

The IOM report on displacements in the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) (March 2019) highlights the growing importance of return movements of former Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in 2018. According to the DTM, the total returnee population represents 41% of the population affected by displacements in the LCB. Whilst the available population and location data highlights the large number of returnees in the region, the implementation of the stability index sheds more light on what assistance is required to ensure durable returns, who needs it and where. This tool serves as a measure of stability in return areas and identifies “pockets of stability” which will enable actors to plan for more adapted programming.

Methodology

The **stability index** is based on key informant data collection at locality level. It correlates data available on returnee population with 19 indicators, grouped in three scales to measure the stability of a return area and create a location stability score. Scales are: 1) access to livelihoods and basic services, 2) perceptions in terms of social cohesion and 3) perceptions of security.

The indicators used to build the stability index were selected on the basis of recent quantitative and qualitative research on the dynamics of post-conflict returns. These indicators represent a set of minimum or critical living conditions that are necessary to make a place stable and more conducive to durable returns. In practical terms, the model responds to the following question: « Are there conditions on the ground that favour the stability of an area? ».

These indicators were formulated into a survey format and interviews with key informants were conducted in each return location (314) of the Far-North region between 12 and 25 August 2019. This method has the advantage of allowing the coverage of a large number of localities over a short period of time, but its main limitation lies in the fact that only one, or a few informants, report on the views of a community.

DATA COLLECTION IN THE FAR-NORTH

110 574 Returnees

6 divisions	31 sub-divisions	314 locations
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Data collected – August 2019.

STABILITY INDEX CALCULATION

The stability index uses Principal Component Analysis to assess the impact of each indicator on the perception of stability of an area and then provides a specific value per indicator. These ratios make it possible to evaluate which indicators have a greater statistical impact than others on the perception of stability of areas. Each indicator thus has a value associated that allows to calculate a « livelihood and basic services score », a « social cohesion score » and a « safety score ». These three scores are then combined to create the stability index. **The index ranges from 0 (low perception of stability) to 100 (high perception of stability).**

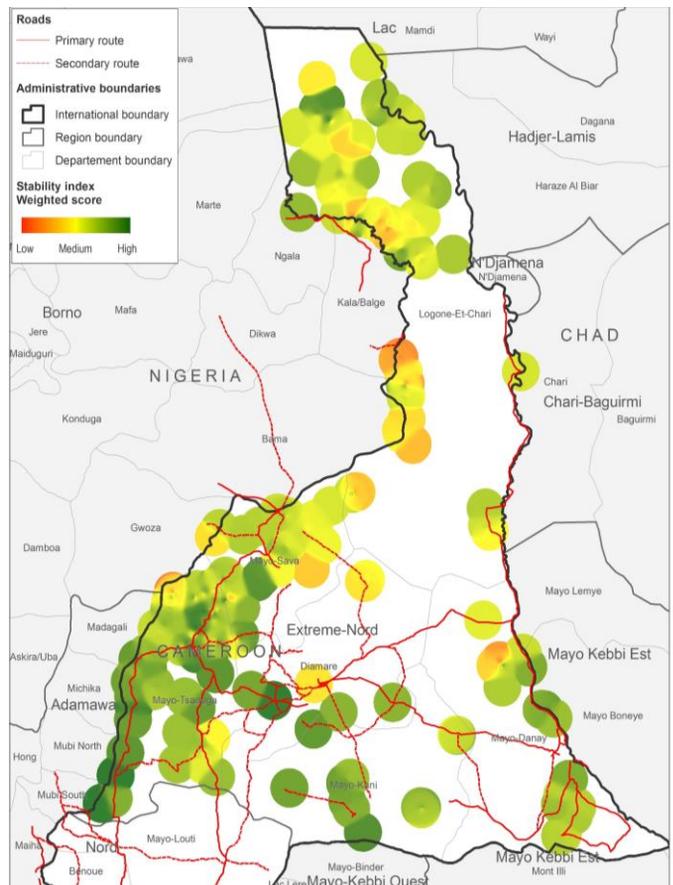
Findings

In 94% of the assessed locations, local populations do not expect to move in the next 6 months (dependent variable – perception of stability).

The overall stability scores in the 6 divisions vary between 62 and 81, which indicate that most of the conditions necessary for stability are met. The Mayo-Kani division (hosting the lowest proportion of returnees) has the highest stability score whilst the Logone-et-Chari division (hosting the largest proportion of returnees) has the lowest stability score. In this division, the relatively low stability scores in the Logone-Birni, Waza and Makari sub-divisions currently host the highest proportion of IDPs.

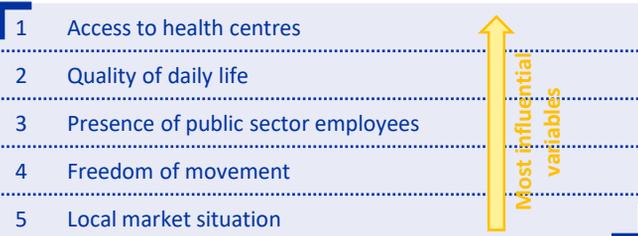
Based on statistical analysis, the local populations’ positive perceptions of security in the assessed locations contributes the most to the high perception of stability across the divisions.

Map 1: Stability scores in assessed localities across the Far-North region



KEY STABILITY INDEX VARIABLES

Principal Component Analysis has shown that the five variables below have the most influential impact on the outcome of stability in the assessed locations and thus add more weight to the overall index:

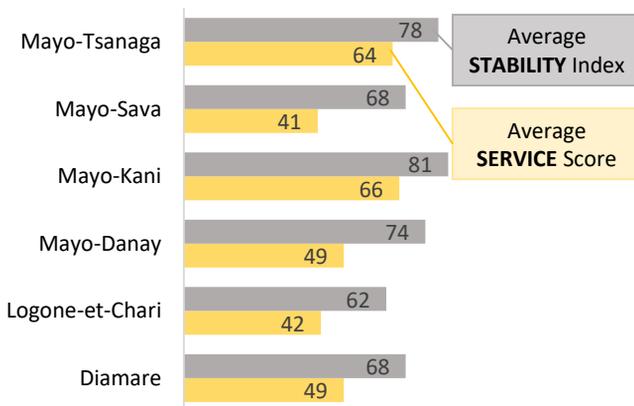


Considering the low variations in responses for some of the indicators (access to legal remedies, illegal occupation of land, tensions in the community), these were given a relatively low weight and thus have less impact on the overall stability index.

Scale 1: Livelihoods and basic services scale

The average livelihood and basic services scores are lower than the average stability index in all divisions. They are especially low in the Logone-et-Chari division (42) which hosts the highest proportion of returnees (32%) and for the Mayo-Sava division (41), hosting 31% of the returnee population in the Far-North region.

Chart 1: Average Livelihoods and basic services Score by Department



Access to health centres is the indicator with the highest impact on the livelihoods and basic services scale. This means that the perception of stability in an area depends a lot on whether the community has access to basic health services. In more than 30% of the assessed villages in the Logone-et-Chari division for example, the communities don't have access to basic health care services. In the Mayo-Sava, Mayo-Tsanaga and Diamare divisions, communities have access to basic health care services in more than 85% of the assessed locations.

The indicator with the second highest impact on Scale 1 is the presence of public sector employees in the assessed localities.

Scale 2: Perceptions in terms of social cohesion

The average social cohesion scores are higher than the average stability index in five out of the six divisions. The Diamare division has the lowest average social cohesion score.

Quality of daily life is the indicator with the highest impact on the social cohesion perception scale. In more than 75% of the assessed locations, key informants reported that streets are lively and residents are able to carry out activities without worry. However, in more than 80% of the assessed localities in the Diamare division (representing 9 localities), key informants reported that the situation is tense and that there are very few people in the streets.

The indicator with the second highest impact on the social cohesion perception scale is the community members' participation in public affairs. In almost 80% of the assessed localities, key informants reported that there are several bodies allowing residents to participate in public affairs (CSO, unions, committees, social gatherings etc). In the Logone-et-Chari division though, community members reported that there are no or very few bodies allowing them to participate in public affairs in more than 40% of the assessed localities.

Scale 3: Perceptions in terms of security

The average security perception scores are higher than the average stability index in all divisions. This is correlated with the latest DTM mobility tracking assessments (August 2019) highlighting that more than 45% of the returnees moved back to their localities because they perceived these areas to be secure.

Freedom of movement is the indicator with the highest impact on the perception of security scale. In more than 85% of the assessed locations, key informants reported that there are currently no or limited restrictions on residents' movements. In 11 localities of the Logone-et-Chari division and 6 localities of the Mayo-Tsanaga division, movements or residents are restricted and this has a significant impact on their daily life.

Programming implications

Identifying pockets of stability

Understanding how to program in these pockets

Understanding return conditions and their evolution over time

Contributing to the HPDN strategy in-country

* Humanitarian Peace Development Nexus

The Stability Index survey form as well as a more detailed methodology note are available on demand.