where possible. Across all four provinces, cash is widely seen as the most appropriate way for people to meet their most urgent needs at the right time, while reducing their dependence on humanitarian aid over the long-term. Its flexibility allows them to better control their spending, make choices adapted to their changing needs, especially according to seasonal changes, and invest in economic activities and/or education – all of which contribute to their autonomy.

In Lac, community members and representatives of humanitarian organisations shared that cash interventions are often discouraged due to concerns about the presence of armed groups, aid diversion, unauthorised deductions,³ and the creation of tension

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The most urgent first step for us is regular cash payments, and everyone must be paid because with money you can do everything: get medical care, eat and enroll your children in school.

Man, refugee, Wadi Fira

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It's not just one NGO that helps us, there are several, so all our priorities can be met, but what we really believe in is the regularity of cash and also the availability of medical services.

Woman, refugee, Sila

³ CALP Network. March 2019. “Cash is no Riskier than other Forms of Aid. So Why do We Still Treat In-kind like the Safer Option?”

within communities. In contexts where the risks associated with cash interventions are considered too high, communities ask humanitarian organisations to prioritise interventions that can help people generate income, for example by providing fishing or agricultural equipment. In the East, support for income-generating activities is also seen as crucial to strengthen the impact of cash interventions.

2. Ensure that more people receive assistance, making available resources go further

In a context of overlapping, recurrent and unpredictable crises, the number of people in need of assistance continues to grow. Those who participated in the dialogues reported a growing sense of vulnerability in the face of repeated shocks. They recognise the limitations faced by humanitarian organisations in reaching all people in need. At the same time, they also believe that the available aid could benefit more people through better coordination and collaboration between humanitarian organisations working in the same areas.

During the dialogues, some participants reported observing overlaps in targeting and/or duplication, where some people receive similar assistance from several organisations, while others receive nothing. People living in the refugee camps in Wadi Fira mentioned seeing some families being allocated a shelter several times, while other families are forced to sleep outside, exposed to rain, disease and insecurity. The criteria for allocating shelter are perceived as unfair, as they prioritise large households without adequate solutions for single people or smaller households. In Ouaddaï, some people believe that certain ethnic groups are systematically excluded from distributions, creating mistrust and tension between communities that receive aid and those that don't.

“Many of us are homeless, and in order to be allocated a shelter, you need to have five or more people before you can find a roof over your head. So, with this system, it's a bit difficult because some people's parents died while fleeing the war in Sudan, and they find themselves here without family. In such a situation, how do they expect these people to cope? We want, if possible, for shelter to be allocated to everyone because that is the most urgent need for all of us right now.”

— Woman, Refugee, Wadi Fira

From the communities' perspective, humanitarian organisations must strengthen their joint efforts to avoid duplication in distribution lists and review their targeting criteria to ensure a fairer and more equitable distribution of aid. As a first step, they are asking humanitarian organisations to organise dialogues with communities living near each other to develop solutions that will increase the number of people who can benefit from humanitarian aid and to collectively determine priorities when resources are limited. This approach is considered essential to limit tensions between different community groups and improve transparency around the response. For example, refugees in Wadi Fira are proposing the construction of collective hangars or cohabitation between families to ensure that every refugee (especially single people and small households) has access to shelter, which is considered a fundamental need for dignity and security.

“Currently, the urgent problem for everyone is to first give us houses or places to sleep. We are aware that there are many of us refugees from 2025, so if it is not possible to find houses for all of us, we propose building a large hangar that can hold 50 people so that when it rains, we can shelter from the rain”

— Man, refugee, Wadi Fira

“

When it comes to humanitarian aid, many aid workers come here and then leave. They bring aid, but not everyone benefits from it. They only select certain ethnic groups.

Man, refugee, Ouaddaï

“

We know people who have been given tents two or three times in a row. The humanitarian organisations don't know who has already received a tent. They mix everyone up. That's why we say there's a lack of organisation. So when the tents are distributed, we see that there isn't enough shelter for the number of refugees who are supposed to receive them.

Woman, refugee, Wadi Fira

Criteria 2: Promote autonomy and resilience

The people we spoke with repeatedly emphasised that their communities do not want to depend on humanitarian aid. They expressed the need for sustainable solutions that promote their resilience and autonomy, and that enable them to take over and support themselves when humanitarian organisations leave their area. Short-term emergency responses continue to dominate across Chad, and many people feel that not enough is being done to help them build autonomy and resilience. This perception has also been a recurring theme in all GTS data collections since 2018.

Does the support you receive help you to become autonomous?

Figure 9: **Sila 2025**

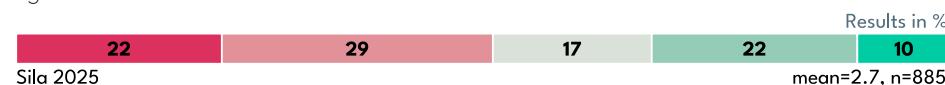


Figure 10: **Wadi Fira**



Figure 11: **Ouaddaï**

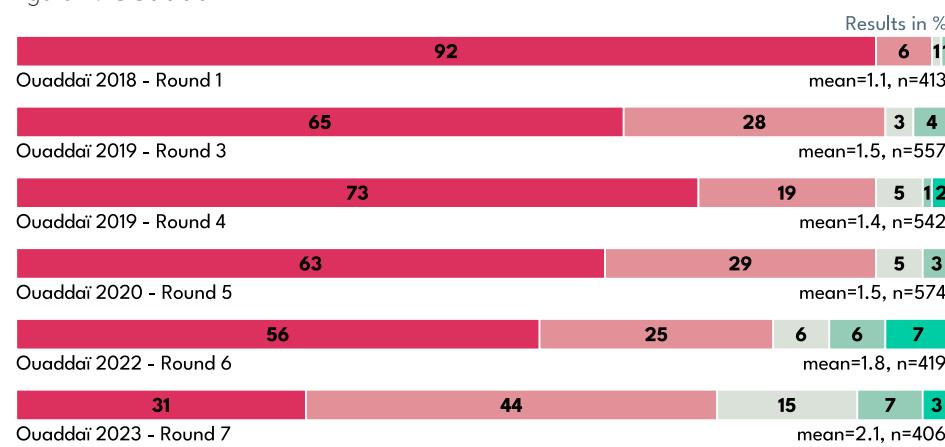
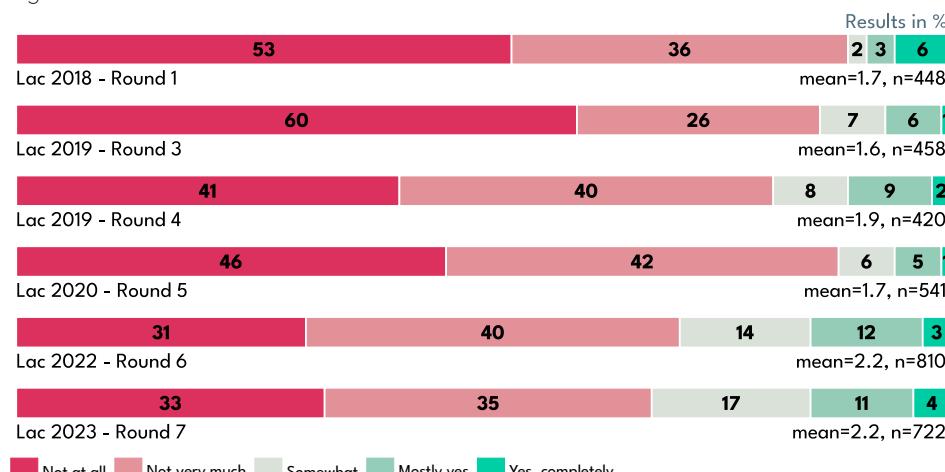


Figure 12: **Lac**



In Lac, many people mentioned their growing dependence on food distributions in recent years due to the presence of armed groups that threaten the population and restrict access to fields, as well as to worsening natural hazards such as irregular rainfall

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What we want is help to start income-generating activities such as trade, sewing, agriculture or livestock farming. [...] These three points are priorities that could help women take on responsibility and also become more independent, because women here suffer too much.

Woman, returnee, Lac

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I can say from my own experience that the cash problem is due to the influx of refugees around the world. The NGOs are overwhelmed by the numbers. We are still a new camp, so we are asking the NGOs to support us until we are self-sufficient because we have too many needs at the moment.

Man, refugee, Sila

and floods, leading to damaged crops. After food distributions in the province ended abruptly in 2023, community members felt abandoned, with no alternatives for feeding themselves or generating income.

According to respondents in the four provinces, the lack of adequate investment in community autonomy and resilience increases their long-term vulnerability and reinforces their dependence on increasingly insufficient humanitarian aid. Again, they stressed the importance of cash interventions and the need to increase the amounts allocated to each person to allow them to invest in the income-generating activities of their choice. Communities also highlighted the need for agricultural and fishing equipment, vocational training to help people diversify their livelihoods, as well as for humanitarian organisations to develop appropriate exit strategies that enable communities to take over when they leave. In Sila, for example, respondents suggested training and recruiting local teachers and medical staff, particularly in refugee camps where there are many Sudanese professionals, to ensure the long-term continuity of schools and health centres.

Education is also seen by many as essential for reducing dependence on humanitarian aid and enabling children and young people to eventually provide for themselves and their families. In the eastern provinces, participants in the dialogues highlighted that investments in education are urgently needed, not only to ensure a better future for children and young people, but also to protect them from negative coping strategies, such as joining armed groups or becoming bandits.

“In terms of education, our children lack classrooms in which to study, which leads to banditry because they go to the host community and provoke fights, making it difficult for us to live together.”

— Woman, Refugee, Sila

Natural hazards

During the community dialogues, participants highlighted the negative and growing impacts of natural hazards on their daily lives and livelihoods. In Sila and Wadi Fira, many people explained that increasingly severe rainy seasons and floods are frequently disrupting access to basic services, such as health centres, increasing risks for pregnant women and children. Houses often collapse, exposing people to waterborne diseases, malaria and protection risks, while damaging household assets, including food stocks. In all four provinces, many people reported how their fields and crops keep being destroyed either because there isn't enough water or because they flood, compromising their ability to feed their families.

Participants emphasised that to strengthen community resilience and autonomy, humanitarian and other organisations active in their provinces must not only adapt their support to the seasons, but also assist communities in implementing measures to protect themselves, anticipate and mitigate the impacts of natural hazards that are becoming more severe due to climate change. They propose building dams, drainage channels and embankments to prevent fields from flooding, as well as constructing shelters that are more resistant to rain and floods. They also request technical advice and training to protect and adapt their agricultural practices to a changing climate.

To ensure the continuity of essential services during the rainy season and when it floods, when some communities find themselves isolated, people propose the establishment of mobile health clinics, adjusting distribution schedules and pre-positioning aid.

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The cause is also linked to the climate. We have already sown millet, but with the scarcity of water and the delay in the rainy season, everything is going to waste.

Man, returnee, Lac

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Given climate change, it is very difficult for us to succeed in agriculture, which was the only activity practised by women.

Woman, host community member, Sila

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When you decide to come and support us, we will participate alongside you. We will channel or direct the aid so that it is more useful and reaches those most in need.

Woman, host community member, Lac

Criteria 3: Involve community members to ensure aid is adapted to the local context

Community members have their own strategies and solutions to the problems they face. They work together through groups, collective contributions, and regular meetings to discuss their challenges and identify collective solutions. In this context, many express their incomprehension at not being more involved in the decisions taken by humanitarian organisations on their behalf. People want to be more involved in decision-making about humanitarian aid because they have ideas, ongoing initiatives and local expertise to draw on. They believe that their involvement would enable the design of more appropriate and effective interventions, given that community realities are diverse and changing. An approach that is relevant in one community is not necessarily relevant in another. They also believe that this would help pool efforts, strengthen peaceful coexistence between host communities, refugees and IDPs, and increase the impact of interventions at the local level.

“For projects to succeed, partners need to come and talk to us directly to find out what our specific needs are. We have submitted reports detailing our difficulties. It would be good if humanitarian organisations could take our reports into account.”

— Man, Refugee, Ouaddai

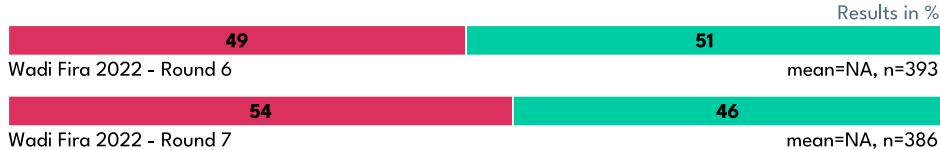
That being said, many people feel excluded from the decision-making processes of humanitarian organisations, especially because they do not always know who to turn to. In data collected by GTS since 2018, the percentage of people who don't know how to make suggestions or complaints to humanitarian organisations is consistently high, which echoes the perspectives shared this year during community dialogues.

Do you know how to share suggestions or concerns with humanitarian organisations?

Figure 13: **Sila 2025**



Figure 14: **Wadi Fira**



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We want them to take our grievances into account, to work with our statements and not those of the camp managers.

Man, refugee, Ouaddai

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There is no one we can complain to who can speak for us. When you don't have a boulama (influential person) to represent you here, no one helps you.

Man, refugee, Ouaddai

“

We want to be in direct contact with the partners because we find that sometimes [the intermediaries] sent to the field do not accurately convey our messages or grievances.

Man, refugee, Wadi Fira

Figure 15: Ouaddaï

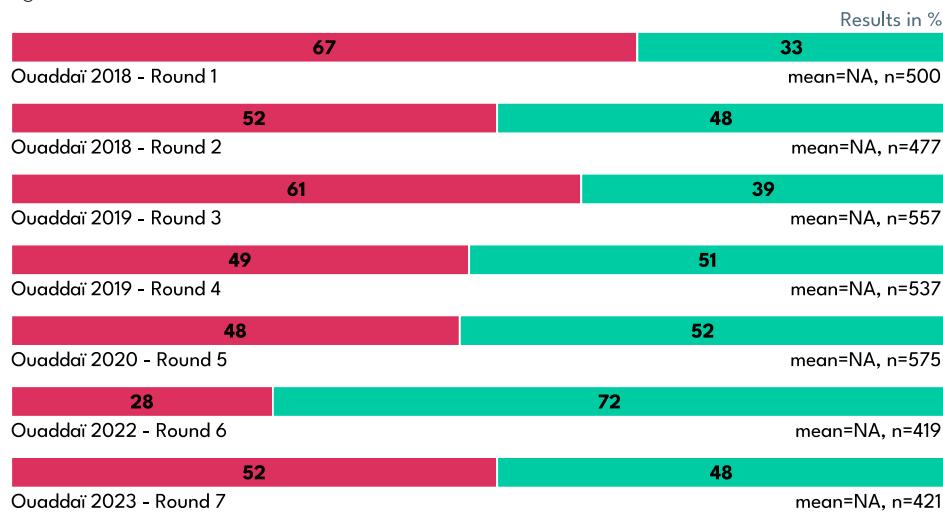
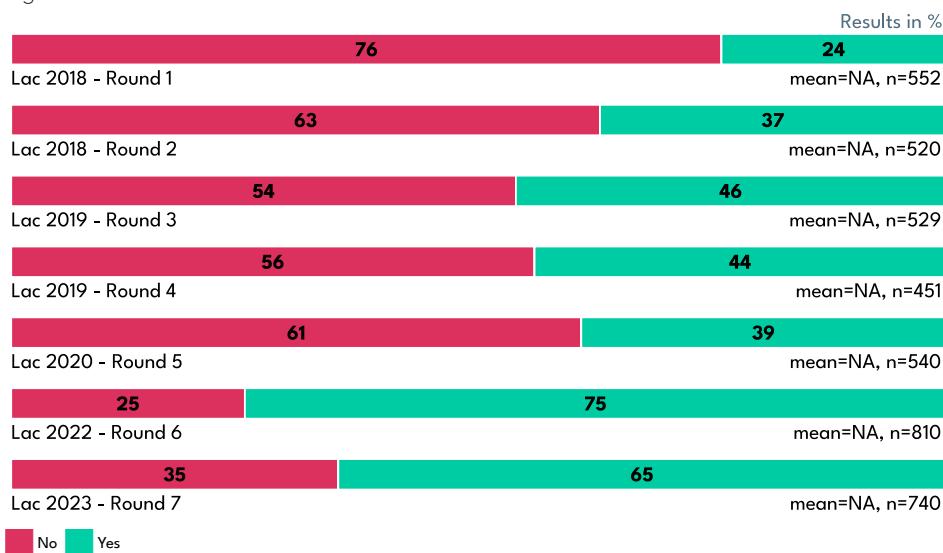


Figure 16: Lac



During all the community dialogues in the east and in Lac, participants emphasised that decisions regarding humanitarian aid, especially about targeting criteria and programme design and implementation, do not sufficiently involve community representatives. Some people acknowledge that humanitarian organisations often consult with administrative community leaders, but this is considered insufficient, particularly by those who do not feel adequately represented by these individuals.

In previous data collections conducted by GTS in Chad, some people indicated that they did not receive enough information from their community leaders about humanitarian aid, highlighting the importance of involving a diversity of community representatives who are able to represent the voices of different groups, including women and young people.

Do you think that community leaders have shared necessary information on humanitarian aid and services with you?

“

What we want is to further strengthen our relationship with [the host community]. To live as brothers and sisters, not as enemies. To do this, humanitarian workers need to help us build good relationships.

Man, refugee, Sila

Figure 17: Sila 2025



Figure 18: **Wadi Fira**

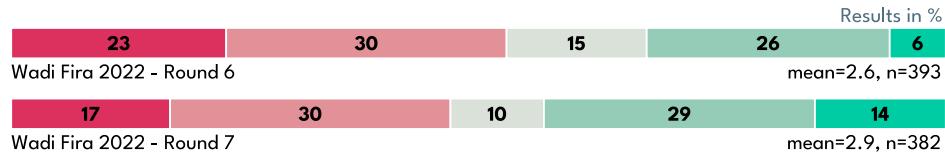


Figure 19: **Ouaddaï**

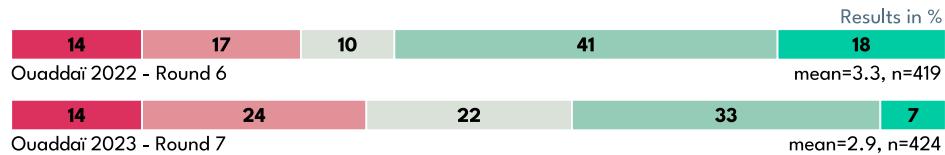
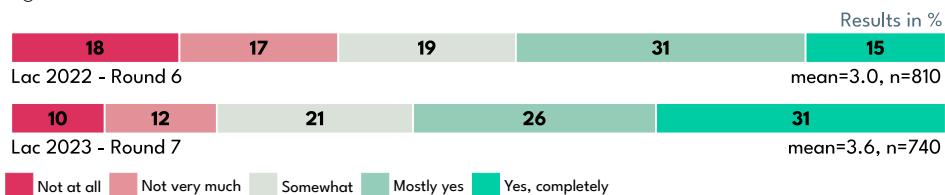


Figure 20: **Lac**



Many participants in the community dialogues called on humanitarian organisations to organise joint consultations with representatives of host communities, refugees (old and new) and IDPs, in order to design programmes that prioritise those with the greatest needs in a specific locality, rather than targeting specific groups. For example, many host community members in Wadi Fira and Sila feel that they do not receive sufficient assistance, particularly given the resources they already shared to support refugees from Sudan and IDPs prior to the arrival of the humanitarian response. This perception of unfairness in the provision of humanitarian aid and services between different groups fuels tensions between those who receive aid and those who don't, thereby increasing the risk of violence.

According to those interviewed in Sila and Wadi Fira, the establishment of joint local committees, bringing together representatives of host communities, refugees and IDPs, could contribute to more equitable distributions of humanitarian aid, while reducing rumours of favouritism that fuel tensions. Some also suggest introducing quotas for women and young people to ensure their effective participation. In the eastern provinces, and more specifically in Sila, those who participated in the dialogues emphasised that involving communities in programme implementation can ensure that support arrives when it's needed the most and allow existing human resources to be mobilised, such as teachers and health professionals from Sudan that are now living in refugee camps in the province. In Lac, participants stressed that involving communities in identifying needs and implementing programmes would help humanitarian organisations to better identify those with the most urgent needs as communities are aware of their own dynamics and vulnerabilities.

“

We would like to have permanent contact with NGOs. Perfect collaboration is needed to build mutual trust. Information must be shared in both directions: from the community to the NGOs and from the NGOs to the communities. For example, we need to be notified well in advance of the launch of an activity initiated by an NGO so that we can raise awareness among our members.

Man, returnee, Lac

“

We want to be informed if aid will be delayed, because after the previous distribution there has been complete silence from the NGOs.

Woman, refugee, Sila

Criteria 4: Provide clear and transparent communication

According to respondents in the eastern provinces and in Lac, humanitarian aid loses value when it is not accompanied by clear and transparent communication. Communities want to be able to plan according to the aid available and identify alternative solutions when they cannot access what they need. To do this, they need regular and accessible information about the launch of activities, targeting criteria, distribution schedules, possible changes, and the end of humanitarian interventions.

However, during the community dialogues, some people said they felt insufficiently informed about humanitarian interventions – a perception that comes up regularly in the data collected by GTS in the four provinces.

Do you feel informed about the aid and services you can receive?

Figure 21: **Sila 2025**



Figure 22: **Wadi Fira**

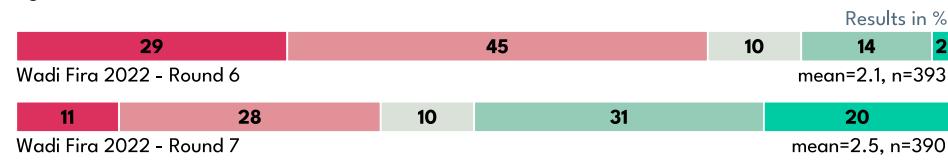


Figure 23: **Ouaddaï**

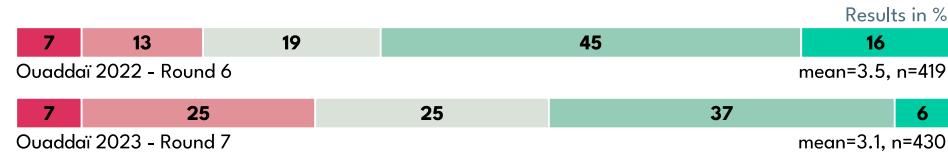
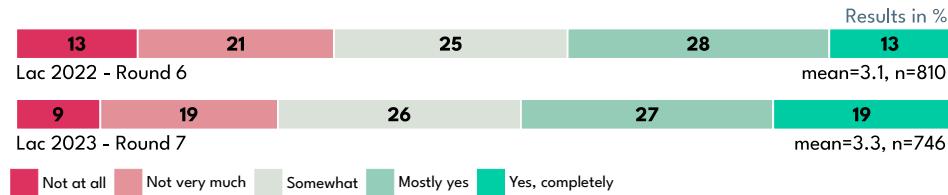


Figure 24: **Lac**



Do you know how aid providers decide who receives aid and who does not?

Figure 25: **Sila 2025**

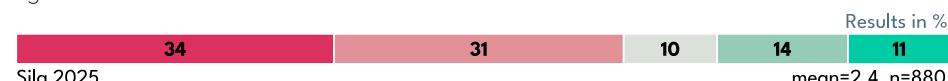


Figure 26: **Wadi Fira 2023 - Vague 7**



“

You live solely on aid from NGOs. And even they take up to three or four months to deliver aid. In the meantime, you have to go up into the mountains to collect firewood or go into debt with traders, and not all traders are willing to wait.

Man, returnee, Sila

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We hear that NGOs have been giving out cash all around us lately, but we haven't benefited from it for a while now. We don't know what is preventing this method from being taken into account.

Woman, host community member, Lac

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We are not always informed about a situation or upcoming events. We wake up one morning and find that people have come to distribute this or that. There are some shady things going on behind the scenes.

Man, refugee, Wadi Fira

Figure 27: **Ouaddaï**

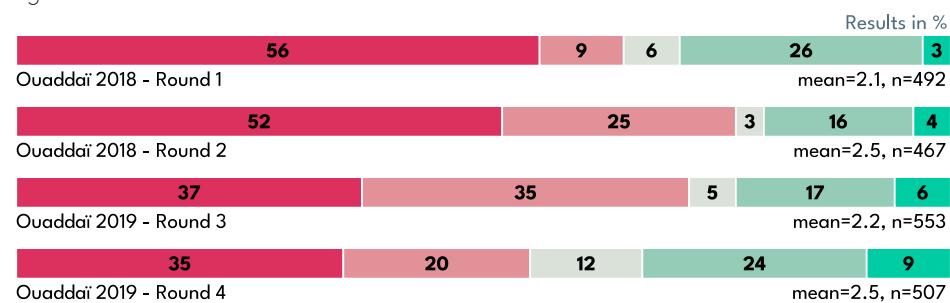
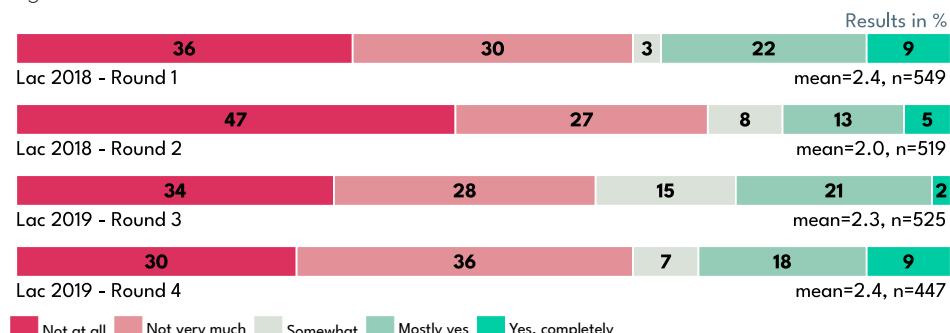


Figure 28: **Lac**



In Sila, some participants explained that the lack of information on distribution dates or delays increases vulnerability, as people go into debt with traders to bridge the gap between distributions and meet their urgent needs. In Lac and Wadi Fira, the lack of information from humanitarian organisations can also lead to feelings of frustration, abandonment and exclusion, especially when certain interventions stop in some communities but not in others, or when certain groups are prioritised without clear explanation.

In all four provinces, information exchanges between communities and humanitarian organisations are seen as essential for building trust. Participants stressed that the lack of feedback after data collections by some organisations makes people feel undervalued. Communities recognise that humanitarian organisations cannot always respond to all their priorities and suggestions, but they want to understand the efforts they make, as well as the constraints and obstacles they encounter. They believe that open and transparent exchanges on the modalities of humanitarian programmes and the efforts of organisations are necessary to reduce tensions within communities and limit perceptions of favouritism in distributions.

“Several NGOs have come here to talk to us. Others give us donations, and others just come to collect information and then disappear and never come back. We despise the latter. We want a relationship based on regular dialogue and information sharing.”

— Man, Refugee, Lac

Key messages by region

Advocacy messages from the eastern provinces

In Sila, Wadi Fira and Ouaddai, host communities, refugees and IDPs have different priorities, but their advocacy messages to humanitarian organisations are similar and include:

- **Improve the quality of humanitarian aid:** humanitarian aid must be better aligned with community priorities. It must also be sufficient, regular and timely.
- **Promote cash interventions where possible:** people want to be able to choose the assistance that best suits their changing needs.
- **Increase the number of people receiving aid, using existing resources better:** community members are aware of the limitations of humanitarian organisations in providing aid to everyone who needs it. However, they ask for more efforts to ensure a wider distribution of aid by minimising duplication between organisations working in the same areas and engaging in dialogue with different communities to find solutions and communicate their efforts to increase the number of aid recipients.
- **Reduce dependence on humanitarian aid:** humanitarian organisations must implement strategies to reduce people's dependence on humanitarian aid, for example through appropriate exit strategies that enable communities to take over, as well as more support for income-generating activities and education for children and young people.
- **Ensure ongoing dialogue between communities and humanitarian organisations:** Organisations must prioritise finding joint solutions with different community groups living in the same areas to strengthen social cohesion and reduce tensions between old and new refugees, IDPs and host communities. They should also share more information about their programmes, efforts and challenges to build trust and transparency.
- **Adapt aid to the seasons and worsening natural hazards:** Humanitarian organisations must ensure sufficient and appropriate aid during the rainy season, pre-position assistance before communities become inaccessible, and strengthen flood protection measures.

Some operational recommendations from communities:

Sila

- **Zabout:** prioritise access to education for children, build resilient classrooms from durable materials, recruit local teachers from host communities and refugee camps, and raise awareness among parents about the importance of enrolling children in school.
- **Daguessa:** prioritise cash distributions to enable each household to meet its needs, advocate for increases in the amounts, ensure regular distributions and raise awareness about the effective use of cash.

Wadi Fira

- **Camp d'Irdimi:** prioritise improving housing conditions, make shelters available to all by considering innovative approaches (hangars, modular houses and cohabitation between households), and increase the security of people and property.
- **Tandakouna:** prioritise access to drinking water, strengthen existing water structures, increase the number of water points, involve communities in the management of water points.

Ouaddaï

- **Camp d'Arkoum:** prioritise food security and community autonomy, work with authorities to allocate arable land to refugees, provide support for income-generating activities, and strengthen the capacities of agricultural groups and cooperatives.
- **Breidjing:** prioritise access to water, construct boreholes, provide training on how to treat water from the wadis, set up community management committees and distribute water storage equipment.

Advocacy messages in Lac province

- **Reduce dependence on humanitarian aid:** people are deeply affected by the decline in aid in the region and express frustration at the immediate departure of humanitarian organisations without alternatives or explanations. They are calling for training, awareness-raising and support for community groups to reduce their dependence on humanitarian aid and increase their autonomy.
- **Adapt aid to community priorities:** this is essential to increase aid quality, especially when it comes to addressing food needs and the timeliness of aid.
- **Promote cash interventions where possible:** people want to be able to choose the aid that best suits their changing needs.
- **Organise ongoing dialogue with humanitarian organisations and other groups living close to each other:** organisations must prioritise finding joint solutions with the various community groups living in the same areas to promote social cohesion and reduce tensions between old and new refugees, IDPs and host communities. They should also share more information about their programmes, efforts and challenges to build trust and transparency.

Some operational recommendations from communities:

- **Ngororom:** prioritise cash distributions, establish frameworks for dialogue between the community and humanitarian organisations to design the intervention, set up a community security committee, raise awareness about the rational use of cash.
- **Fourkoulom:** prioritise cash distributions, raise awareness about cash interventions, set up targeting and distribution committees with community members, and increase support for the development of income-generating activities.

Conclusion

This report highlights a key message consistently expressed by the communities consulted in the provinces of Sila, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Lac: the quality of humanitarian aid is not determined solely by the volumes distributed or the number of people reached, but by the way in which aid is designed, implemented, explained and adjusted over time. Through dialogue and feedback, community members have formulated a clear and consistent definition of what they consider to be 'high-quality' aid: aid that meets essential needs at the right time, supports autonomy rather than dependence, genuinely involves those affected in decisions, and is based on transparent and ongoing communication.

The findings presented in this report show that, despite the recognised importance of humanitarian aid in saving lives and preserving livelihoods, gaps remain between these expectations and the experiences of communities. These gaps translate into increased vulnerabilities, frustrations, loss of trust, and sometimes tensions between groups living in the same areas. In a context marked by multiple crises, scarce resources

and prolonged displacement, these dynamics pose a major risk to the effectiveness, acceptability and sustainability of responses.

At the same time, discussions also showed that communities do not see themselves solely as participants in aid programmes, but as full-fledged actors, offering realistic solutions tailored to their contexts. Whether it is a question of prioritising more flexible modalities, rethinking targeting criteria, anticipating the effects of natural hazards and climate change, strengthening cohesion between host communities and displaced populations, or improving the flow of information, the proposals put forward reflect a detailed understanding of local constraints and the trade-offs necessary when resources are limited.

This report therefore invites humanitarian and development actors, as well as technical and financial partners, to consider participation, transparency and accountability not as abstract principles, but as essential operational levers for improving aid quality. It highlights the importance of investing in regular, inclusive and structured spaces for dialogue that can inform programme decisions, explain the choices made and adjust interventions to changing needs and contexts. Closing the loop with communities – by returning to them to share results, report on decisions taken and discuss the limitations encountered – appears to be a key condition for strengthening trust and the impact of responses.

Ultimately, in a context where it will not be possible to meet all needs, this report reminds us that the way in which trade-offs are made is as important as the trade-offs themselves. Building more coherent, predictable and fair aid means thinking about it with communities, not simply for them. Only then can aid continue fulfil its role: responding to emergencies while supporting, as far as possible, the dignity, autonomy and social cohesion of those affected by crisis.

Lessons learned

- 1. Meaningful dialogue takes time and requires appropriate logistics.** Establishing an inclusive dialogue process requires significant preparation, resources and logistical organisation. It takes time to mobilise participants, organise travel, adapt tools to local contexts and create an environment conducive to open and respectful dialogue. This project has shown that the quality of dialogue depends directly on these conditions.
- 2. The communities attached great importance to the process.** The commitment of the participants was remarkable throughout the process. At the final feedback session, some travelled up to three days by road to attend, illustrating the importance they attach to these dialogue spaces. This investment demonstrates a genuine desire to participate, to be heard and to have their priorities recognised.
- 3. Dialogue without a concrete action plan risks becoming an empty exercise.** Dialogues only make sense if they lead to action. Participants clearly expressed that making recommendations without follow-up or concrete responses fuels frustration and mistrust. Without feedback mechanisms and a clear action plan, dialogues can be perceived as broken promises. The credibility of participatory processes therefore depends on the ability to translate discussions into real and visible change.
- 4. Communities expect visible efforts, even when responses take time.** The dialogues showed that people are aware of the constraints faced by humanitarian organisations and understand that their concerns cannot always be resolved immediately. However, they want to understand what is being done, the challenges faced and the limitations. More than instant responses, they demand transparency, communication and involvement in the search for solutions. Explaining obstacles, sharing progress and building responses together builds trust and gives meaning to the participation process.
- 5. Bringing people together and facilitating dialogue is essential for building sustainable and inclusive solutions.** Before seeking solutions, it is essential to create a space to talk, listen and confront realities. The dialogues enabled

participants, refugees, IDPs, host communities, women and young people to share their experiences, better understand each other's points of view and collectively identify problems before considering responses. These exchanges with and between communities form the first real foundation for participation and enable the co-construction of solutions that are fairer, more comprehensive and better adapted to everyone's realities.

Methodology

Limitations of quantitative data comparability

Although the same questions have been asked over the years, the quantitative results presented are not directly comparable over time or between provinces. Sampling approaches varied across survey waves, and geographic coverage was not uniform, as the localities surveyed within each province were not systematically the same. These factors limit the comparability of results across different survey waves.

The Feedback Studio – Purpose and scope

The Feedback Studio is a collaborative approach that aims to create a space for organisations to reflect on, review and refine their practices with communities, while placing people affected by crises at the heart of their work. In this process, stakeholders engage in a series of dialogues to share their perspectives, review and adapt response plans with communities, and build on identified good practices.

The Feedback Studio consists of a series of iterative workshops conducted both with humanitarian organisations and directly with communities. This approach promotes open dialogue rather than top-down solutions, encouraging stakeholders to exchange ideas, identify challenges and co-design solutions together.

Guiding principles

- **People-centred approach** | Ensure that communities and their priorities are at the heart of the process and influence outcomes.
- **Collaboration and co-creation** | Encourage an inclusive environment where communities and stakeholders come together, share ideas and develop solutions together.
- **Iterative and adaptive approach** | Rely on cycles of feedback sharing, reflection and adjustment to respond to changing circumstances and promote continuous improvement.
- **Transparency and accountability** | Build trust through transparent communication about the process, its implementation and its use.
- **Open dialogue** | Ensure equitable and ongoing participation from a wide range of stakeholders.
- **Closing the loop** | Return to communities after each stage of the process to review previous steps, validate results and move forward.

Process overview

For this methodology, we used the following activities at different stages of the project:

- Understanding the context and priorities of individuals through individual interviews.
- Dialogues with communities in the provinces of Lac, Ouaddaï, Sila and Wadi Fira.
- Action planning workshops in the four provinces with communities and Concern Worldwide provincial teams.

Sample

The sample was designed to represent the diversity of views of the different groups living in the target areas. Humanitarian interventions were implemented in all selected villages, which enabled us not only to feed into the action planning sessions, but also to pass on feedback from the communities directly to the humanitarian organisations active in these areas.

Specific features of the sample:

- Equal representation of women and men
- Representation of refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons and host communities
- All participants aged 18 or over
- All participants had received humanitarian aid in the last six months

Locations covered:

- Lac: Fourkoulom (village and IDP/returnee site) and Ngororom (IDP/returnee site)
- Ouaddaï: Breidjing (village) and Arkoum (refugee camp)
- Sila: Daguessa (village and returnee site) and Zabout (refugee camp)
- Wadi Fira: Irdimi (refugee camp) and Tandakouna (village)

Type of activities / Province	Lac	Ouaddaï	Sila	Wadi Fira	Total
Individual interviews	7	6	6	5	24
Community dialogues	5	5	6	6	22
Final restitution	1	1	1	1	4
Total	13	12	13	12	50