

# How access to development and social protection programming impacts on migration decision making

The case of Nigeria

February 2022



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2021 Seefar conducted one of the first mixed-methods studies focused on whether and how access to development initiatives, including social protection programmes, may influence migration decisions in Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> International development organisations and EU donor governments support the Nigerian government to fulfil a dual objective: to address irregular migration from Nigeria toward the Member States of the EU while also reducing poverty and achieving development goals and economic stability. Yet, there is only limited reliable evidence on which to base investment and policy decisions; little primary research has attempted to examine interactions between development initiatives, social protection and migration in Nigeria.

This study delivers policy-relevant and actionable research on the connections between migration drivers and the influences of development and social protection programmes. We collected qualitative and quantitative data from five migrant groups: potential migrants, transit migrants, asylum seekers, returnees and family members. Findings and resulting recommendations aim to support donors, development and aid organisations, governments and civil society actors to tailor policy and programming to the needs of different migrant groups, and promote efficient resource planning across the humanitarian and development agendas addressing both poverty and migration.

Two overarching research questions guided the study:

- 1. In what ways does access, or lack thereof, to development interventions including social protection affect migration decisions?**
- 2. What development interventions, including social protection programmes, would allow individuals considering irregular migration to stay and live their lives in their origin country with dignity?**

We analysed quantitative and qualitative data along three themes: (1) whether knowledge of programmes and trust in organisations and/or the government to deliver programmes has any influence on migration decision making; (2) whether and how access to and participation in programming meets the needs of potential migrants and addresses the underlying motivations and drivers to migrate; and (3) what constitutes effective programming from the perspective of different migrant groups.

## Key findings

**Our study has found that the effective delivery of development and social protection programming would reduce migration intentions or cut migration plans altogether.** All migrant groups consider both types of programming the key to reducing poverty and enabling the Nigerian population to lead dignified lives. Alongside basic needs, job creation, business development, and cash assistance were the top-rated programme types perceived to provide an effective alternative to migration.

**At the same time, all five migrant groups reported only minimal to moderate levels of awareness and knowledge of any social protection or development programmes offered by IOs/NGOs or the**

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<sup>1</sup> Mechanisms that allow access to the human right to social security, including initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups.

**Nigerian government.** This is despite significant investment in social protection and development programming over the last decade. Over half of all potential migrants reported no knowledge of development interventions or social protection programmes offered by the government including any programming that may be available in their local government areas (LGAs). Awareness is highest amongst those who likely do not fit the eligibility criteria for most social protection or vocational skills programmes (i.e. those with at least secondary or university-level education). Levels of awareness are especially low in the states known to be migration hubs, namely Edo and FCT (Abuja) States.

**Increased access to information on available government-led or IO/NGO programming would yield positive impacts on the current decisions of potential migrants.** 42% of potential migrants reported that they would reconsider their migration plans if they knew more about what specific programmes were available and for whom. 57% of transit migrants and 66% of returnees reported that having information would have affected their decisions to leave.

**Programmes are also commonly failing to reach those most likely to migrate irregularly. Very few respondents across the migrant groups reported receiving any formal social protection or social safety net, or having ever been enrolled in development programming offered by government or development agencies.** Only 5% of potential migrants interviewed had participated in government-led programming offered in the five years prior to the interview. A mere 4% had accessed programmes delivered by international or non-government organizations. For those who had benefited from either type of programming, the duration of programming delivered by either government or IOs/NGOs were on average less than six months, which was too short to effect adequate change in their personal lives and, thus, inadequate to effect change to their migration plans. The government-led social protection programming was on average longer in duration by 3–6 months.

**The study also found that the failure to provide social assistance to those who need it most (those without education, married with children but no income) may act as a driver to migrate for people who would not normally choose migration if they had options to stay home.** Re-emigration intentions of female returnees who did not receive assistance upon return, for instance, are based on inadequate access to programming and a struggle to survive or meet basic needs.

**Any influence government-led programming could have over migration decision making was found to be rooted in trust and good governance; trust that programming will lead to a better future with durable and long-lasting benefits, whether that be development initiatives or social protection.** Nine out of ten potential migrants we interviewed reported a deep distrust in the government to put policies into action and ensure the dignity and quality of life for all citizens. Many interviewees across all groups cited corruption, lack of accountability, mixed messages regarding eligibility criteria and lack of capacity of those in public office to deliver programming efficiently. This distrust in the government is driving the current intentions to migrate across migrants of all ages, levels of income and education, and gender. Trust levels in IOs and NGOs remained high despite even less access to their programming.

**Offering combined programming that allows an individual to access both social protection and development programmes at the same time reduces migration intentions to a remarkable degree across all groups.** 60% of potential migrants stated that they would change their migration plans and stay home if offered combined programming that balances or offers both social protection and development outcomes. In comparison, only 10% reported they would change their plans for enrolment in vocational training and 19% would stay home if offered cash assistance only.

**The study found that for any type of programming to be effective it must restore dignity and address the needs of individual migrants and their families where applicable.** Though needs can be broadly categorized by 'migrant group', the impact that a specific 'type' of development or social protection programme may have on the wellbeing of individuals within migrant groups differs according to circumstance and 'social location'. For example, even though they are both 'potential migrants', educated migrants with assets will have different needs and priorities than those who have little chance of asylum and for whom the journey is risky. Their needs would differ again from those vulnerable to

trafficking, who would require different types or combinations of programming. This study found, for instance, that former victims of trafficking and those considered at risk benefitted remarkably from 'empowerment' programming that had objectives linked to both protection and development outcomes. At the same time, female potential migrants considered at risk of trafficking who had benefited from cash assistance related to the COVID-19 palliative programmes are still planning to migrate.

**For many Nigerian potential migrants, lacking a perspective of hope for their future at home, irregular migration to the EU is seen as the only way forward.** The prospect of achieving a better quality of life which includes basic needs being met while also being able to generate income in many EU destinations specifically is a strong pull factor for potential migrants. The large majority of migrants interviewed who were outside of Nigeria expressed the view, nonetheless, that 'there's no place like home'. Many migrants on the move reported that they would not have migrated and/or would return home if offered some long-term benefit that they could trust to last and be consistent. The qualitative interviews provided some more depth to what potential migrants need to stay put, which included basic needs of health, food and shelter as well as good roads and stable electricity.

**Overall, the study found that potential migrants in Nigeria are not influenced to migrate solely by the hope of income and better jobs but also by the idea of migrating to a place where their basic human rights would be respected and their basic needs would be met.** The drive to find 'quality of life' elsewhere is rooted in not having it at home, as well as believing that no matter how long they wait, the government will not deliver on their promises. If needs were met and promises kept at home, many would stay put.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

*For international donors and development actors focused on the implementation of development initiatives including social protection.*

- 1. Ensure investment into programmes or policies targeting irregular migration includes components relating to, at a minimum, basic needs provision through development initiatives and/or social protection schemes.** The research established that interventions targeting irregular migration can be most effective if linked with programming that ensures that basic needs are met. This could include promoting combined programming, which would address basic needs at the same time as delivering development support to those most likely to migrate (i.e. income generation, livelihood development/job creation projects).
- 2. Support activities and initiatives that work to build confidence and establish trust of citizens in the government and public officials who are responsible for implementing programming.** This could include:
  - a** Supporting programmes that are delivered through development actors who have high levels of trust and are rooted in local communities. This means working in partnership with IOs/NGOs, grassroots organizations, civil society and respected local gatekeepers (including community heads) to develop or strengthen effective and sustainable projects. This could also include first a ‘trust mapping’ exercise to understand what organizations are the most trusted for what type of programming and then designing and implementing the project jointly with those who ranked at the top.
  - b** Promoting community-level trust-building activities with local governments that reach citizens most likely to migrate. This could include:
    - Promoting awareness and access to information about availability of social protection schemes and development programmes, with clear messaging around eligibility criteria.
    - Targeting existing awareness-raising activities more deliberately at people considering irregular migration, by including the key messages from existing migration-related communications campaigns.
    - Developing and implementing awareness-raising activities regarding available programmes and eligibility criteria in partnership with media houses that have a wide audience and reach (i.e. the Nigerian movie industry).
- 3. Support the development of migration-sensitive programming and/or invest in initiatives promoting social protection that can address the needs of those most likely to migrate (or re-migrate).** Focus on support for basic needs, income generation, livelihood development/job creation, as these are shown to have the biggest effect on migration decisions. This could also include:
  - a** Investing in a pilot project of ‘combined programming’ that involves a specific development intervention identified in this study (livelihood/vocational) and a protection scheme (cash-assistance/basic assistance) to test effectiveness on migration intentions. Implementing dedicated pilot projects will achieve two things. First, it will provide longitudinal data on how and why particular programmes can affect the migration decision making of potential migrants. Second, it will allow for documentation of good practices as well as the development of monitoring tools that can allow organizations to measure/evaluate impacts of needs-based initiatives in the

context of migration, or develop novel and innovative tools for needs-based migrant sensitive programming.

- b Focusing on proper return and reintegration programming for returnees that is delivered through combined programming.

**4. Support the capacity-building of key actors involved in the delivery of social protection and development initiatives to implement and monitor migration-sensitive programming.** Actions could include:

- Generally supporting the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation systems in place and used by offices and individuals involved in the development and/or implementation of programmes and initiatives. This would allow for better targeting and resource management, which in turn translates into greater transparency and accountability – the foundation for effective programming that mitigates migration.
- Specifically supporting the expansion of social protection coverage and improving targeting mechanisms to include potential migrants. This could include developing systems or tools that could allow for additional screening especially for those who are unlikely to be successful in an asylum application, and those who face increased risks on route.
- Supporting the government authorities at all levels, particularly at the LGA level, with systems or activities to increase effectiveness and uptake of programming. On one level, this means ensuring programmes are physically accessible by those who are eligible. On another level, it also means supporting a system that allows for a projection of numbers of those who are planning to migrate amongst those who are eligible for different types of programming within a particular region or LGA.
- Targeting those most likely to consider migrating irregularly with multiple interventions – possibly using a type of graduation approach. Programming that balances social protection (i.e. basic needs assistance) with traditional development approaches (such as vocational training or business start-up) can be implemented in a holistic graduated approach, tailored differently for different groups (e.g. those most vulnerable to human trafficking; those migrating due to unemployment; or returnees). Assessment of who would be best suited to which type of programming would allow development programming/social protection actors to take into account migration intentions as an outcome and migrants as a specific audience.

**5. Invest in programme evaluations and research to generate new knowledge and policy directions.** This could include commissioning two rapid evidence assessments on (1) existing good practices in programmes that make deliberate efforts to be inclusive to migrants and adapting/developing an approach; (2) existing good practices in programmes that have a positive effect on the lives and wellbeing of beneficiaries and assess what can be adapted to be inclusive and effective with different migrant groups.

# KEY TERMS

## Asylum seeker

An asylum-seeker is a person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim.<sup>2</sup> Although asylum seekers arrive in a country irregularly, the 1951 Refugee Convention states that they must be given access to fair and efficient asylum procedures and measures to ensure they live safely while their claims are processed. If an asylum application is accepted, a person is granted refugee status. Rejected asylum seekers must leave the country and may be expelled in the same way as any other irregular migrant.<sup>3</sup>

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## Country of destination:

The country that is a destination for migration flows (regular or irregular).<sup>4</sup>

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## Country of origin:

The country of nationality or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence.<sup>5</sup>

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## Country of transit

The country through which migration flows (regular or irregular) move; this means the country (or countries), different from the country of origin, which a migrant passes through in order to enter a country of destination.<sup>6</sup>

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## Development programming

Development is a multidimensional undertaking to achieve a higher quality of life for all people. Economic development, social development and environmental protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing components of sustainable development. Support can be provided to affected populations or beneficiaries by state and/or non-state actors that indirectly impacts household wellbeing through poverty reduction, vocational training, livelihood programming, and access to economic support (for example, microloans).<sup>7</sup>

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## Forced return

In the global context, forced return is a broader term which includes any action having the effect of returning the individual to a state, including expulsion, removal, extradition, rejection at the frontier, extra-territorial interception and physical return.<sup>8</sup>

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2 [Amnesty International \(2022\). Refugees, Asylum-Seekers and Migrants.](#)

3 [Ibid.](#)

4 [European Commission \(2022\).](#)

5 [European Commission \(2022\).](#)

6 [European Commission, \(2022\).](#)

7 [United Nations Library \(key terms\).](#)

8 [European Commission \(2022\).](#)

### **Irregular migration**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines it as “movement that takes place outside the regulatory norms of the sending, transit and receiving country”. This means that irregular migrants can be those who enter a country without legal papers or with false documents, those who overstay legal and valid visas or those who undertake employment or any other activity that is not allowed as per their visa norms.<sup>9</sup>

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### **Migrant**

An umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons.<sup>10</sup>

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### **Potential migrant**

A person who has not gone anywhere yet but is planning to soon. Seefar terms anyone who plans to travel within 12 months as a potential migrant.<sup>11</sup>

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### **Primary irregular movements**

Irregular journeys taken for the first time, specifically the entry into the territory of another country, without the prior consent of the national authorities or without an entry visa, or with no or insufficient documentation normally required for travel purposes, or with false or fraudulent documentation.<sup>12</sup>

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### **Quality of life**

the standard of health, comfort, and happiness experienced by an individual or group. Quality of life is defined by the World Health Organization as 'individuals' perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live, and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.

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### **Refugee**

a person who has fled his or her country due to fear of persecution because of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions. In some countries, they may be registered with UNHCR or they may be recognised by the immigration authority of the country where they are located. A person must cross an international border to be recognised as a refugee. In the African Union, countries may recognise those who flee conflict or generalised violence as refugees. In the European Union, a strict definition of refugee is applied and refers to those who are personally at risk of persecution on one of the listed grounds.<sup>13</sup>

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### **Returnee (return)**

The movement of a person going from a host country back to a country of origin, country of nationality or habitual residence usually after spending a significant period of time in the host country. This movement may be voluntary or forced, assisted or spontaneous.<sup>14</sup>

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9 [IOM. World Migration report \(2018\).](#)

10 [IOM \(2022\).](#)

11 [Lovo, S. \(2014\). Potential migration and subjective well-being in Europe.](#)

12 [IOM, Key Migration Terms.](#)

13 [Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees \(1951\).](#)

14 [European Commission, Glossary of Terms.](#)

### **Secondary movements**

The movement of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, who for different reasons move from the country in which they first arrived to seek protection or permanent resettlement elsewhere.<sup>15</sup>

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### **Social protection**

Mechanisms that allow access to the human right to social security, including initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks and enhance the social status and rights of the marginalised; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups.<sup>16</sup>

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### **Subsidiary protection / humanitarian protection**

Is a form of asylum or international protection for persons seeking asylum who do not qualify as refugees. In the European Union, a person eligible for subsidiary protection status means they are from a country outside of Europe and would face a real risk of suffering serious harm if s/he returned to their country of origin. This can include people who flee war or conflict.<sup>17</sup>

The protection given to a third-country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to their country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person to their country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm.<sup>18</sup>

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### **Transit migrant or migrants in transit**

Those migrants who have left their home and/or country of origin and are in a place for temporary periods, on the way to their main country of destination, i.e. they are in an 'ongoing' state of migration. Usually, migrants in transit face a lot of security and safety issues as well as threats to their human rights, while they undertake their migration journey.<sup>19</sup>

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### **Voluntary return**

The assisted or independent return to the country of origin, transit or another third country based on the free will of the returnee.<sup>20</sup>

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15 [European Commission, Briefing \(2017\).](#)

16 [Schüring, E. and V. Kronenberg \(2017\). Social Protection as an Alternative to Migration?](#)

17 [European Commission, Glossary of Terms.](#)

18 [European Commission \(2022\).](#)

19 [IOM, Key Migration Terms.](#)

20 [Ibid.](#)

# INTRODUCTION

## Background and Study Objectives

Nigeria is considered the giant of Africa, with the largest economy on the continent. Yet, severe poverty and chronic unemployment have pushed millions of Nigerians to leave their country through irregular pathways and migrate north.<sup>21</sup> Nigerians consistently remain one of the main nationalities applying for asylum in the EU, with the main receiving countries being France, Germany and Italy.<sup>22</sup>

Nigeria's National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) is deemed as an umbrella policy framework that incorporates related social agenda paradigms intended to reduce poverty and provide a life of dignity for all citizens with the aim of addressing poverty in the country and improving the quality of life of Nigerians. Programmes cut across four pillars: social assistance, social care, social insurance and labour market interventions.

Development programming refers to support provided by state and by non-state actors that indirectly impacts household well-being through poverty reduction but includes vocational training, livelihood programming, and access to economic support such as micro-loans for business start-up.

For nearly a decade, various international development agencies and EU donor governments have supported the Nigerian government to fulfil a dual objective: address irregular migration from Nigeria toward the Member States of the EU while also reducing poverty and achieving development goals and economic stability. Yet, the actors involved only have limited reliable evidence on which to make effective investment and policy decisions and programme planning. Most evidence is based on the question of how or whether large scale development or substantial injections of development aid and/or increases in GDP correlate with migration flows. Few studies, if any, have linked migration decision making with the concrete outputs of development or governance aid such as access to development initiatives and provision of social protection on a micro scale.<sup>23</sup>

Against this backdrop, Seefar conducted one of the first large-scale mixed-methods studies into if and how a person's access to (or inability to access) development initiatives including social protection programming can shape their migration decision making. Contrary to what one may expect, the sparse evidence that exists generally has shown that

irregular migration can in fact be driven by an increase in development initiatives aiming to impact household wellbeing through poverty reduction, vocational training, livelihood programming, and access to economic support. Addressing any negative push factors such as youth unemployment, lack of economic prospects, insecurity or lack of educational opportunities through development aid can also "promote, rather than impede out-migration by increasing household income".<sup>24</sup> At the same time, research into social protection – state-led initiatives and mechanisms that allow access to the human right to social security – has failed to offer insights into how these mechanisms might contribute to tackling irregular migration. There is some likelihood that these sets of policies and programmes to reduce poverty and provide a safety net for the poorest and most marginalised people and communities can also increase the number of people choosing to migrate.<sup>25</sup>

21 See [The Conversation \(2021\)](#).

22 [EASO, \(2020\)](#).

23 The Nigerian government recently launched a National Development Plan 2021–2025, for instance, which aims to address the chronic poverty characterizing the country through social protection and development initiatives. Outcomes include an additional 21 million full-time jobs by 2025, a strengthened system for good governance, increased school rates for children and universal healthcare coverage upped by 25%, and access to safe drinking water for 90% of the population.

24 [De Haas et al., \(2019\). International Migration: Trends, Determinants, and Policy Effects.](#)

25 See Desk Review, for more details.

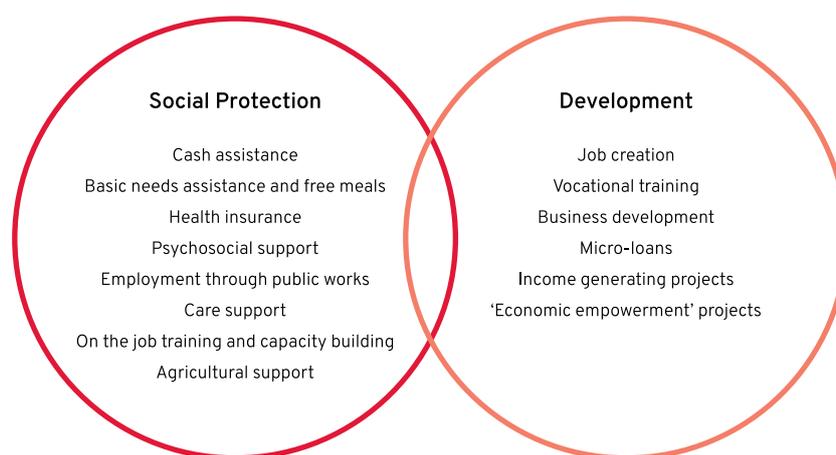
In light of the gaps in evidence, two overarching research questions guided this study:

1. In what ways does a lack of access to development interventions including social protection affect migration decisions?
2. What development interventions, including social protection programmes, would allow individuals considering irregular migration to stay and live their lives in their origin country with dignity?

The objective was to produce policy-relevant and actionable research on the gaps between the drivers for migration and what development and social protection programmes can actually influence. Data was gathered to support donors, development and aid organisations, governments and civil society actors to tailor funding, programming and policy to the needs of different migrant groups, and promote efficient resource planning across the humanitarian and development agendas.

## Definitions and Scope of Study

Figure 1: Division of Social Protection and Development



Most social protection programmes can also be considered 'development' as they may indirectly help boost the economy, reduce vulnerability and poverty and may be critical in a country achieving the sustainable development goals.<sup>26</sup> Various United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also deliver social safety nets and social protection programmes. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are actively involved in supporting the Nigerian government in implementing social protection as well as development programmes across various sectors from food security to rural agriculture.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, the objective of many of the development policies and interventions, such as Vision 2030, is poverty reduction.<sup>28</sup> To this end, social protection and development can overlay and build on each other in this context.

**Despite the overlap of development and social protection programming, however, this study clearly distinguishes between the two in order to produce effective and efficient recommendations for specific programming types.** The categories of programming we looked at included cash assistance, basic needs assistance, vocational training and economic empowerment such as business support. These were selected after an online baseline survey conducted with potential Nigerian migrants indicated they are the top four programmes Nigerians felt are most closely linked to migration decision

26 ILO, [World Social Protection Report, 2017](#).

27 See Desk Review.

28 For context specificity, see [Nigeria: Integration of the SDGs into National Development Planning, June 2020](#).

making. While business support and vocational training are clearly development oriented, basic needs assistance falls under social assistance as a social protection intervention. Cash transfers straddle both types of programming; cash assistance is a means for development, meaning it can be used both for business start-up, for instance, as well as for basic needs. In this study preference for cash assistance was often indicated compared to in-kind support and is referred to as a social protection intervention or modality for social assistance. Some other interventions and subcategories discussed by respondents are included in the Findings sections.

**Figure 2**  
2021 social protection policy measures in Nigeria

Social assistance	Social care	Social insurance	Labour market intervention
Free meals, health care and removal of user fees for selected basic social services to the poorest and most vulnerable groups including people living with disabilities, children under five, the elderly and pregnant and lactating women.	Support and home care for families in distress and for people in vulnerable situations; health services (including mental and psychosocial) to survivors of sexual violence and child labour; free capacity-building programmes for care workers.	Social health insurance schemes, pensions to citizens aged 60 and above, and insurance for crops and livestock which can be activated during economic shocks to the poorest and most vulnerable.	Job training and adapting job seeker's skills. Includes skills training and development, access to land for smallholder farmers, access to financial services for small enterprises and cooperatives and providing unemployment subsidies.

When respondents refer to ‘social protection’ they are referring to a host of different interventions, as per Graphic A.<sup>29</sup> When they specifically note ‘social assistance’ in their interviews or responses, they are referring to the programmes that fall under the social assistance policy measure for social protection.<sup>30</sup>

When the terms ‘basic needs’ and ‘quality of life’ are used they hold distinct meanings. Basic needs encompass those amenities that uphold dignity and safety: food, shelter, appropriate and adequate clothing. Basic needs also include that to which people have inherent rights: education, clean water, and health services. These were explained to respondents before and during the survey and interviews.

When using the term ‘quality of life’ in interviews, researchers pre-empted and defined what we mean for the participants before they answered. We applied the broad definition from the World Health Organisation (WHO)<sup>31</sup> and structured the meaning to refer to: better education, income, healthcare and access to basic amenities such as constant electricity and water and others that are consistent with their basic human rights, and are congruent to their level of qualifications in the case of education or employment.

## Analytical Framework

To explore the research questions and analyse the data in an effective way we adapted what is known as a socio-ecological framework. Our adapted approach centres an individual migrant within a ‘life world’ of pressures and opportunities. Expanding out from the individual migrant are areas representing environments that yield protective factors and/or challenges. The approach explores connections between the individual and the family environments, for instance, with (1) institutional practices and

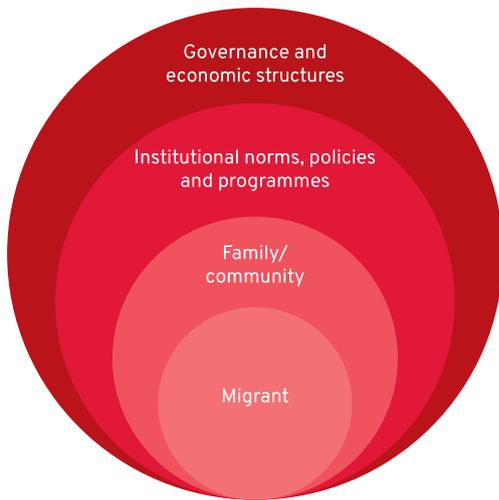
29 Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning. (2021). Revised Draft National Social Protection Policy.

30 The respondents were presented with the terms and their definition as laid out in the Introduction section of this report. When they refer to policy measures during interviews we retroactively categorize these measures/responses according to the taxonomy in Figure 2.

31 An individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns.

provisions that influence decisions and agency at the individual level, as well as (2) the economic structures that govern availability of and access to resources and public services, including development and social protection programming. Such an approach allows us to understand how and why these factors or ‘environments’ affect wellbeing and thus decision making.

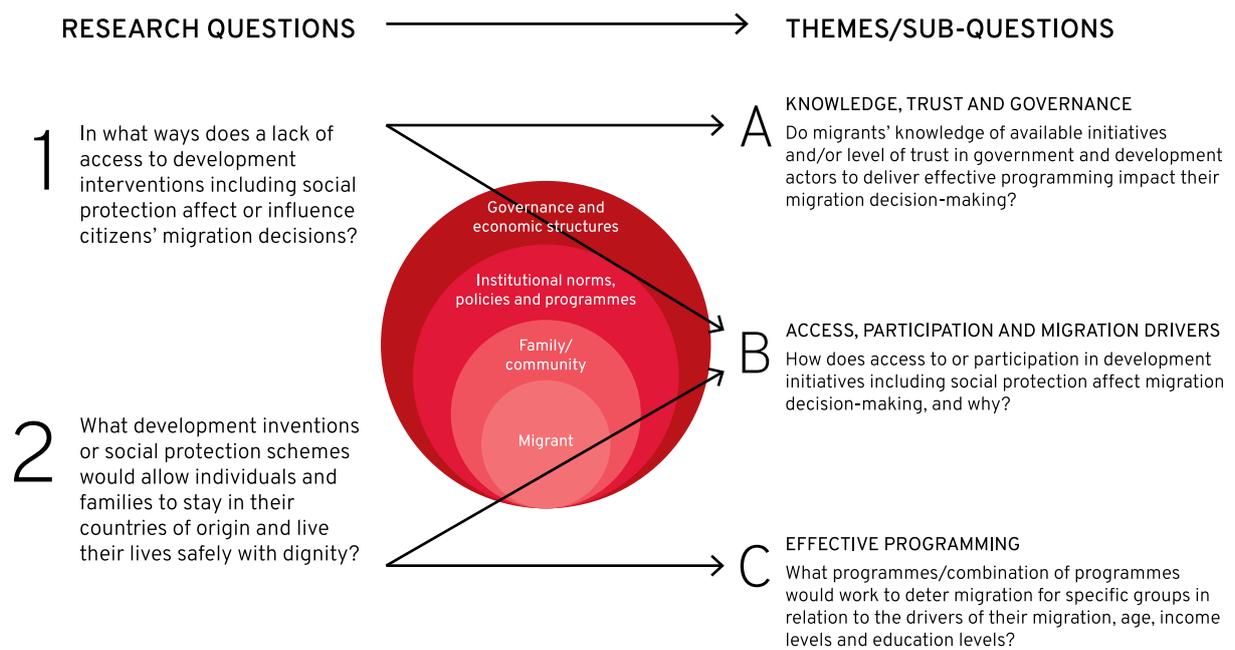
**Figure 3: Socio-ecological view of migration decisions**



The study included five migrant groups: potential migrants, transit migrants, asylum seekers, returnees and families who have been impacted by migration of an immediate family member and who are left behind in Nigeria.<sup>32</sup> Including the five groups allowed us to assess trends and conceptualise programming impact on migration intentions from the family base to those who have been granted asylum, for instance. This provided a big picture view of how or why programming influences decisions on whether to migrate or how it may influence subsidiary choices being made in the moment by asylum seekers and returnees looking to make a secondary move or re-emigrate.

Including the five groups and using a socio-ecological approach helped to generate a holistic evidence-base on how access to development initiatives including social protection programming fits into the life worlds of potential and transit migrants and their decision making. It has led to a better contextualization of the potential effects that macro level policies and meso level interventions have on the more personal, and sometimes private or less vocalized, intentions to migrate. These include the influence of their families’ wellbeing, trust in different state and non-state actors to deliver effectively, or what ‘effective programming’ means to them in light of their particular circumstances.

**Figure 4: A socio-ecological model of migration decision making as it relates to programming**



<sup>32</sup> There can be overlap between these groups. For the sake of this study we have relied on self-identification by interviewees regarding the most appropriate group – e.g. where migrants tell us they intend to continue to a new destination country we class them as transit migrants; where they tell us they do not plan to move on we class them as asylum seekers. Though it falls outside of the standard definition, for the purposes of the study we have bundled under ‘asylum seeker survey’ those also with refugee status, subsidiary protection status, or are awaiting his or her application decision.

To help us analyse these aspects in relation to the two overarching questions in a concrete way, we established three themes that linked the individual (micro) to the meso/macro levels of governance and access to programming to use for analysis.

- A Knowledge, trust and governance.** This relates to whether and how the knowledge of interventions and the trust levels in organisations and/or the government to deliver programmes are linked, and whether that has any influence on migration decision making.
- B Access, participation and migration drivers.** This relates to whether and how access to development initiatives including social protection affect drivers of migration and, possibly, choice of destination. This theme directed the analysis of whether and how access to programming addresses the underlying drivers of migration.
- C Effective programming.** This relates to what particular programmes can address the drivers of migration across the different groups. This theme directed the analysis of what programmes different migrant groups may consider transformative and can lead to sustainable changes to their wellbeing and thus provide an alternative to migration.

Figure 5: Survey Repondents 1,730 total survey respondents

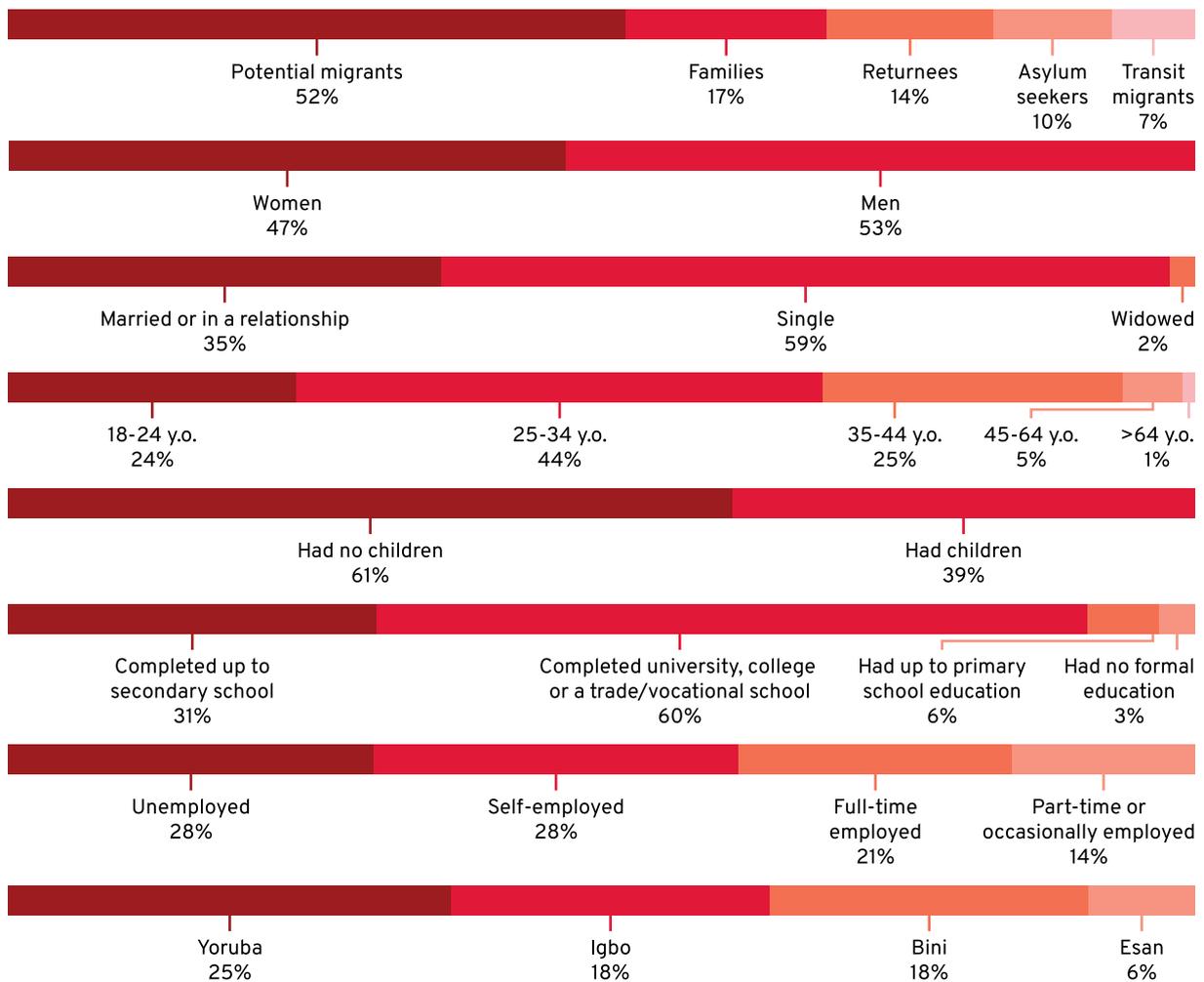
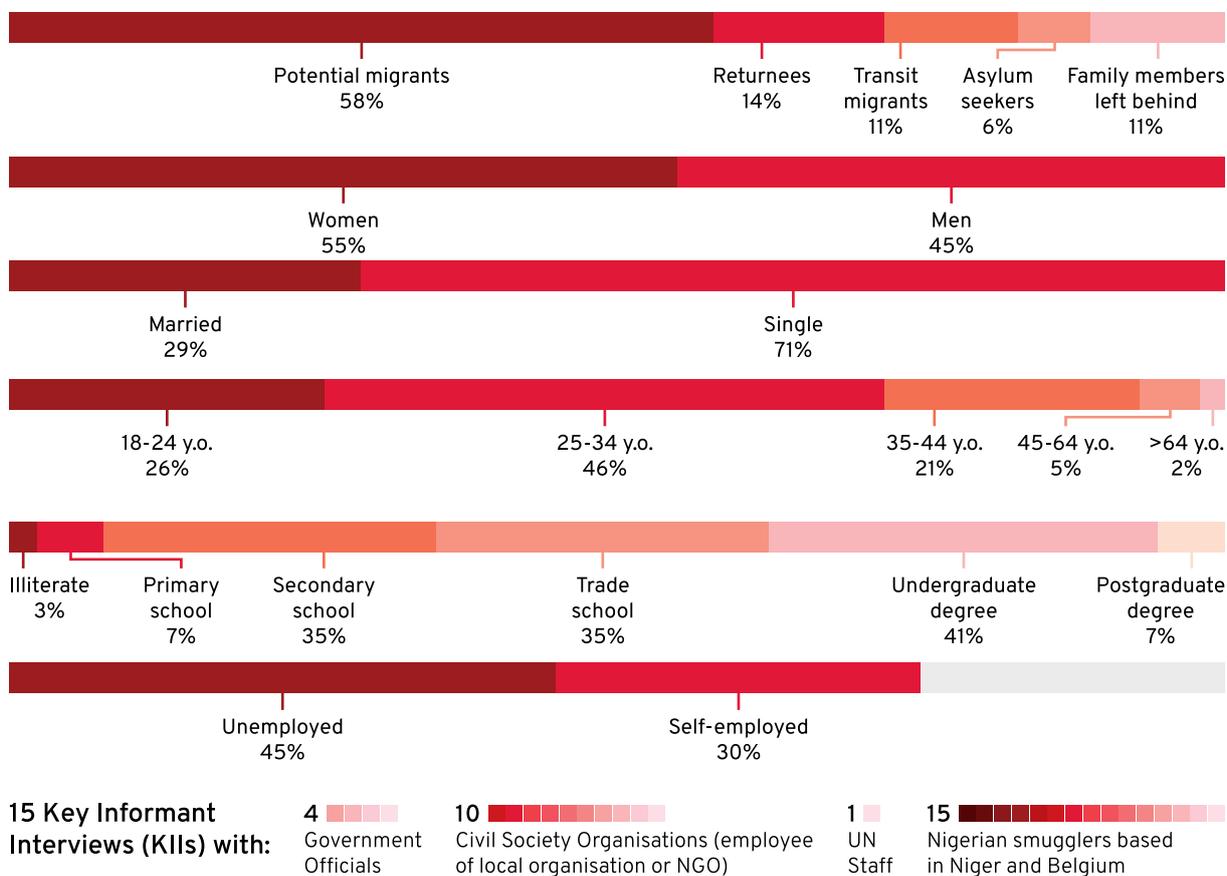


Figure 6: In-Depth Interviews (IDIs)



## Methods

The findings in this scoping study are based on data generated through a range of methods and tools implemented in a phased approach. Phase 1 included a desk review and an online baseline survey reaching 400 respondents across Nigeria in June 2021.

### PHASE 1

May-June 2021

Desk review

400 online surveys (baseline)

### PHASE 2

July-September 2021

1,730 face-to-face and telephone surveys with potential migrants, returnees and families in Nigeria, those in transit in Italy and Niger, and asylum seekers/refugees in Italy

### PHASE 3

September-November 2021 (only with transit migrants and asylum seekers)

178 IDIs with potential and transit migrants, asylum seekers/refugees, returnees and families

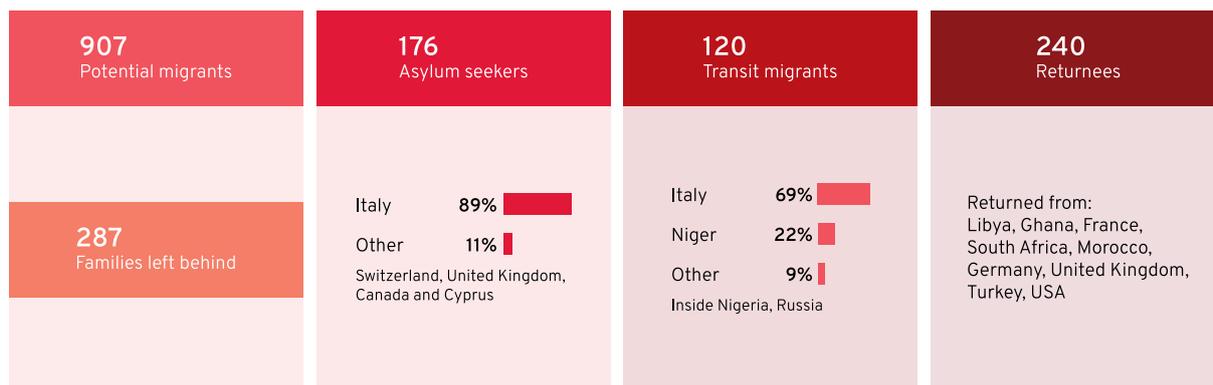
15 KIIs with UN staff, INGOs, government officials

15 KIIs with Nigerian smugglers based in Niger and Belgium

21 FGDs with potential migrants, returnees and families in Nigeria, those in transit and asylum seekers in Italy

Drawing from the baseline results, in Phase 2 (July–September 2021) 10 Nigeria-based researchers conducted 1,733 face-to-face and telephone surveys with potential migrants, returnees and families located across 32 Nigerian states, Nigerian transit migrants in Italy and Niger, and Nigerian asylum seekers in Italy. See Annex for more details. The surveys were developed in partnership with the field teams.

**Figure 7: Migrant groups participating in the study**



Phase 3 (September–November 2021) implemented the qualitative component including In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). It included 178 IDIs and 21 FGDs with potential migrants in Nigeria, transit migrants and asylum seekers/refugees in Italy, returnees and families in Nigeria. 15 KIIs with UN staff, INGOs and government officials gave depth to the analysis of challenges government and development actors face in delivering effectively.

An additional 15 KIIs with Nigerian smugglers based in Niger and Belgium provided a holistic picture of how, as former economic migrants, a lack of access to social protection and development programming played a role in their decision making and current work in the smuggling trade.<sup>33</sup>

The survey and interview participants were recruited face-to-face through snowball sampling and Seefar’s network in the different study locations. See Annex for more details on the methodology and analysis.

### Study Limitations

a) **Security concerns limited the geographical reach of the project.** The insecurity in Nigeria meant that the study could not be carried out in specific states including some high-risk areas where kidnappings and physical violence are common and where levels of irregular migration are high. The researchers interviewed participants living along the periphery of some of the high-risk areas.

b) **The COVID-19 pandemic limited the ability of researchers to conduct all surveys and interviews face-to-face.** The study was carried out during the pandemic and so some adjustments were made periodically. Some researchers were based in areas that restricted movements from time to time. Some of the IDIs conducted over the phone were shorter in duration and lacked the nuance that in-person interviews bring, though all critical aspects and questions were covered.

33 The countries chosen for interviews with transit migrants and asylum seekers were convenience-based. See Annex for more details. The smugglers interviewed were both male and female and operating outside of any large organized crime circles. The added benefit of involving them in the study included understanding where social protection and development programming fit into their decision to enter the business, and what it would take in terms of programming to enable them to leave, if they wanted to. They too are migrants, and so their insights just complement and validate the views garnered from the other migrant groups.

c) **Self-reporting/perception and recall bias.** Respondents were asked questions related to access to programmes up to five years ago. It may have been difficult for respondents to recall what type of programming they received (i.e. was it social protection or development?). In addition, the Nigerian government and IOs/NGOs, local civil society organizations and churches/mosques can each deliver development initiatives including social protection. Though we included distinct survey questions on the 'government' and IOs and others, the answers for who the provider was for the programming may not be strictly reliable. Though this lack of detail somewhat limits the depth of the study, it does not pose any limitations on the conclusions or recommendations.

Likewise, in asking those in transit, asylum seekers or returnees to retrospectively evaluate what they would have done if they had received certain information, for instance, there is a degree of bias from the situations they are currently in and how those lived experiences shape their responses to a question like this. At the same time, there is also the power of hindsight, and relaying to us what it would take to not migrate having already been through the decision-making process.

d) **The research does not represent a programme review or evaluation.** As this was a scoping study focused on the views of different migrant groups, we did not conduct an in-depth discourse or policy analysis nor a review or evaluation of any specific programming. When we discuss programming we draw on the desk review and respondents' recollection of initiatives that may have been accessed or generally available.

## Report Outline

The findings of this report are split into three sections based on the key themes described in our analytical framework:

- Section I reports on findings related to knowledge, trust and governance.
- Section II details how access, participation and migration drivers are linked.
- Section III describes what programming is considered by migrants to be effective and transformative to their wellbeing and, thus, influential on their migration decisions.

Analysis in each section links the findings back to the two key research questions. The concluding chapter summarises key findings and outlines recommendations for policy makers, donors and development aid and migration practitioners. Annex explains our research methods and the limitations of the study in further detail.

## SNAPSHOT: SOCIAL PROTECTION INTERVENTIONS IN NIGERIA

In 2017, the Government of Nigeria increased budget allocation at national and federal levels to social protection activities as part of a specialized social investment programme to build on and/or develop key social protection interventions (see Figure 8). The programme was mainly targeted to the poor and vulnerable and included cash transfer, school feeding, microcredit to women and traders and skills acquisition and job opportunities for unemployed youths. According to the federal government, more than 1.5 million Nigerians benefited from these interventions.

In 2019, to bolster and support their social protection agenda, the Nigerian government announced a commitment to lift 100 million citizens out of poverty.<sup>34</sup> To support this commitment, the World Bank approved a USD 800 million credit from the International Development Association (IDA) for Nigeria's National Social Safety Net Program Scale-Up (NASSP-SU) in 2021, with the aim of supporting poor and/or vulnerable Nigerians under the government's existing social safety programmes.<sup>35</sup>

Examples of key interventions:

- Family Economic Advancement Programme: an ILO supported poverty alleviation and economic empowerment programme for individuals and families through the institution of necessary microeconomic activities at various localities within the country.
- N-Power: addresses the issues of youth unemployment and helps increase social development. The scheme was created as a component of the National Social Investment Program, to provide a structure for large scale and relevant work skills acquisition and development and to ensure that each participant will learn and practice most of what is necessary to find or create work.
- Child Development Grant Program (CDGP): a DFID funded project which is implemented by Save the Children and Action Against Hunger in Zamfara and Jigawa States.
- Cash Transfer Program (CTP): The National Cash Transfer Program (CTP) came into existence after the establishment of the National Cash Transfer Office (NCTO) in 2016. The role of the office is to provide cash transfers to poor and vulnerable households under an expanded national social safety nets system.
- Public Workfare (PWF) Program: provides support to the participating state governments to provide immediate labour intensive work opportunities for unskilled youths from poor and vulnerable households.
- Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP): provides microloans for traders, artisans, farmers, enterprising youths and above all vulnerable women.

34 ILO. (2022). *Social Protection and Public Finance Management: Nigeria*.

35 World Bank. (2021). *Nigeria to Scale-up Delivery of Social Assistance to 10.2 Million Households*.

# KEY FINDINGS

## Section I: How knowledge of and/or trust in social protection and development programming influences irregular migration decision making.

### 1.1 Low levels of awareness among priority target groups about programming by the government and international actors.

Despite efforts to fund and roll out social protection and development programming, all five migrant groups reported only minimal to moderate levels of awareness and knowledge of any social protection or development programmes available and offered by IOs/NGOs or the Nigerian government.

Over half of all potential migrants reported no knowledge of development interventions or social protection programmes offered by the government including any programming that may be available in their local government areas (LGAs). This is especially evident amongst those aged 18–24 years (70% unaware).

Employment and higher education correlated with higher knowledge levels of what programmes are available, indicating that programmes may not reach those potential migrants who are most in need of support. Potential migrants who were employed at the time of interview had higher levels of knowledge (61% aware) than those with occasional small jobs (29% aware) and those who were unemployed (36% aware). Likewise, on average, 80% of those without formal education or with at most primary education were unaware of programmes, whereas those with university-level education generally did know (63%) of available initiatives.

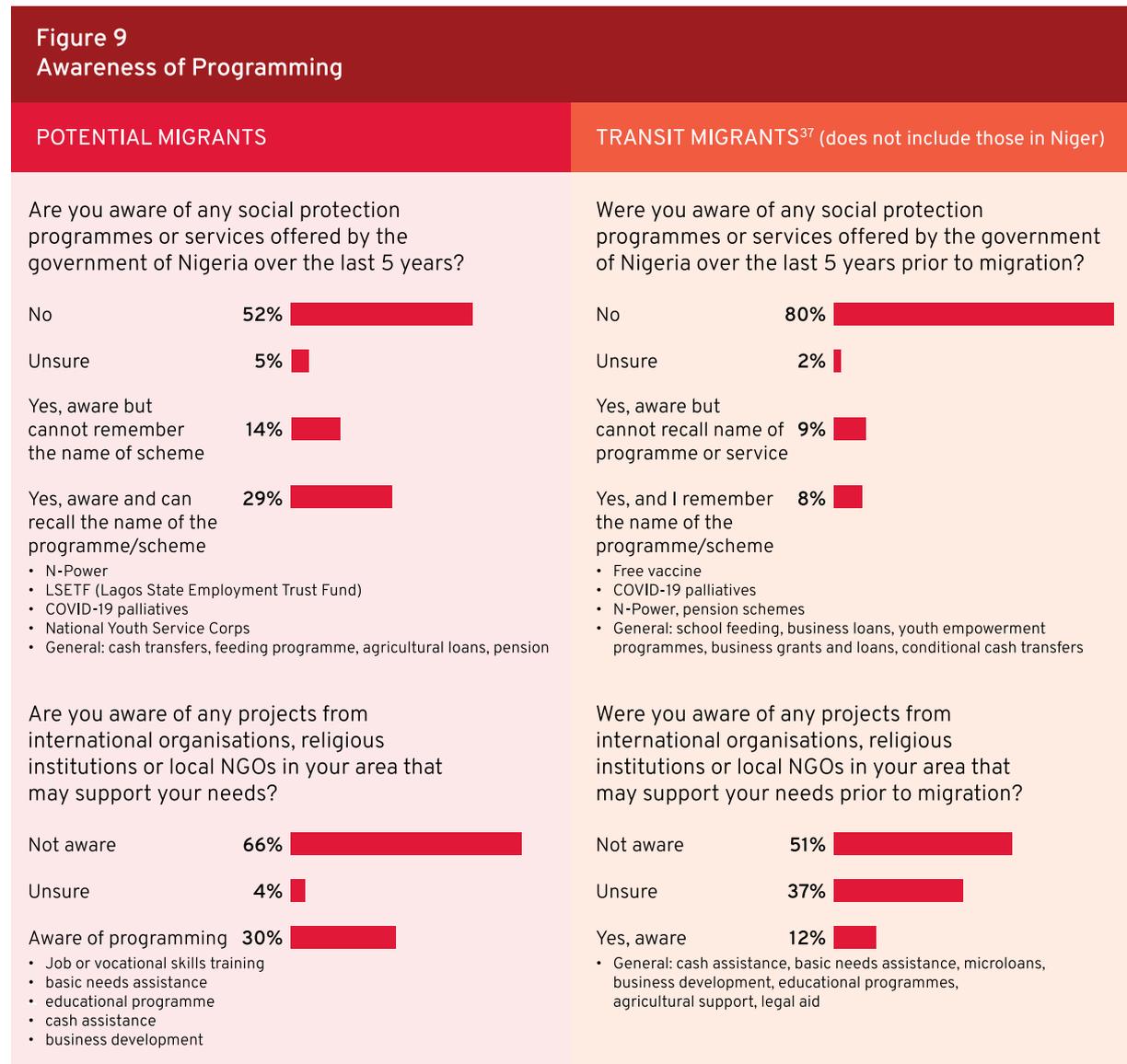
Findings also show that information on government-run programmes is not reaching potential migrants as a whole, especially those living in major migration hubs. Figure 8 below illustrates how levels of awareness are low in the states known to be migration hubs, namely Edo and Abuja.<sup>36</sup>



**Potential migrants’ awareness of international development actors including the UN was lower than that for the government-led programming.** Only 40% reported having knowledge about different programmes offered by IOs/NGOs.

<sup>36</sup> These locations also had the greatest number of respondents. The locations with smaller sample sizes such as Benue State, for instance, reached 100% awareness but the sample consisted of only four potential migrants. In the five states listed in Graph B the sample sizes were between 50 and 350 for each.

17% of transit migrants knew about some overnment-run programming in the five years prior to migration while 12% reported being aware of IO/NGO programming prior to leaving. A mere 3% of those transiting through Niger knew of available government support prior to leaving. 7% knew about programming delivered by IOs/NGOs such as educational programmes, agricultural support and vocational skills training.



16% of asylum seekers reported having had knowledge of government-led programmes prior to migration while 64% reported being unaware of any IO/NGO programmes for the five years leading up to the time of departure.

Nearly a third (30%) of families were aware of social protection programmes or services offered by the government of Nigeria, such as N-Power, free education, school feeding programmes, COVID-19 palliatives, healthcare, health insurance and cash transfer. This higher percentage of families who were aware of programming may be due to children and youth in the household being exposed to more

37 Figure 9 does not include transit migrants in Niger.

information while at school or outside of the household who, in turn, impart that information to family members. It may also be that low-income families are also targeted for social protection programming especially and so they would be privy to information on eligibility and available programming; 57% of the families we interviewed did not have enough monthly income to cover their basic needs.

**On the whole, the study found that there are low levels of knowledge of what programmes are available and this is especially so for those potential migrants who are also likely eligible for programming.** At the same time, the inverse is true: though awareness is highest amongst those most likely to migrate (i.e. those with secondary or university-level education, single, aged 25–34 years), they likely do not fit the eligibility criteria for most programmes.

## 1.2 Low levels of awareness impact migration intentions

**The study found that increasing the level of knowledge of IO/NGO and government programmes may have some influence on potential migrants' migration decision making.** 42% of potential migrants reported that they would reconsider their migration plans if they knew more about what specific programmes were available and for whom. An additional 23% were undecided, meaning there may be scope for influence, while 35% disagreed – they would migrate anyway (reasons for this explored in Section 1.3).

Transit migrants and returnees reported a more positive influence than potential migrants, while asylum seekers and families were not convinced, in hindsight, that information would have affected the decision to leave:

- More than half of transit migrants interviewed (57%) reported that having had information on what programmes were available and accessible while still in Nigeria could have helped them make a better-informed decision.
- 45% of those seeking asylum abroad reported that receiving information on what support they could have had while in Nigeria may have swayed their decision to migrate. The majority of them, however, consider their life as improved since leaving so they could not say with certainty how this information would have influenced their decision at the time.
- The least amount of influence any increase in knowledge would have on migration intentions was seen among families. Only 33% suggested that programme information would have convinced the family member to stay, with 28% undecided. A possible reason is that they may not be able to guess what the family member would have decided if circumstances were different. It also reflects, however, the general thinking of the family unit – only a third of families were convinced that information would have influence.
- The most positive influence of information is on returnees: 66% reported that having had the knowledge of the support available while still in Nigeria would have convinced them to stay home.
- 42% of female potential migrants reported that they would remain at home if they were informed about and given access to programming that could meet their needs. A further 24% were undecided.

I heard about a vocational training programme organized by Lagos State government for returnees. I did not bother to follow up on the programme because I already have a skill. What I need is start-up capital, not another skill.

If I was aware of a financial assistance programme, I would be the first to enrol to benefit.

- IDI, female returnee, Nigeria (returned from Ghana)

These findings demonstrated that access to more information on existing programmes that meet particular needs would have had a positive impact on decisions to migrate for returnees and transit migrants. Yet, regardless of any level of information they would receive, or the potential benefits they could avail of, more than half of all potential migrants we interviewed would still migrate. This finding remained static across all potential migrant age groups, education levels, socio-economic and marital statuses. As detailed below in Section 1.3, this study found that this is due to high levels of distrust in the Nigerian government's capacity and willingness to implement effective, equitable programming.

### 1.3 While trust in IOs/NGOs to deliver effective programming is moderate, low levels of trust in the Nigerian government to do so negatively impacts on migration intentions.

**This study found that the limited effect that having access to information could have on plans to leave strongly correlates with an erosion of trust in the Nigerian government.** Generally speaking, people's confidence in the government's capacity or willingness to provide them with long-term opportunities to live with dignity is very low and this has a direct effect on migration intentions. For instance, 88% of potential migrants feel that the government does not have any meaningful plan for their wellbeing, so they are choosing to migrate. In addition, 93% of surveyed potential migrants agreed with the statement as given in the survey: "My government programmes cannot help me satisfy my needs – I am my own government. This is why I am migrating."

**On the whole, this general lack of confidence in the government generally has translated into a deep distrust of government-led programming specifically.** Despite ambitious policies, a deep distrust in the government to put policies into action and ensure dignity and quality of life for all citizens is driving intentions to migrate across all ages, levels of income and education, and gender. On average, 9 out of 10 potential migrants reported a lack of trust in government-led initiatives to effect change in their lives, whether that be development initiatives or social protection.

- 92% of all potential migrants reported that they do not trust that the programming would last over the long-term so they would still migrate. The result held for men and women equally.
- 90% of potential migrants reported that even if they benefited from government programmes, they do not trust that it would help them enough or that the government would deliver it in the way they say they will. They would migrate anyway.

Qualitative IDIs as well as FGDs provided nuance and contextualization as to why this erosion of trust is embedded so deeply in decisions to migrate. Perceived nepotism within government circles that oversee how benefits are distributed has led to resentment and distrust. Hopelessness was also voiced by many respondents in that they feel they will never be able to benefit from programming because they do not know anyone on 'the inside'. Finally, respondents reported frustration that the burden of care for themselves and their families falls squarely on their own shoulders. As one potential migrant lamented: "*How do you describe a place where everybody provides virtually almost everything that the government is supposed to be providing for them? Nigerians provide their own power supply, water supply, security, education, healthcare, and even means of livelihood.*" (IDI, female potential migrant, Lagos.)

**Despite less awareness of their programmes, levels of trust were found not to erode at the same rate or in the same way for IOs/NGOs or the UN actors who are delivering programmes.** On the contrary, 79% of potential and 80% of transit migrants trust international development organizations to deliver more effective and beneficial programmes than the government, and to deliver projects that can help young Nigerians to not have to migrate. Two thirds of potential migrants, for instance, said that they would trust IOs/NGOs to deliver programming effectively for vocational skills like tailoring or carpentry and that the benefits may provide an alternative to migration. Three quarters of potential migrants felt similarly about economic empowerment programmes delivered by IOs/NGOs: that these would be delivered effectively and the benefits would be longer lasting.

Finding higher levels of trust in IOs/NGOs despite less access and shorter timeframes for project implementation invites some tentative conclusions. For example, because IOs or the UN are viewed as having obligations to be politically ‘neutral’ perhaps citizens feel that these organizations are inherently more trustworthy. Perhaps, in their experiences, though the project timeframe was shorter, the benefits were such that they lasted longer. Lastly, it is very difficult to manipulate the international system in terms of nepotism. Perhaps IOs/NGOs are perceived to be less corrupt and thus fairer and more equitable.

**Overall, what this finding reveals is that trust levels in the provider can be considered a major determinant in how effective programming can be in influencing migration intentions.**

#### 1.4 Mixed messages regarding eligibility criteria and a perceived lack of capacity of those in public office to implement initiatives further diminishes trust in government-led programming.

**During the IDIs, many potential migrants, transit migrants and returnees were highly aware of issues that could impede effective government-led programme implementation** (no respondent cited any challenges with IO/NGO programmes). Many potential migrants in particular suggested that, alongside corruption, they also believed the government lacks the capacity to implement effectively. As one interviewee reported, *“This current government has no capacity to address the social economic challenges in Nigeria.”* (IDI, male potential migrant, Nigeria)

**Many potential migrants, transit migrants and returnees cited that the Nigerian government also lacks adequate data indicating who are the most in need of programming.** *“The Nigerian government can help to address the challenges if it wants to, [but] the social programmes do not get to the common people who actually need them. For instance, the government does not have actual data of those in need of its programme assistance so the poverty rate is still there despite the programme assistance by the government.”* (IDI, female returnee, Nigeria)

**Staff of government agencies, the UN and NGOs who were interviewed for this study confirmed various challenges faced by the authorities to deliver effective programmes** as detailed below in Figure 10. A key informant who works for an international NGO, for instance, also recognized the difficulty some people face in accessing government-led programming in relation to nepotism: *“Yes. Many people are not privileged enough to access [government-led] developmental programmes. Some are short changed because they have no connections to the organizers of such programmes; others lack the information to access developmental programmes and so on.”* (KII, INGO staff member, Edo State).

**The study further found a discrepancy between what is written in policy regarding eligibility criteria with the actual experience and knowledge of migrants of what makes one eligible for programming.** One KII with a government official suggested, for instance, that programming eligibility criteria is broader than what is detailed in the policy and broader than how many migrants understand it to be: *“As for the criteria for participation, all you need to be is human and alive to participate and benefit! There are no special quote unquote criteria that one must conform to in order to benefit from these programmes and/or projects. Insofar as you are situationally aware about these programmes when they are announced, and then take the time to apply to be a part of them, that is about that.”* (KII, female government official, Senior Special Assistant to the

**Figure 10**  
**Key challenges in implementing social protection effectively in Nigeria**  
(See Desk Review, for more details)

- Policy inconsistency
- Lack of funding
- Low coverage
- Poorly design social protection schemes
- Corruption
- Lack of accountability
- Lack of reliable data indicating who is most in need

Governor, Nigeria)<sup>38</sup> This is not the understanding of the many potential and transit migrants we interviewed. Rather, as they understood it, there are strict eligibility criteria and, furthermore, you actually have to know someone for your name to make it on the list. **This finding indicates either a miscommunication to the general public regarding eligibility, or a misunderstanding of the criteria among government officials who are in charge of implementing the policies and programmes.**

**SPOTLIGHT:**  
**Migration intentions are not measured in government programming**

“In direct terms, I cannot say that measuring migration falls under the parameters we use in measuring impact or success of our programmes, but it is definitely worth looking into.”

- KII, Government Official, Anonymous, Lagos

“The migration intentions of the people are not really taken into consideration. We can generally say that when people are doing well or better, they generally want to maintain the status quo, therefore they may be a bit more resistant to moving abroad because who knows what they will see there.”

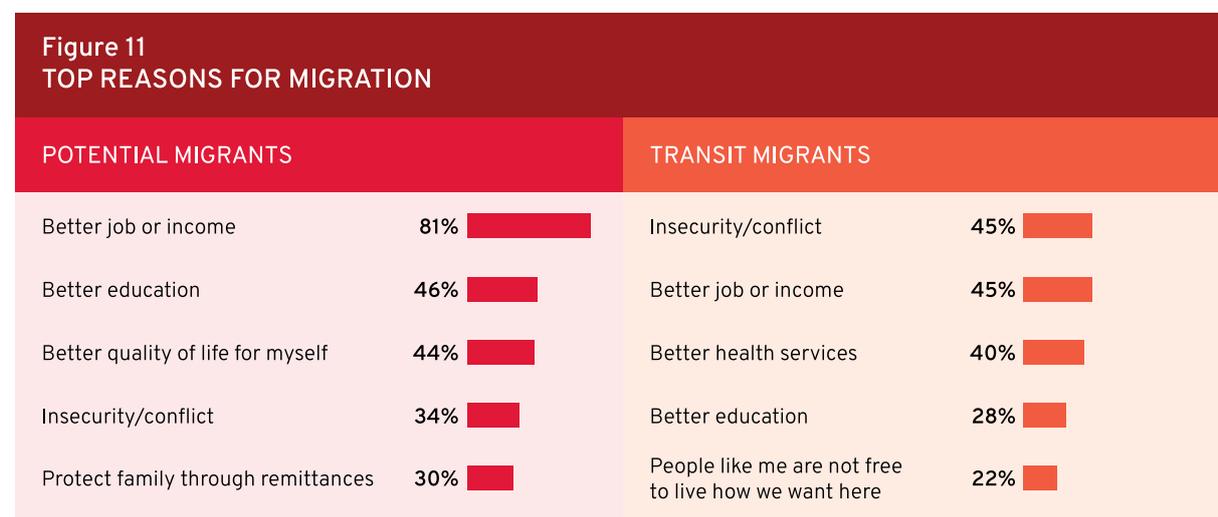
- KII, Government Official, Anonymous, Cross River State

“No, we don't directly measure the migration intentions of the beneficiaries.”

- KII, Government Official, Benin City

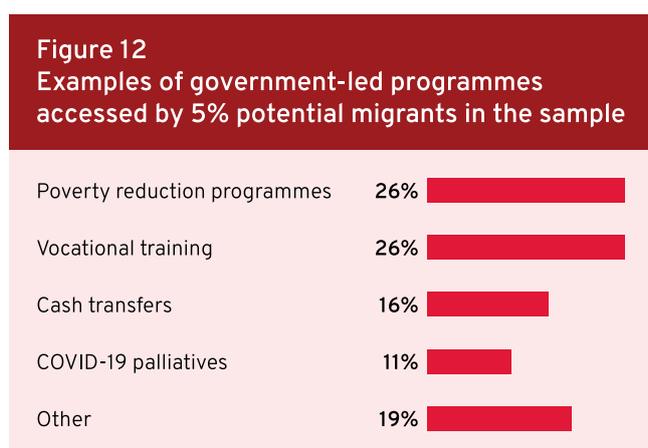
38 The State is anonymous as requested by the key informant.

## Section II: How access to social protection and development programming can influence migration drivers.



### 2.1 Access to government programming is low across all migrant groups; access to IO/NGO programming is lower.

While knowledge and awareness of programming is minimal to moderate, the study found that there were almost no interviewees across all migrant groups who had actually accessed programmes. Overall, 96% of potential migrants interviewed have not participated in or have had any access to government programming offered in the five years prior to the interview. The study also found that all other migrant groups lacked access to programming, which confirms that social protection and development programmes delivered by development actors and government are failing to assist populations who are planning to migrate irregularly.



Specifically, only 12% of the 43% of potential migrants who reported being aware of government-led initiatives (as detailed in Section 1.1; or 5% of the total) had been enrolled in government-led programmes within the five years before their interview. Most of the programmes mentioned fall under the social protection framework while some may also be considered development. Examples of programmes are highlighted in Figure 12.<sup>39</sup>

9% out of the 40% of potential migrants aware of projects offered by IOs/NGOs (or 4% of total) had been enrolled in development or social protection projects in the last five years. 89%

reported not having been enrolled in programmes delivered by IOs/NGOs, while 2% were uncertain.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> This was a multiple response question and some may have benefited from several programmes.

<sup>40</sup> There may have been a misunderstanding of who delivered the programmes, i.e., government vs international or local NGOs. We did not test for this in the survey. Also, while the survey asked directly, there was also little recall about who delivered these programmes.

Examples of programmes the 9% had accessed also fall under both social protection and development (see Figure 13).

The degree of access experienced across other migrant groups was found to be comparable to that of potential migrants.

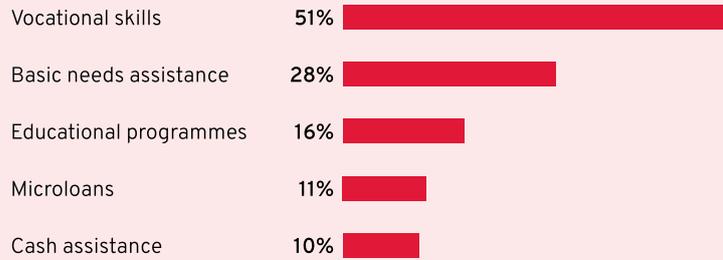
- 16% of transit migrants reported having been enrolled in government social protection programming while still in Nigeria prior to migration.

Programmes included vocational training, business grants or business loans, community services subsidies, disability support or disability income, poverty reduction programmes and cash transfers.<sup>41</sup> 49% of those who were aware of programming but did not access programming reported that they couldn't because it was not available to them (such as geographical location), and 29% of them reported they did not enrol because they were not eligible.

- 90% of asylum seekers interviewed did not benefit from any type of programme while in Nigeria and 4% were unsure. 6% reported having benefited from government programming prior to migrating, including public works or government employment, business grants or business loans, vocational training, food transfers, COVID-19 palliatives and poverty reduction programmes. An additional 4% of asylum seekers accessed educational and vocational programming delivered by IOs/NGOs prior to leaving, though another 7% may have but could not recall for certain.
- 3% of returnees interviewed accessed or received benefit from IO/NGO-led development or social protection interventions prior to their migration from Nigeria. 7% had benefited from government-led programmes such as microcredit, poverty reduction, health insurance, pension, disability fund.

As so few potential migrants in fact have access, drawing firm conclusions around the lasting benefits of social protection and development programming with a view to migratory movements remains difficult. However, for those potential and transit migrants who had benefited from programming, the study findings suggest that, as described directly below in Section 2.2, the duration of programming may be too short to effect adequate change in the personal lives of migrants and, thus, inadequate to impact migration plans.

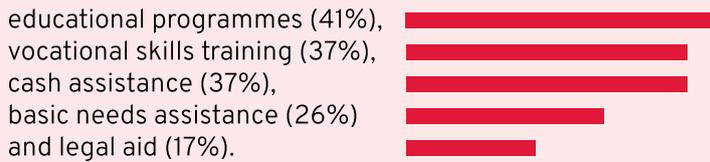
**Figure 13**  
Examples of IO/NGO programmes accessed by potential migrants



<sup>41</sup> Due to measurement bias during data collection, we cannot accurately report on the number of transit migrants who accessed programmes offered by IOs/NGOs. Only two transit migrants answered the questions.

**Figure 14**  
**Access to programming while on the move or when based in destination country**

93% of migrants interviewed and currently residing in Italy but planning to migrate onward are currently benefiting from various initiatives such as:



These are delivered by the government of Italy or various IOs/NGOs operating in Italy.

76% of asylum seekers interviewed who have reached their destination country are receiving:



mainly from their host governments. Despite the hardship reported (language barriers and racism), asylum seekers who are benefiting from programming generally reported feeling satisfied with their migration decision and that they now have what they need to live a dignified life.

## 2.2 Short durations and inadequate delivery of financial benefits limit the potential that programming has to improve the lives of potential migrants and reduce migration intentions.

The study found that enrollment in government programming did not last long, and that projects led by IOs/NGOs were even more short-lived. 72% of the IO/NGO programming accessed by potential migrants lasted for less than six months, with 41% of that programming lasting less than three months. Government-led programming, particularly the social protection programming, lasted longer. On average, 31% of potential migrants enrolled in social protection programmes benefited for more than a year, and 36% benefited from programmes for more than two years. The opposite trend emerged among the transit migrants who had benefited from government programming prior to migration: 67% reported having benefited for less than 3 months while an additional 25% reported having benefited for 3–6 months. 8% of transit migrants were enrolled for 6–12 months.

Qualitative interviews provided insights that short-term support like one-off cash transfers or programmes such as COVID-19 Relief Funds may have minimal influence on migration decisions amongst potential migrants. For instance, the Nigeria COVID-19 Relief Fund providing individual cash assistance was felt greatly beneficial at the moment but had only marginal influence on migration decisions. Nearly all COVID-19 Relief Fund beneficiaries participating in two focus groups in Lagos for our study reported that the fund gave a measure of stability to their lives and families. Some boosted

their businesses or had started one, while others repaid their debts. Yet, they also all reported that the fund had no real influence on their plans to migrate, cautioning that though these types of programmes may be beneficial in the moment, they are just a start to making a difference. *“Programmes like these are a start. Not entirely, but a start. If they back things like this with credible governance and security, then Nigeria will be a haven.”* (FGD, COVID-19 Relief Fund beneficiary, Lagos). Moreover, as another potential migrant stated: *“If the government wants to do something that will stop people from migrating, it is not by giving out money, but by good governance, so that everyone benefits, not just a selected few.”* (FGD, COVID-19 Relief Fund beneficiary, Lagos).

Relatedly, the failure to provide social assistance to those who need it most (those without education, married with children but no income) may act as a driver to migrate for people who would not normally choose migration if they had options to stay home. Interviews with returnees during this study, for instance, provided insight into the impact of ‘partial programming’ upon arrival on their intentions to migrate again. We use the term ‘partial programming’ to describe the programming where respondents told us it did not deliver what was expected or promised. As a group often targeted for assistance programming, it was striking that over half (57%) of returnees surveyed had plans to leave Nigeria again within 6–12 months post-interview because of inadequate or partial access to/limited or no financial benefit from reintegration assistance. An additional 29% would migrate again if given an opportunity but do not currently have concrete plans. The 57% includes female returnees who reported having faced sexual violence and physical violence in Niger and Libya. Both male and female migrants who went through Niger and Libya reported having experienced physical violence and detention, and some of the women had been trafficked for sexual exploitation. A willingness to leave again while already having had such harrowing experiences indicates that a desperation to achieve some quality of life overshadows the known risks of seeking it abroad.

In interviews, returnees who are planning to leave shared a common experience: they received only partial programming and their expectations were not met.

“I [was] promised that after the training, cash would be given to enable me to start up a business but they did not keep to that promise, so I only gained the knowledge without money to start the trade I was trained for. My life has not changed.”

- IDI, male returnee, Nigeria

“I am yet to benefit from the programme, since I was not given money. I am still waiting to hear from them. I was told to wait, that they are paying people batch by batch. As we speak I have not benefited from the programme except for the knowledge I received during the training.”

- IDI, female returnee, Nigeria

“As a lady things are more difficult for me. I received my training in 2019 and I’m yet to receive my cash, I was told to hold on for now, that it would get to my batch for payment. I have not benefited.”

- IDI, female returnee, Nigeria

**The study also found that re-emigration intentions of female returnees who did not receive assistance upon return are based on inadequate access to programming and a struggle to survive or meet basic needs.** As one female FGD participant noted, *“I have nothing to show since I returned from Libya. My case is so because I came from Libya by myself; for this reason I could not get any support. My life remains the same. If I have my way, I would migrate again because I am suffering. I cannot feed myself or my family. It is really sad.”*

Due to a lack of access to complete and adequate services and programming, over half of returnees interviewed for this study have essentially become potential migrants.

At the same time, FGDs with returnees also provided insight into the positive impact *effective* programming has on reducing migration intentions. Some returnees reported that they have turned their lives around since benefiting from reintegration assistance and cash transfers, for instance. Others who had access to farms or business to begin with also reported substantial benefit from the training and financial assistance.

“Yes, I have benefited from [a] programme and it has also changed my life and how I think. When I returned from Libya, I thought all hope was lost, but after the training and the cash support, I started a boutique business. I sell ladies' clothes and shoes, it has been lucrative. I have thought of getting loans to add to my business but nothing is forthcoming. In all, I would say the programme has changed my life and that of my family”.

- FGD, female returnee, beneficiary of return programming.

### 2.3 If it cannot be delivered at home, the hope of benefiting from programmes elsewhere is a strong pull factor for potential migrants.

“Nigeria is a failed state, that is why many people are looking for ways out in order for them to have access to a good life. Those of us traveling through the desert and the Mediterranean Sea are not crazy. We embark on such journeys with a mindset that we are going to a better place where humans are recognized and valued. I have been through the desert and I knew what I went through, it was not easy at all. If we have a good government that values the citizens and provides us with basic needs, none of us would embark on irregular migration.”<sup>42</sup>

- Male returnee, FGD, Nigeria (Returned from Germany)

In 2017, Nigeria adopted a National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) with the plan to establish a social protection floor.<sup>43</sup> A social assistance coordination platform that utilized the National Social Register (NSR) was also set up around the same time.<sup>44</sup> It was intended that the NSPP would help to reduce poverty, provide a life of dignity for all citizens, and improve the quality of life of Nigerians.<sup>45</sup>

42 As this was a qualitative interview, basic needs may be taken here to include electricity and good roads and safe infrastructure.

43 Social protection floors are nationally-defined sets of basic social security guarantees which secure protection aimed at preventing or alleviating poverty, vulnerability and social exclusion. These guarantees should ensure at a minimum that, over the life cycle, all those in need have access to essential health care and basic income security. See [ILO, Social Protection Floor](#).

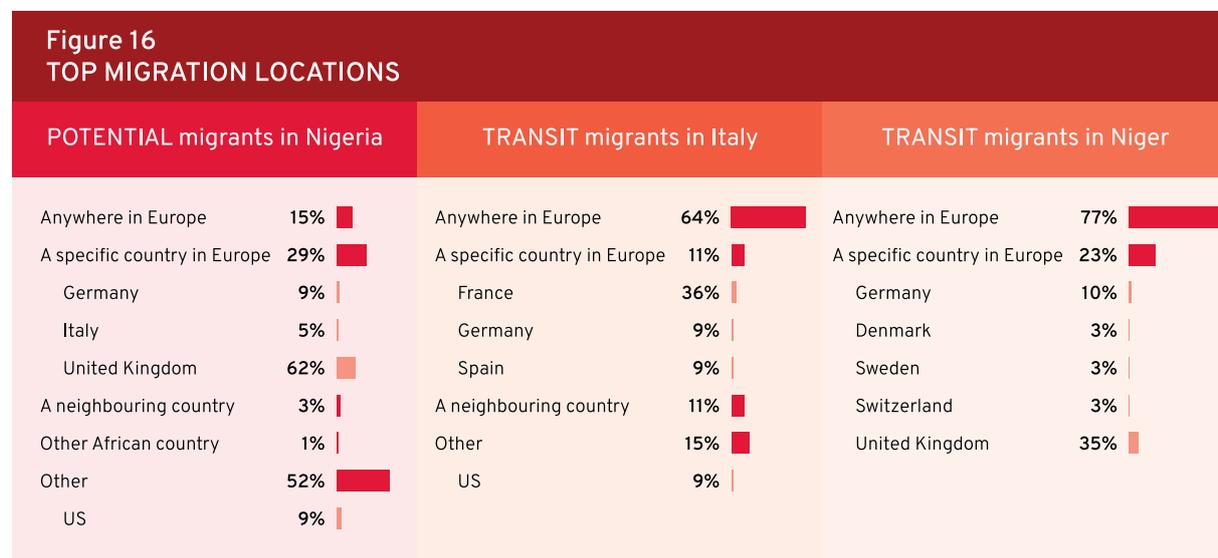
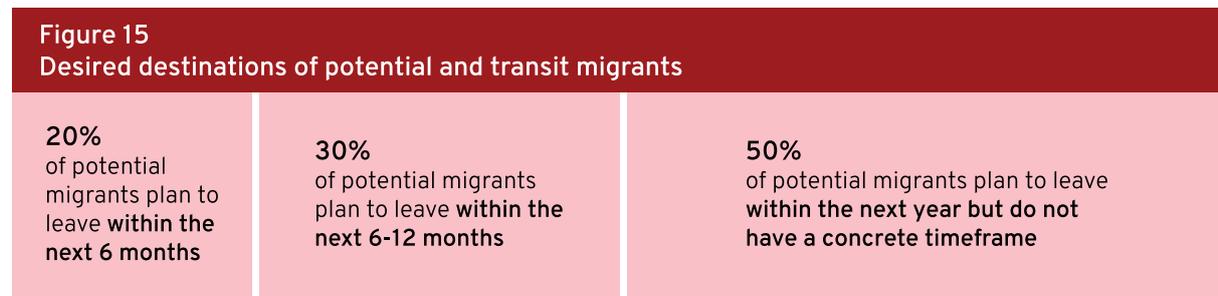
44 Ibid.

45 [National Society Safety Net Coordinating Office. \(2022\). Social Protection: Social Protection Policy.](#)

**This study found that it is this kind of ‘improved quality of life’ that many Nigerians want, and it is what they are seeking when they plan to migrate.** Given the limited access to interventions that fall under the NSPP, the drive to find ‘quality of life’ elsewhere is rooted in not having it at home, as well as believing that no matter how long they wait, the government will not deliver on their promises:

- 94% of potential migrants reported that they need to migrate to another country so they can benefit from what the destination country government is doing for their own citizens.
- 80% reported that migrating was the best option for them to be able to meet their basic needs and survive.
- 88% reported that the government does not have a meaningful plan for their wellbeing or that of their families.

In the IDIs, poverty and material hardship were two of the biggest motivating factors for migration. Many potential migrants reported to be under the impression that once they arrive at their destination, they will have access to a better quality of life including better education, income, healthcare and basic amenities such as constant electricity and water.



“I’m planning to migrate to any country that can offer stability and security. That’s basically what I’m lacking in Nigeria.”  
- IDI, male potential migrant, Nigeria

Family wellbeing also matters in the decision making of potential migrants. 93% of potential migrants reported that, *“Once I migrate, I will be better able to support my family at home in Nigeria because I can send them money. They will be better protected because I migrated.”* Whether or not this actually happens, the perception attests to the fact that many potential migrants feel that their families require financial support and that these needs will not be met by the government or development actors. The desire to protect their family through migration holds true for those on the move as well. The number of those currently residing in Italy who felt that onward migration will enable them to better protect and provide for their families was lower but still remarkable at 76%. In addition, 100% of transit migrants in Niger felt confident that migrating is the best option for them to provide for their families back home.

**Yet, the study found that the vast majority of potential migrants would prefer to stay home if they had access to long-term social protection and guaranteed access to basic needs on a consistent basis.** 79% of potential migrants and 75% of transit migrants agreed/strongly agreed that if the government were able to provide and guarantee provisions to meet basic needs over time, then they would abandon their migration plans.

52% of transit migrants currently residing in Italy reported that they would have stayed home if their basic needs had been met. 60% of asylum seekers, despite being content within their destination country, agreed that they would have stayed home and could see themselves living a decent life if their basic needs had been met in Nigeria. This finding is also especially high amongst returnees planning to migrate for the second time: 91% of returnees agreed that access to basic needs is what it would take to remain in Nigeria indefinitely.

Finally, 92% of families who are impacted by the migration of an immediate family member agreed that if the government were able to provide and guarantee provisions to meet basic needs over time, then families can have a decent life in Nigeria. 58% of families also think that the family member would not have migrated if the families’ basic needs were met: health care, education, and food.

This finding suggests, overall, that potential migrants are not influenced solely by the hope of income and better jobs but also by the idea of migrating to a place where their basic human rights would be respected and their basic needs would be met.

**We can conclude that access to programming that addresses basic needs and restores dignity influences migration decision making if delivered as promised and if sustained over the long term. If that can be done at home, the vast majority of migrants would stay.** If it cannot be achieved and delivered effectively people will continue to seek to migrate. Lacking a perspective and hope for their future at home, irregular migration towards the EU is seen by many Nigerians as the only way forward.

Figure 17  
SPOTLIGHT

**Asylum seekers and refugees contemplating a secondary movement within the EU are largely motivated by limited access to opportunities for income and protection in their current destination country**

The asylum seekers who do not have access to social protection programmes or development initiatives in their destination countries reported intentions to go somewhere else. Reasons they cited for embarking on a secondary movement:

Better opportunities for business development	40%	
Job or vocational skills	33%	
Better protection (housing, food, healthcare)	15%	
An educational programme	12%	

## Section III: Development and social protection interventions that could impact irregular migration plans.

### 3.1 Accessing both social protection and development programmes at the same time reduces migration intentions to a remarkable degree across all groups.

**60% of potential migrants reported that they would change their migration plans and stay home only if they had access to *combined* programming involving vocational training, cash assistance and basic needs assistance** such as health care and food security.<sup>46</sup> An additional 20% would 'very likely stay home' but may continue to think about migrating if they received this type of programming. 5% were undecided, while only 15% would migrate regardless of what was offered to them.

In contrast, when presented with only one option, only a very small number of potential migrants interviewed said they would stay home. 10% would likely stay if they were offered vocational training and 19% stated that they would remain in Nigeria if offered only cash assistance – and likely only for a short while. Combined programming, on the other hand, would allow them to use cash assistance to invest as opposed to having to spend it on electricity, for instance.

When speaking with families, a similar trend emerged. 65% reported that the family member would very likely have remained in Nigeria with the promise of combined programming. Only 4% felt that vocational training would have influenced their decision. Similarly, 14% of families felt cash assistance would have been a pull factor to remain home, at least temporarily.

This significance of the result is strong even amongst the potential migrants who have actually benefited from programming. Focus group participants who had benefited from government-led programmes also reported substantial benefit since it offers job creation/training as well as cash assistance.<sup>47</sup>

**Once potential migrants begin their journey and are in transit the idea of combined programming remains influential.** 52% of transit migrants reported that they likely would have stayed home or would return home if able to benefit from skills training and cash and basic needs assistance at the same time, and over the long term. Whereas a mere 24% would be convinced to stay home to complete vocational training only.

Individual IDIs and FGDs with asylum seekers also reinforce the positive effects of receiving both social protection and development programming simultaneously. Asylum seekers based in Italy, for instance, reported no intention of migrating onward because of the support they have found in the country. Some noted that the programmes were “a real blessing” as they no longer have to beg for food or clothing, indicating an increase in dignity and safety.

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46 The baseline survey indicated that cash assistance, vocational training and basic needs assistance were the top three programmes that would deter migration plans and allow people to live a decent and dignified life in Nigeria. So the survey tool implemented during Phase 2 focused on these three programmes.

47 N-Power is an example of a programme that respondents said was beneficial. “Under the N-Power initiative (consisting of N-Teach, N-Tech and N-Agro) graduates are given jobs either as school teachers, farm extension workers, in the agro sector and some in the health sector and paid a monthly stipend of N30,000 (about \$55) for a year, used to be two years before disengagement. Beneficiaries are picked on merit. Just write and pass the exam.” KII, government official, Nigeria.

“The programme is sponsored by the government of Italy; the benefits of this programme are numerous. The programme is to be able to help immigrants integrate into the society well and be able to contribute their own quota into the economy of the country.”

- FGD, male asylum seeker, Italy

“Most of the programmes I am enjoying are business grants, free education, vocational training, good security, free housing, all being provided by the government and some NGOs. The programme offered me a lot and helped me put food on my table.”

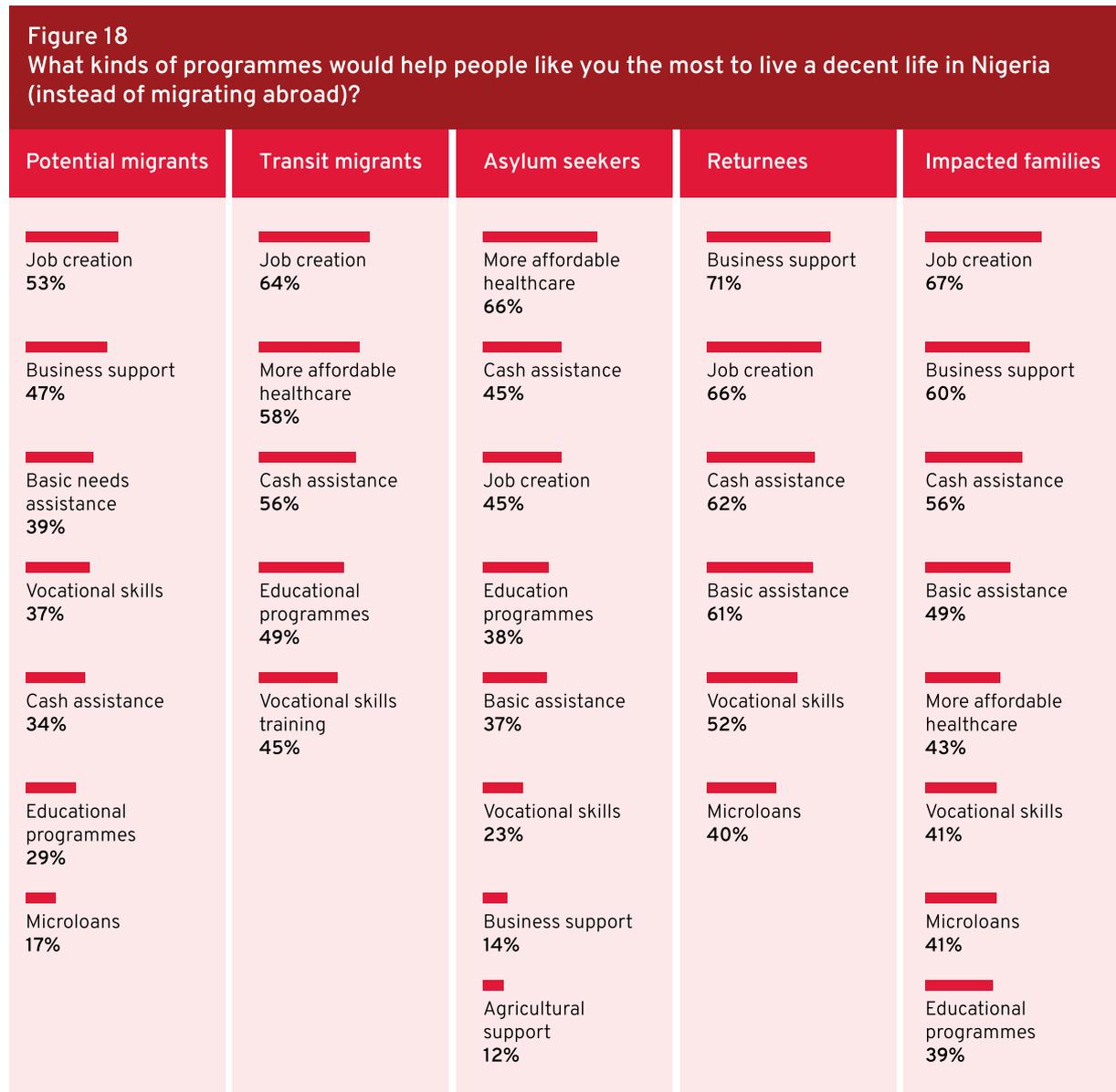
- FGD, male asylum seeker, Italy

### 3.2 Job creation, cash assistance, business start-up and access to basic needs are key initiatives that could prevent people from migrating irregularly and possibly draw migrants to return home.

The study found that different migrant groups have different priorities and perceptions of what programmes or interventions can be considered ‘transformative’ to their wellbeing and dignity. On the whole, however, as illustrated through Figure 18, the provision of job creation, business support, cash assistance, and basic needs assistance were reported to be the most effective in deterring migration in the first place and/or drawing transit migrants home.<sup>48</sup>

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48 The baseline survey indicated that cash assistance, vocational training and basic needs assistance were the top three programmes that would deter migration plans and allow people to live a decent and dignified life in Nigeria. The survey tool implemented during Phase 2 went into more depth with a focus on these three programmes. The questions raised included the ways in which a specific development intervention (livelihood/vocational) or social protection (cash assistance/ basic assistance) service may affect the migration decision making of potential migrants and those in transit, including the gaps between the drivers for migration and what programmes actually influence.



Though needs can be broadly categorized efficiently by ‘migrant group’, the study found that the impact a specific ‘type’ of development or social protection programme may have on the wellbeing of individuals within migrant groups differs according to circumstance and ‘social location’. For example, even though they are both ‘potential migrants’, educated migrants with assets will have different needs and priorities than those who have little chance of asylum and for whom the journey is risky. Their needs would differ again from those vulnerable to trafficking, who would require different types or combinations of programming. For example, vocational training is preferred by those who are underemployed and aged 18–24 years while those who work part-time ranked job creation as their priority.

On the whole, however, when coupled with basic needs assistance, economic empowerment such as business start-ups and capital was reported to be especially beneficial by female potential migrants and female transit migrants (for details see Section 3.3). A similar result was found in the FGDs with transit migrants and asylum seekers who are currently enrolled in vocational training or are receiving cash or

basic assistance in Italy.<sup>49</sup> The majority of migrants interviewed reported that they would have stayed at home in Nigeria if combined support or similar programmes and benefits were available, and that potential migrants in Nigeria would also reconsider their plans.

**Testimonies from male and female asylum seekers and transit migrants benefiting from a programme in Italy that includes vocational training, cash assistance and basic needs assistance at the same time**

Yes, if the programmes had existed many people would have stayed back.

Yes, if the programme existed many people would stay back in Nigeria. I would have stayed.

Yes, if these programmes I am currently benefiting from such as business grants, job creation, good security, vocational training are provided [then] the majority of Nigerians would stay back.

Yes, they will surely stay back home and things will be better. I would stay back.

Yes, if the programme had existed many people would have stayed back in Nigeria.

Yes, they would stay if the programme is well delivered. I would have stayed.

The Nigerian smugglers who were interviewed in Belgium and Niger also further validated the types of programmes that would be transformative. Despite being in completely different contexts, they reported that financial assistance as a means to get through hardship and poverty and to invest in jobs and businesses would enable them to leave the smuggling trade and return home.

**SNAPSHOT ON SMUGGLERS**

The vast majority (86%) of the smugglers interviewed originally embarked on their journey as economic migrants hoping to settle within West Africa or travel to a European country through the Central Mediterranean route.

Many ended up staying in Niger because they were swindled, stranded, robbed or kidnapped.

Many smugglers believe that Nigeria is hopeless and offers very little financial or physical security, and few opportunities to live well. Yet, 79% of the smugglers indicated job creation, business and job opportunities and/or economic empowerment would enable them to return home and live a decent life.

“You know, in Nigeria we have everything, we have everything! We are the giant of Africa but now we are the giant only by name. Here in Niger there is electricity, there is water, there is security, there is everything. You can sleep outside till 2 o'clock or until daybreak, nobody can go to disturb you but, in Nigeria, it's not like that.”

- KII, Nigerian Smuggler, Niger

49 They participated in the same FGD in Italy. It was a mix of male and female participants.

### 3.3 Combined 'empowerment' programming that has objectives linked to both protection and development outcomes suspends the migration plans of vulnerable women considered most at risk of human trafficking.

This study found that former victims of trafficking and those considered at risk benefitted remarkably from 'empowerment' programming that had objectives linked to both protection and development outcomes. The data emerged first from interviews and FGDs with former female potential migrants in Lagos, Nigeria who had participated in the Government Enterprise and Empowerment Program (GEEP).<sup>50</sup>

All the women who participated in a focus group in Lagos who had benefited from the cash and business start-up programmes under GEEP reported that they no longer had plans to migrate.<sup>51</sup> Their lives had reportedly changed for the better and the financial payoffs from participating in the programming were also reaching their family members. Initially, the majority were migrating due to being unable to make ends meet. Their financial situations were poor and, though the levels of education varied, none were able to apply their education or find a job.

Below are excerpts from the FGD with the female beneficiaries who have benefitted/were still benefiting from the combined vocational skills, cash assistance and business start-up GEEP programme.

#### Female participants benefitting from combined GEEP programme

Yes, my life changed the moment I became hopeful with my digital skills. Currently I run a boutique and I also market my goods and services online. My family members are happy that I have something to do that puts food on the table and they are benefiting too.

I will say my life has changed since I benefited from the programme, I was hopeless, no job, no source of income. Now I have opened a makeup artist shop and people have started patronizing me. Though I just started because the programme ended last month, September 6th 2021. As for my family, the impact would get to them soon.

Drastically, my life has changed. I own a shop where I sell female and children's clothes. My family members are benefiting also. One of my younger sisters is helping me to sell in the shop too.

Very well, my life has changed, the moment the cash was given to me I went on to rent a shop where I braid hair and fix attachments. Things are going on fine and my family members are benefiting also.

A big yes, my life has changed, I make money online using my digital skills, so much to be done, things are going on fine. Yes, my family members are benefiting.

My life and that of my family members have changed. I am now a manufacturer of soap and bleach. I have produced four batches since I started in September till now. Though the market is slow, with time everything will be fine.

<sup>50</sup> GEEP is a type of development and social protection programme that provides microloans for traders, artisans, farmers, enterprising youths and above all vulnerable women. The programme includes business start-up, training and cash assistance.

<sup>51</sup> This is not representative and carries the limitations of a FGD, namely the potential bias of respondents confirming what thought leaders in the FGD say. It is recommended that this result be tested on a bigger sample of beneficiaries and with a mixed methods approach.

On the whole, this type of combined programming had a remarkable impact on their intentions to migrate – and on their families’ wellbeing. We did not have access to information regarding whether the programme measured effects of outputs or outcomes on migration intentions but we may assume that this is not a programme targeting or being sensitive to migration. Overall, this finding does show that programmes for vulnerable women at risk of trafficking or migration may easily be linked to migrant-sensitive programming.

Further data emerged from FGDs and IDIs with female asylum seekers who were former victims of trafficking and who are now benefiting from general assistance programmes from the government of Italy. Their feedback raised similar trends to those noted in the GEEP group, which validates the conclusion that combined programming mitigates risks to trafficking. For instance, all women were struggling while in Nigeria to take care of their families and meet their own basic needs. The effect of the programming on their lives also speaks to the importance of a programme to enable empowerment and restore a sense of dignity.

#### Female asylum seekers (former victims of trafficking) in Italy benefitting from combined programming

“Most of the programmes I am enjoying here now are free housing, free education, good security, and financial assistance. They are mostly sponsored by the federal government and some non-government organizations. I found out about the programmes from the television news. I also did vocational training and I was offered a certificate.”

- FGD, former victim of trafficking and female asylum seeker, Italy.

“The programmes I enjoy here are free education and a good health care centre. They are sponsored by the Italian government. I found out about some of the programmes through friends and newspapers. I attended one vocational training and I was issued a certificate.”

- FGD, former victim of trafficking and female asylum seeker, Italy.

“I am enjoying food, clothes, shelter, vocational training, financial assistance, and job creation. The benefits of this programme are numerous, the programme enables immigrants to integrate into the society well and be able to contribute to their quota on the development of the economy of the country thereby providing food for themselves. This programme was sponsored by the government of Italy. I found out about some of the programmes through friends and television.”

- FGD, former victim of trafficking and female asylum seeker, Italy.

# | CONCLUSION

Development programming including social protection is considered the key to enabling the Nigerian population to lead dignified lives. Yet such programmes in Nigeria commonly fail to reach those most likely to migrate irregularly. Very few potential migrants receive any formal social protection or social safety net, or have ever been enrolled in development programming. Similarly, few have information about what is available. For those who have benefitted from programming, the trust in the government to adequately and effectively deliver on their promises or programmes has largely eroded and, thus, there has been little effect of these initiatives on migration decision making.

At the same time, the large majority of study participants indicated they felt that ‘there is no place like home’, and many told interviewers they would not have migrated and/or would return home if offered some long-term benefit that they could trust to last and be consistent. We found that effective delivery of development programming but especially basic needs assistance as part of social protection schemes work to reduce migration intentions or can cut migration plans altogether. Job creation, business development, and cash assistance were also top-rated programme types to provide an alternative to migration.

Three conclusions are of particular relevance to policy and programme development. First, the key to effective programming that takes into account migration decision making is restoring dignity and addressing the needs of individuals in relation to their personal migration drivers. Second, the influence programming has over migration decision making is less about access and more about trust and good governance; trust that it will lead to a better future with durable and long-lasting benefits. Third, combined programming that balances or offers both social protection and development outcomes effectively reduces migration to a remarkable degree across all groups.

# ANNEX

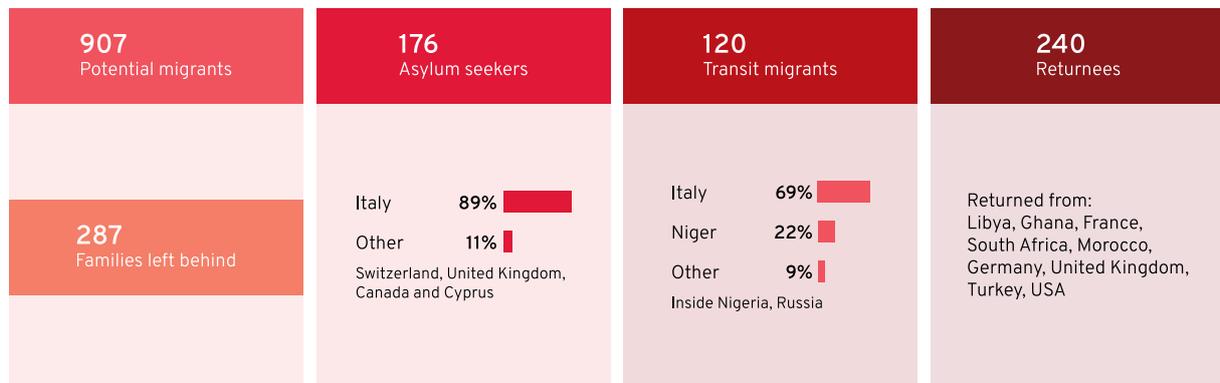
## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Methods

The findings in this scoping study are based on data generated through a range of methods and tools implemented in a phased approach. The first phase included a desk review and an online baseline survey reaching 400 respondents across Nigeria in June 2021.

Drawing from the baseline results, in Phase 2 (July–September 2021) 10 Nigeria-based researchers conducted 1,733 face-to-face and telephone surveys with potential migrants, returnees and families located across 32 Nigerian states; Nigerian transit migrants in Italy and Niger; and Nigerian asylum seekers in Italy. The surveys were developed in partnership with the field teams.

**Figure A1: Sample size and location of respondents when surveyed/interviewed**



Phase 3 (September–November 2021) implemented the qualitative component including In-Depth Interviews (IDIs), Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This entailed 178 IDIs and 21 FGDs with potential migrants in Nigeria; transit migrants and asylum seekers/refugees in Italy; and returnees and families in Nigeria. 15 KIIs with UN staff, INGOs, and government officials gave depth to the analysis of challenges government and development actors face in delivering effectively and, in particular, for potential migrants and returnees.

An additional 15 KIIs with Nigerian smugglers based in Niger and Belgium provided additional insights into how, as former economic migrants, a lack of access to social protection and development programming played a role in their decision-making and current work in the smuggling trade.<sup>52</sup>

52 The choice of countries for interviews with transit migrants and asylum seekers was convenience-based.

**Figure A2: Key Informant Interviews**

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS - NIGERIA				
GENDER	ORGANISATION	LOCATION	TYPE OF INTERVIEWEE	TITLE/ROLE OF INTERVIEWEE
Man	Lagos State Government	Lagos	Government official	Officer, Monitoring beneficiaries of NSIP for compliance
Man	Withheld by respondent	Abuja	NGO employee	Programme manager
Woman	Federal Government	Lagos	Government official	Assistant chief investigation officer: investigation of postal related crimes
Man	Local organisation	Ekiti	Employee of local organisation	Clergy: Pastor
Man	Local organisation	Benin, Edo	Employee of local organisation	Local corp officer
Woman	Local Government (state withheld by respondent)	State in North central Nigeria	Government official	Senior Special Assistant on development partnership/non-governmental affairs
Woman	Lagos State Government	Lagos	Government official	Commissioner
Woman	UN staff	Cross-River	UN Staff	Consultant and development practitioner
Woman	Embrace lifestyle foundation	Lagos	Employee of local organisation	Founder
Man	Local organisation	Benin, Edo	NGO employee	Assistant project officer
Woman	Onyx	Cross-River	Employee of local organisation	Founder
Man	Enactus Nigeria	Lagos	Employee of local organisation	Senior programs officer: programs implementation and training
Man	Cuso International	Cross-River	NGO employee	Staff at Cuso International

## Design and Sampling Framework

Five surveys were developed – one per migrant group. They were essentially a slight variation on the same core survey to account for the different circumstances. For instance, questions asked to transit migrants or asylum seekers sought to understand access to programming in the past, prior to their migration. Likewise, questions posed to families centred on the family member who migrated, as well as their experience and access to programming as a family. The surveys were developed in partnership with Afghan field researchers in Afghanistan and the EU.

The surveys were descriptive and captured only a moment in time (as opposed to comparative surveys). They were semi-structured with the opportunity to provide additional feedback/information by selecting ‘other’ text boxes. The design of the survey questions followed the thematic template set out by the analytical framework; the survey first asked questions about trust, knowledge of programming and governance. It moved on to questions regarding access and impact of programming (hypothetical and actual) on migration drivers. The third section of the survey posed questions about what types of programming would be most transformative.

The survey was translated into Yoruba and Pidgin.

The sampling for the survey respondents from each group was purposive, predetermined by the groups with clustered: potential migrants, transit migrants, asylum seekers, returnee and family members. In accordance with purposive sampling, a pre-screening was conducted before the survey began. This also allowed for researchers to collect demographic data. If the person did not fall into one of the five categories all of the information was dismissed and not calculated or submitted to Kobo. Also in accordance with purposive sampling, the survey and interview participants were recruited face-to-face through snowball sampling and Seefar’s network from migration awareness raising campaigns.

The minimum sample size for each migrant group was calculated by Raosoft. The margin of error/bias that we tolerated was set with a confidence level of 95% and response distribution of 50%.

The locations were chosen based on convenience as we had researchers living in or in close proximity to these countries. Italy and Niger were chosen also because of the significance of these countries for Nigerian transit migrants and those who have found asylum.

## Risk Mitigation

The piloting of the data collection tools (described below) allowed us to catch and delete duplicates, identify ethical concerns and rephrase questions that may be culturally sensitive. We also put complaint mechanisms in place to log any issues that emerged throughout the project.

Some concepts or terms used in the questionnaire were predefined so as to streamline the answers and mitigate measurement bias. The terms we defined for the respondent were quality of life and basic needs. Quality of life was defined using the definition of the WHO: support with education, income, healthcare and basic amenities such as constant electricity, adequate shelter and clean water. Basic needs referred to water, food, shelter and clothing.



Once the cross tabs were completed, a process of descriptive analysis began and continued for approximately four weeks. Every crosstab was individually described and related to the broader research questions, ranked according to themes and documented in excel data files.

### Qualitative

The qualitative data were thematically analysed using the NVivo software (see Figure A3), which allowed us to have deeper insight into our data, discover hidden themes and produce an in depth analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). After coding our data for emerging themes, we further coded them using a directed qualitative content analysis to find specific themes and mentions of specific words or phrases to shed more light on the focus of this study which is the link between social protection and migrants' decision making (see Figure A4).

### Triangulation

The qualitative and quantitative data were then assessed together and synthesized according to themes, linkages between themes and outliers.

### Capacity Building of Local Researchers

The research design was participatory. Each phase began with intensive training in the methodology and a two–three week pilot phase. During the quantitative phase all researchers were trained in survey design, how to administer surveys while mitigating measurement and/or observer bias. During the qualitative phase, researchers were given a full day workshop on how to administer qualitative interviews with different stakeholders. Midway through the pilot phase the research team were checked on and then at the end of pilot phase another full day workshop was held to discuss the tools and check on comfort levels in administering the tools and whether there was a need for further capacity strengthening.

The surveys as well as all qualitative tools were designed by the research team at HQ but the field team provided feedback over the course of pilot periods. At the end of each pilot period, the tools were revised, agreed upon and the phase officially began. All pilot data was considered unusable and wiped from the Kobo tool.

### Data Management

Data was secured through password protected files which only the research team could access. All surveys were anonymised and no names were taken and given to the research team. Names and numbers were given to the field researchers for purposes of follow up/re-interview but these were never shared and were destroyed on the last day of fieldwork.

### Limitations of Methods and Research Tools

Measurement bias is always a risk in quantitative research. We mitigate this risk with high targets and the use of Kobo, which uses automated skip logic that reduces faulty data collection.

# How access to development and social protection programming impacts on migration decision making

The case of Nigeria

February 2022