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VULNERABILITY AND RESILIENCE ASSESSMENT INITIATIVE TO COUNTER VIOLENT EXTREMISM (VRAI)

Final Synthesis Report

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List of Acronyms

AQIM	Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CGD	Centre de Gouvernance Démocratique
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DNH	Do No Harm
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
HQ	Headquarters
ISGS	Islamic State in Greater Sahara
ISIS/WA	Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/West Africa
JNIM	Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin
LRCD	La Radio Lutte Contre Désertification
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
VE	Violent Extremism
VEO	Violent Extremist Organizations
VRAI	Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment Initiative to Counter Violent Extremism
VST	Village Selection Tool

Executive Summary

Mercy Corps' Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment Initiative to Counter Violent Extremism (VRAI) aimed to **design a set of replicable data collection tools**, which will enable national, regional and local level state and civil society practitioners to identify communities most vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

VRAI partnered with local organizations in three regions, including two in Niger (Diffa and Tillabéry with partner Karkara) and one in Burkina Faso (with partner Centre de Gouvernance Démocratique (CGD)).

Mercy Corps carried out phase one of the assessment in March 2017 in the Diffa region of Niger; phase two from July - August 2017 in the Gorom-Gorom commune of Burkina Faso; and phase three from October - November 2017 in the Tillabéry region of Niger. In total, Mercy Corps surveyed 705 households and conducted 86 focus group discussions, in addition to numerous key informant interviews and participatory mapping exercises. With all three phases of the study, a rich and robust dataset has been collected, which did not previously exist in the West Africa countering violent extremism (CVE) context.

Overview of Methodology and Research Tools

The VRAI toolkit is comprised of various participatory community assessment tools that seek to measure community vulnerability – and resilience – to recruitment by violent extremist groups. The primary tool is called the Village Selection Tool (VST). This tool consists of a set of vulnerability and resilience criteria, which a committee of community stakeholders uses to rank villages in a particular region by their perceived vulnerability (see Annex 1 for full list of VST criteria). After the ranking exercise, 10 villages are then selected for further data collection with five villages selected from the perceived “more vulnerable” group and five from the “less vulnerable” group, as identified by the VST.

In these 10 villages, Mercy Corps then employed a suite of participatory community research tools in order to validate and supplement the findings of the VST. Initially, this set of tools consisted of the following: 1) Community workshop guide; 2) Historic profile of community; 3) Social and resource map; 4) Conflict tree; 5) Social cohesion tree; 6) Women's focus group; 7) Young men's focus group; 8) Young women's focus group; 9) Household questionnaire; 10) Local authority questionnaire; and 11) Actors and victims questionnaire (see Annex 2).

Following phase one in Diffa, however, the VRAI toolkit was revised, as explained below.

Refining the Methodology and Research Tools

Phase one in Diffa served as the pilot and testing phase. After conducting phase one, Mercy Corps evaluated the effectiveness of the tools and their ease of use. Based on these lessons learned, Mercy Corps made several revisions to the VRAI toolkit and methodological approach prior to phases two and three of the study. These revisions are summarized below and explained in detail in the section entitled, “Reflections on the Effectiveness of the Tools.”

- Reduced the number of criteria in the VST from 43 to 23 in order to make the tool more manageable and eliminate redundancies.
- Reduced the suite of community research tools from 11 to six, including by merging four previously separate tools related to socio-economic and cultural dynamics into one tool.
- Revised the household questionnaire and focus group guides to not only gather data on what community members *perceive* to be the most operative factors of vulnerability and resilience, but to also obtain data on the levels of vulnerability factors themselves, such as community perceptions of public services, current security conditions, and religious freedom.

Recommendations for the Future Use and Sequencing of the Tools

Overall, the suite of tools used provided significant and useful information. The team observed that the participatory tools (the VST; and the social, economic and community mapping tool) were the most useful in terms of providing rich nuanced information that included the full context. The household questionnaire was useful in collecting a great deal of information and being able to analyze it quickly, though the results from certain portions of it were inconsistent. Participatory methods, observation, and in-depth interviews yielded much more useful and candid discussions and information. The following recommendations are for future users of the suite of tools:

- Where time and resources allow, use several tools from the suite of tools to further refine the VST as appropriate to the context. The “Participatory Mapping Guide” is a critical first step in the community – an entry into the

context, to understand the challenges, issues and underlying context. Without this step at the community-level, the other data collection will yield useful information, however, it will be less rich, nuanced and contextualized. Often this step can inform other questions/information that should be probed in the focus group discussions, for example. The following tools should be prioritized:

- Participatory mapping guide
- Focus group discussion guide
- The portion the revised household survey, which gauges “sources of community grievances.”

After testing the VST against these tools, refine the VST using participatory discussions with local stakeholders to finalize a context-specific VST.

- Where time and resources are limited, users may use only the final recommended version of the VST (see Annex 1) and – through participatory discussions with key stakeholders in a target region – identify the most vulnerable and resilient communities.

Key Research Findings

While the primary purpose of the VRAI project is to design a set of replicable data collection tools, Mercy Corps recognizes that the data it collected while designing and testing these tools is nevertheless important and worth discussing.

The data collected from Diffa, Gorom-Gorom, and Tillabéry indicates that multiple factors play a role in driving people to engage in violent extremism (VE). These include the perception that violent extremist organizations (VEOs) provide easy access to financial and personal gain, as well as grievances toward the central government that could be exploited by VEOs.

Participants perceived socio-economic factors as the most significant types of vulnerability factors in all three of VRAI’s regions.

- In **Diffa**, the vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was difficulty in marrying or attaining a position of respect within communities, which was identified by 85 percent of the 293 surveyed households. This was followed by the degradation of traditional educational values (83%), the desire to defend a religion or an ideology (81%), a lack of employment opportunities (75%), and easy access to financial and personal gain (74%).
- In **Gorom-Gorom**, the vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was

identified by 86 percent of the 205 surveyed households. This was followed by the lack of employment and opportunities (75%), and the degradation of traditional educational values (58%).

- In **Tillabéry**, unlike in Diffa and Gorom-Gorom, only one vulnerability factor stood out significantly: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was identified by 90 percent of the 207 surveyed households.

Participants perceived having a culture of non-violence, the existence of inter- and intra-community dialogue, and possessing a religious conviction that opposes violent extremism as the most significant types of resilience factors.

- In **Diffa**, the resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was having a religious conviction that opposes violent extremism, which was identified by 94 percent of the 293 surveyed households.
- In **Gorom-Gorom**, the resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was having a culture of non-violence, which was identified by 70 percent of the 205 surveyed households.
- In **Tillabéry**, the resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was the presence of inter- and intra-community dialogue, which was identified by 51 percent of the 207 surveyed households.

Following revisions to the VST and the suite of participatory community research tools used in Diffa, the VST became more capable of identifying the communities most vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

- In **Diffa**, after comparing and analyzing the data collected in the more vulnerable and less vulnerable villages (as identified by the VST), there appeared to be no major difference between the two classifications of villages in terms of their perceived sources of vulnerability and resilience.
- In **Gorom-Gorom** and **Tillabéry**, there were several survey questions in which the responses were strongly related to the classifications of the VST. For example, in Gorom-Gorom, lack of access to public services and health services correlated with villages the VST identified as vulnerable. In Tillabéry, when asked about the current state of the security situation in their community, in four of the five villages identified as vulnerable by the VST, respondents viewed the security situation as “bad.”

Background

The threat of violent extremism in West Africa is increasing. Existing VEOs – such as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant/West Africa (ISIS/WA) in the Lake Chad Basin region, Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS), Ansar Dine in northern Mali, and the Macina Liberation Front (MLF) in central Mali – are simultaneously moving into new territory, including within the borders of Niger and Burkina Faso. In addition, new groups are regularly emerging in the region (e.g. Ansarul Islam), while existing groups often merge, splinter, and re-form in different iterations, which creates a highly fluid security environment. For example, several of Mali’s violent extremist groups – including AQIM, MLF, Ansar Dine, and Al-Mourabitoun – merged into the umbrella organization Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) in early 2017.

The presence and expansion of these groups present a serious threat to security and impedes peacebuilding and humanitarian efforts in an already fragile region. A key gap identified for effective countering violent extremism (CVE) efforts is the lack of tools and reliable data that would allow actors to identify communities most vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

Introduction to VRAI

With funding from the USAID Regional West Africa Mission, Mercy Corps’ Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment Initiative to Counter Violent Extremism (VRAI) aimed to design a set of replicable data collection tools, which will enable national, regional and local level state and civil society practitioners to identify communities most vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremist groups.

VRAI partnered with local organizations in three regions, including two in Niger (Diffa and Tillabéry with partner Karkara) and one in Burkina Faso (with partner Centre de Gouvernance Démocratique (CGD)).

VRAI Objectives

The overall objective of the VRAI project was to promote peace and stability in West Africa through the development of innovative and adaptable tools that identify community vulnerabilities and resilience capacities to inform effective CVE programs. The interim results of the VRAI project intend to: 1) develop and test a set of tools that measure vulnerability and resilience while taking into account gender issues and local knowledge; and 2) disseminate the process and lessons used to develop the tools and their uses and applications.

Geographic Targeting

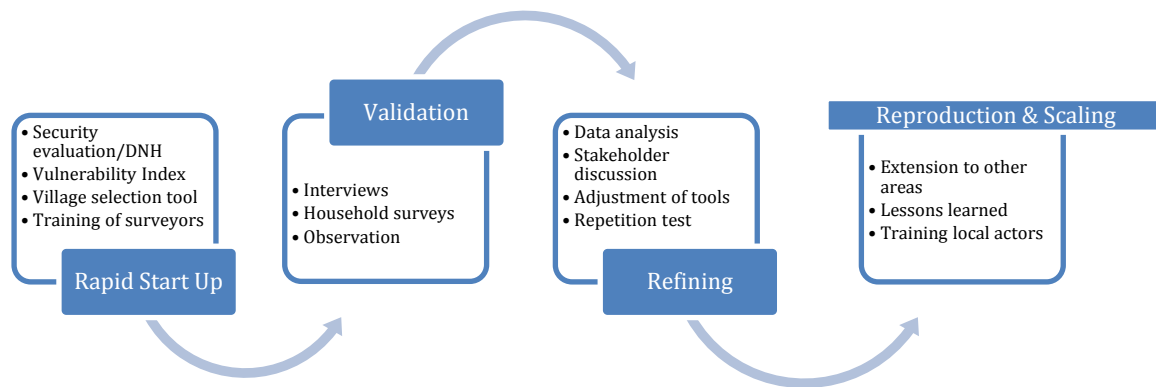
The VRAI research was carried out in Niger and Burkina Faso. These two countries were chosen because of the increase in violent attacks carried out by ISIS/WA in the Lake Chad Basin region, their proximity to Mali (the conflict and actors) and the various VEOs in the Liptako-Gourma Region, including Ansaroul Islam, JNIM and ISGS.

Country	Region/ Province	Commune	Reason for choice
Niger	Diffa	Diffa and Maïné-Soroa	Situated on the Niger-Nigeria border, which runs along the Komadougou-Yobe river, significant recruitment from ISIS/WA, originating in Nigeria, has been noted in this area. For example, the village of Tam had more than 400 people recruited between 2014-2015 based on the statistics provided by the Town Hall of Maïné-Soroa. During the first few months of 2017, the area was relatively calm and therefore a good target for the study.
	Tillabéry	Banibangou and Tondikiwindi	Areas situated along the border with Mali penetrated by VEOs originating from Mali. These VEOs' influence in Tillabéry has increased in the last two years. The security situation has become tenser and attacks are frequent. As the situation is rapidly changing, there is a need to evaluate the situation and understand what is taking place.
Burkina Faso	Oudalan	Gorom-Gorom	An area in the triangular region between Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, which is also experiencing complex security issues that need to be recorded and analyzed. Recently, the region saw the emergence of the local extremist group Ansarul Islam in the Soum Province, which neighbors Oudalan province. ISGS came to the forefront in late 2016 by attacking security posts in Markoye and Intagom.

Intervention Strategy

VRAI was based on an adaptive and collaborative research model that emphasizes a pragmatic approach focused on the development and refinement of tools and community participation. VRAI's strategy enabled it to be adaptable in a complex and constantly changing environment while remaining relevant to the global and regional context. The tools developed by the project were tested in Diffa, and observations were noted to refine the tools for the next phases of the study in the Sahel region of Burkina Faso and Tillabéry, Niger.

VRAI Project Research Process



Test Phase in Diffa, Niger

The Diffa phase was used as the pilot/testing phase. It was the first area used for testing the tools, collecting data and observing the dynamics of participation. With this information the team refined the tool kit used to measure vulnerability and resilience. The Diffa phase had the following objectives:

- Test the use of the village selection, vulnerability measurement and resilience measurement tools in communities faced with VE.
- Test the adaptability and applicability of the data collection tools to Diffa's specific context.
- Test the dynamics of community participation with respect to refining the tools and research in the field.
- Analyze the tools' performance and effectiveness based on the results obtained.
- Modify and correct the tools in order to produce a toolkit to measure vulnerability and resilience in the face of VE that can be reproduced in any context.

Do No Harm and Gender Considerations

Do No Harm (DNH) is a core principle that Mercy Corps applies throughout its programming. Recognizing that giving visible preference to a particular segment of the population risks reinforcing fears of identity-based exclusion, the program approach emphasizes consensus building and ensures that benefits of program participation are equally accessible to all segments of the community. Conflict sensitivity and gender considerations were incorporated into all aspects of the tools, risk management, and monitoring and evaluation practices to ensure it was adequately considered and reported. Mercy Corps has developed a standardized

curriculum and tools for training all staff in the principles of DNH and conflict sensitivity.

Methodology and Research Tools

Creating the Pilot Village Selection Tool (VST)

In order to test the VST, Mercy Corps created a pilot version after conducting a rapid document review of key CVE studies and best practices. This included three CVE-specific literature reviews as well as research on participation in violence in order to pull out common drivers that can lead to support for VEOs and/or individuals leaving their community to join VEOs. The rapid scan also examined factors that prevent individuals from supporting these groups or engaging in violence in spite of the presence of VEOs in and around their communities (i.e. resilience capacities).

Based on the desk review, a set of 43 risk factors to VE (adapted to the contexts of Niger and Burkina Faso) was produced, shared and discussed amongst Mercy Corps and local stakeholders. After the first draft of the criteria and tools were developed, Mercy Corps and Karkara met with six mayors, academics from the universities in Diffa and Niamey, the High Commission for the Consolidation of Peace in Niger, and staff from the Niger Ministry of Interior to discuss, update and validate the suggested criteria. Once all input was gathered, a pilot version of the VST was ready to be used to select an initial group of 10 villages in which to test the suite of VRAI tools.

Revising the Village Selection Tool (VST)

After testing the pilot version of the VST in Diffa, Mercy Corps adapted and refined it in an effort to improve its usability and effectiveness. As such, the VST used in Gorom-Gorom and Tillabéry included only 23 criteria, instead of the 43 used in Diffa (see Annex 1).

After the Diffa exercise, Mercy Corps found that certain criteria were not relevant. For example, it was found that the communities did not clearly identify or relate to certain criteria – such as “fair distribution of public resources” or “level of confidence in judicial institutions” – which were more relevant at the national level than at the community level. For this reason, and to make the VST more manageable, these, and other, criteria were removed from the VST and replaced with more

relatable criteria like: “Inequality of access to potable water” and “existence of formal or informal mediation institutions in the village.”

Additionally, Mercy Corps found that many of the criteria used in the Diffa VST were redundant, and as such, Mercy Corps was able to reduce the overall number of criteria by combining and condensing certain criteria.

Establishing Village Selection Committees

As part of its commitment to using a participatory approach to research, the VRAI team worked to establish commune-level village selection committees in all three of its locations comprised of representative local stakeholders. In all three locations, two-day workshops were held with the village selection committees. Each workshop began with an overview of the project, including its objectives, expected results, and methodological approach.

The committees then examined each of the vulnerability and resilience capacity criteria comprising the VST and had the latitude to either approve or discard the criteria based on its perceived relevance for the local context. Committees were also able to add criteria if they felt important factors had been omitted. Each committee spent one full day discussing and debating the criteria, but ultimately, each committee approved the criteria comprising the VST. It should be noted that in Diffa, while the VST of 43 criteria was approved, many members of the village selection committees noted that there were a large number of criteria. Nevertheless, the committees in Diffa ultimately decided to keep all 43 criteria given that it was a pilot test and the committees felt it important to start with many criteria and then scale down or consolidate, as needed, based on the initial implementation and test. This is, indeed, what eventually happened following the Diffa test phase.

Village Selection Process

Each village selection committee then gave each village scores for each of the vulnerability and resilience criteria used in the VST. These scores were then used to create a ranked list of villages according to their vulnerability. A final group of 10 villages was then selected for testing, with five from the perceived more vulnerable group and five from the perceived less vulnerable group.

In Tillabéry however, significant concerns were raised by the commune-level stakeholders and Mercy Corps’ Security Team about the safety of conducting data collection in many of the villages. Indeed, the village leader in the village with the

highest vulnerability score (Inzouet) had been imprisoned on terrorism charges. The village of Tongo Tongo was where the attack of October 4, 2017 took place, which resulted in the deaths of four U.S. Special Forces, as well as Nigerian Military personnel. In the commune of Inatès, even the mayor of the commune resided in Ayorou (outside of the community) due to insecurity. For these reasons, in collaboration with stakeholders and USAID, Mercy Corps worked to identify other suitable villages where data collection could safely take place (see below).

Selected Villages in Tillabéry

Commune	Village	Vulnerability Score <i>(higher scores equals greater vulnerability)</i>
Tondikiwindi (Oullam)	Fanaka Koira	31
	Koma Bangou	32
	Korombara	32
	Cewane	35
	Boutouri	42
Banibangou	Milyado Koira Zeno	33
	Kodey Koira	40
	Banibangou Haoussa (quartier de Banibangou)	43
	Wiyé (quartier de Banibangou)	43
	Banibangou Zarma (quartier de Banibangou)	43

Selected Villages in Oudalan

Commune	Village	Vulnerability Score <i>(higher scores equals greater vulnerability)</i>
Gorom-Gorom	Feterde	28
	Gosey site	29
	Kelgayane	31
	Korizena	31
	Secteur 1	31
	Arrel	42
	Mamassi	45
	N'darga	45
	Guidoye	46
	Adiarey Diarey	50

Selected Villages in Diffa

Commune	Village	Vulnerability Score ¹ <i>(higher scores equals greater vulnerability)</i>
Diffa	Koursari	30
	Ligaridi	30
	Bagara	49
	Diffa Koura	49
Mainé Soroa	Grémadi	32
	Abdouri	46
	Yabal	50
	Boudoum	53
	Abounga Souleyri	54
	Tam	59

Development of Research Tools

Following village selection in Diffa, the VRAI team worked to create a complement of research tools that would be capable of capturing the desired information, while at the same time, in view of the sensitivity of the research subject, ensuring the active and open participation of the community, thereby facilitating the accuracy and representativeness of results. Tools would thus have to promote dialogue and sharing, create trust, and to the greatest extent possible, be applied through processes led by the communities themselves, with an

LIST OF DIFFA RESEARCH TOOLS

1. Community workshop guide
2. Historic profile of community
3. Social and resource map
4. Conflict tree
5. Social cohesion tree
6. Women's focus group
7. Young men's focus group
8. Young women's focus group
9. Household questionnaire
10. Local authority questionnaire
11. Actors and victims questionnaire

¹ It should be noted that after data collection took place in Diffa, Mercy Corps realized that an error had been made during the original ranking exercise. Upon realizing the error, Mercy Corps re-ranked the villages. However, the error did mean that Mercy Corps did not collect data in the five "most" and five "least" vulnerable villages in Diffa. Still, data collection nevertheless took place in villages from the "less" vulnerable group (including two which were tied for least vulnerable in Diffa (Koursari and Ligaridi) and one which was tied for second least vulnerable in Maine-Soroa (Gremadi)); as well as from villages from the "more" vulnerable group (including one which was the most vulnerable (Tam)).

ultimate goal of creating empowerment, confidence, and ownership of the process.

With that in mind, a suite of 11 complementary tools were developed by the VRAI team, including Mercy Corps' Peace and Conflict Advisor in Washington, DC. These tools employed a mixture of quantitative and qualitative methods in line with assessing the 43 criteria captured in the VST. The tools were further refined with Mercy Corps Niger's gender team to better take into account the dimensions of gender and youth.

Revising Research Tools

Following phase one of the research in Diffa, the VRAI team worked to revise the assessment tools in order to increase their usability and effectiveness. With that in mind, the suite of 11 tools used in Diffa was reduced to six and the questionnaires and focus group guides were revised to not only gather data on what community members *perceive* to be the most operative factors of vulnerability and resilience, but to also obtain data on the vulnerability factors themselves (see section entitled, "Reflections on the Effectiveness of the Tools" for more details on these revisions). Following phase two of the research in Gorom-Gorom, Mercy Corps did not make any further revisions to the research tools.

REVISED LIST OF RESEARCH TOOLS

1. *Preparatory Workshop Guide*
 2. *Participatory Mapping Guide to identify social, economic and cultural dynamics*
 3. *Guide for Conducting Focus Groups*
 4. *Household Questionnaire*
 5. *Victim/Actor Questionnaire*
 6. *Local Authority Questionnaire*
-

Based on the quantification of the time needed for the administration of each tool (see below), the team created data collection schedules for each village. These schedules were based on an allotment of six hours each day for data collection, so as not to disrupt the household, work, and income-generating activities of households.

List of Revised Data Collection Tools and Estimated Time Needed for Administration

		Estimated Hours Needed
Tool 1	Preparatory Workshop	3
Tool 2	Participatory Mapping to identify social, economic and cultural dynamics	4
Tool 3	Women's focus group	2
	Men's focus group	2
	Young men's focus group	2
	Young women's focus group	2
Tool 4	Household questionnaire	1-2
Tool 5	Actor and victim questionnaire	1
Tool 6	Local authority questionnaire	1

Surveyor Selection and Training

With research tools finalized, ten surveyors were recruited based on their experience in administering questionnaires and other data collection tools. Another criterion no less important in the context of this study was their understanding and ability to speak the local languages.

A two-day training session conducted by the Mercy Corps team and its local partners allowed surveyors time to fully understand the interview guides to administer the various tools. The first day of the training focused on theoretical, methodological and practical tips for conducting data collection. The second day focused on the use of tablets, where the interview guides and questions were digitized.² The investigators then carried out pilot tests of the tools in the field under the accompaniment of the members of the Mercy Corps team and local partners to ensure the surveyors and supervisors understood the questions and implementation of the tools.

² During phase one in Diffa, data collection took place via paper. For more details, see "Limitations of Phase One in Diffa" below.

Village Level Household Survey Sampling

To ensure the representativeness of its research, the VRAI team initially established a goal of having a global sample of 20 percent of all households in the target villages, with relatively representative numbers of young men and young women, as well as older men and women. However, following an analysis of the proposed sample, it was decided it would be more feasible to identify a smaller household sample through discussions with the village selection committees.³

The ten surveyors were divided into five teams of two with each team consisting of one man and one woman. The five teams were supervised by two supervisors who distributed the teams by village. Teams took an average of three days to collect data from each village. The process of collecting information was facilitated by the members of the Village Selection Committee and the locally elected representatives, who assisted in scheduling interview appointments and mobilizing the target groups to be interviewed.

In Diffa, data collection took place from March 2 - 24, 2017. A total of 293 households were surveyed and six focus groups were held. In Gorom-Gorom, data collection took place over 11 days (from July 27 - August 6, 2017). A total of 205 households were reached with quantitative questionnaires, and 40 focus groups were held and recorded. In addition, 20 local authority questionnaires and four questionnaires for victims of terrorism were implemented. In Tillabéry, data collection took place over 17 days (from October 23 to November 8, 2017), with an additional three days of data verification and debriefing with the community and stakeholders (November 9-11, 2017). A total of 207 households were reached with quantitative questionnaires, and 40 focus groups were held and recorded. In addition, 15 local authority questionnaires and eight questionnaires for victims of terrorism were implemented.

While the primary purpose of the VRAI program is to design a set of replicable data collection tools, Mercy Corps recognizes that the data it collected while designing and testing these tools is nevertheless important. As such, a detailed discussion of the data gathered from VRAI in Diffa, Gorom-Gorom, and Tillabéry can be found in Annex 3.

³ While this was done in Diffa, for Gorom-Gorom and Tillabéry, the households were determined by random selection of households from a household list.

Conclusion

The VRAI study provided a unique opportunity to collect and analyze data in areas exposed to violent extremism. The research shed light on the factors that lead to community vulnerability – and resilience – to violent extremism, and how this relates to the recruitment tactics used by various VEOs.

Reflections on the Effectiveness of the Tools

Limitations of Phase One in Diffa

Limitations of phase one of the study in Diffa include reluctance on the part of respondents to share information about the sensitive topic of VEO recruitment, as with similar research. To minimize this limitation, the survey and focus group discussion (FGD) tools asked respondents to share perceptions of drivers of VEO participation in general in their communities, rather than asking direct questions about the respondents' own vulnerability or resilience factors or attitudes toward VEOs. Therefore, this approach relied on third-party perceptions around the drivers of VEO recruitment, leaving the tools unable to capture actual reported levels of vulnerability and resilience factors in each community.

Because the purpose of VRAI is to develop tools that are replicable and scalable, identifying and seeking current or former members of armed groups was not feasible; however, third-party perspectives carry specific limitations. Mercy Corps' experience conducting interviews with former combatants/VEO members in the region and globally has shown that in general, third party explanations for why people join armed groups often differ significantly from firsthand accounts from members of armed groups themselves. Most notably, firsthand accounts – based on in-depth interviews – tend to yield richer, more detailed stories of the circumstances leading people to join armed groups and often feature complex motivations that may combine both “rational” and “irrational,” or emotional, motivations. Third party accounts, on the other hand, often simplify factors for joining and may be biased toward “rational” motivations, such as economic incentives.

Additional limitations presented around the security situation in Diffa and the availability of skilled and experienced interviewers. Diffa requires abiding by a curfew, with certain areas that are considered more dangerous than others and a large presence of military personnel. Kidnappings and other potential violence are frequent, which may have influenced how interviewers asked questions and how respondents were able to answer questions. Despite this, during this pilot in Diffa,

questions were not changed during data collection. While interviewers with the required skills and experience were difficult to identify, on-site training and supervision was provided and Mercy Corps is confident the interviewers performed well.

It should also be noted that data collection in Diffa was done via paper. Since it was then necessary to transcribe the data into the database, it increased the likelihood of transcription errors, even with supervision and multiple checks. Data collection for Gorom-Gorom and Tillabéry took place using digital tablets.

Effectiveness of Tools Following Revisions

After conducting phase one in Diffa, Mercy Corps evaluated the effectiveness of the tools and their ease of use. Based on these lessons learned, Mercy Corps made several revisions to the VRAI toolkit prior to phases two and three of the study. These revisions included reducing the number of criteria in the VST from 43 to 23; reducing the suite of community research tools from 11 to six; and revising the household questionnaire and focus group guides to not only gather data on what community members *perceive* to be the most operative factors of vulnerability and resilience, but to also obtain data on the levels of vulnerability factors themselves, such as community perceptions of public services, current security conditions, and religious freedom. These new questions provided important insight into community vulnerability and resilience, and helped to validate the predictions from the VST.

During phase two in Gorom-Gorom, questions that worked particularly well to validate the VST include those that addressed the following:

- **Access to public services:** Three of the four least served communities, as determined through the household survey, were also categorized among the five most vulnerable communities by the VST.
- **Access to health services:** The five communities with at least 50 percent of the respondents reporting they had no access to health services aligned with the most vulnerable communities as determined through the VST.

During phase three in Tillabéry, the question that worked particularly well to validate the VST was the one that asked respondents to rate the current state of the security situation in their community. In four of the five villages identified as vulnerable by the VST, respondents tended to view the security situation as “bad.”

Unlike in the Gorom-Gorom study, where access to public services and access to health services was strongly related to villages the VST identified as vulnerable, in

the Tillabéry study, the results were mixed: while one village lacking access to public services (including health services and potable water) was identified by the VST as one of the more vulnerable villages, another village, which was similarly lacking access, was not.

Additionally, some of the other questions also yielded inconclusive results, and are not recommended in the final packet of tools. In particular, questions around the level of alignment between education/training and job opportunities did not provide direct insight into vulnerabilities and resiliencies across communities. Responses to these questions, meant to gauge where there are frustrations around the job market and whether people feel like they have opportunities to get ahead based on their training, are difficult to analyze and are not appropriate for a package of tools intended to provide quick and scalable means to identify vulnerable and resilient communities. Further, the question about equal access to schools will need to be made more specific to ascertain whether people perceive there is equal access to schools across socioeconomic, religious, or other identity groups. The survey also piloted a question around whether charismatic traditional leaders are important, and while the responses indicated interesting differences around the perceived importance of tradition across ethnic lines, it ultimately did not provide clear information relevant to the main research objectives.

Further, questions on the degree to which people agree with or disagree with hate speech and violence yielded very little variability, making it likely related questions were affected by a strong response bias. For future tools, it is recommended that these sorts of questions are asked only in in-depth interviews (if applicable), as candid answers to such sensitive topics in a survey are unlikely. However, there may be a potential to word these questions differently, as per some of Mercy Corps' other, more successful examples of gauging support for violence or violent rhetoric in other conflict-affected areas, including with the use of survey experiments. See more in the "Recommendations" section below.

In all three phases, community members were asked to participate directly in the analysis of the vulnerability and resilience factors leading to or away from VE by identifying what they perceive to be the most operative factors of vulnerability and resilience. Overall, the fact that there was a general consensus across different types of communities – villages classified as both vulnerable and resilient by the VST – about the source of vulnerability and resilience to VE reinforces the idea that a set of factors like those in the VST is a useful way to identify at-risk communities.

However, Mercy Corps learned key lessons about which factors are more difficult to measure, and thus are inappropriate for the final package of tools. These include specific questions about broad “psychological” factors. In the final package of tools, it is unlikely that questions around psychological factors such as “fear,” “assurance,” and “despair” will be included.

Also to note, the team found that with official questionnaires it was difficult to understand the “real” answers (for example who and how many people have joined VEOs; which VEOs are present in community, etc.), however, during small conversations of an informal nature, we received some additional contextual information that was not captured in the tools. When one states that the information will be recorded or documented people are more cautious and do not want to say as much – this is noted for future studies and for the lesson learned.

The above conclusions indicate the need to further refine and streamline the VST for future use, ensuring that each criterion from the VST has been shown to link to levels of vulnerability or resilience within the villages included in VRAI. Annex 1 details which VST criteria are recommended for future use.

Recommendations

For Use and Sequencing of the Tools

Overall, the suite of tools used provided significant and useful information. The team observed that the participatory tools (social, economic and community mapping tool and the VST) were the most useful in terms of providing rich nuanced information that included the full context. The household quantitative survey was useful in collecting a great deal of information and being able to analyze it quickly, though the results were inconsistent. Participatory methods, observation and in-depth interviews yielded much more useful and candid discussions and information. The following recommendations are for future users of the suite of tools:

- Where time and resources allow, use several tools from the suite of tools to further refine the VST as appropriate to the context. The “Participatory Mapping Guide” is a critical first step in the community – an entry into the context, to understand the challenges, issues and underlying context. Without this step at the community-level, the other data collection will yield useful information, however, it will be less rich, nuanced and contextualized.

Often this step can inform other questions/information that should be probed in the focus group discussions, for example. The following tools should be prioritized:

- Participatory mapping guide
- Focus group discussion guide
- The portion the revised household survey, which gauges “sources of community grievances.”

After testing the VST against these tools, refine the VST using participatory discussions with local stakeholders to finalize a context-specific VST.

- Where time and resources are limited, users may use only the final recommended version of the VST (see below, Annex 1) and—through participatory discussions with key stakeholders in a target region—identify the most vulnerable and resilient communities.

For the Tools Used to Identify Community Vulnerability and Resilience

In addition, the following recommendations are for future users of the VRAI tools in order to further improve their effectiveness:

- Prioritize the section of the household survey (with revisions as noted below) dealing with “sources of community grievances.” The initial Diffa survey on “community perceptions of vulnerability and resilience factors” and subsequent iterations of that set of questions in future surveys served their initial purpose in validating the utility of a VST in general. However, because of the subjectivity of responses and their inability to triangulate specific levels of vulnerability and resilience, this section does not need to be used moving forward.
- Because of uncertainty around which VEOs pose the greatest threat in particular communities, results of the national-level forums and discussions with stakeholders in both Ouagadougou and Niamey suggested that the next household survey tool should include a question on which VEOs are operating in the respondent’s area.
- Feedback from stakeholders in Ouagadougou and Niamey suggested that questions on the following topics should either be reworded or removed in future iterations of household survey tool:
 - The relationship between the skills and education available and job opportunities;
 - Perceptions of leadership qualities; and

- Agreement with hate speech or speech promoting violence (these questions need to be structured in such a way as to reduce response bias).
- In the household survey tool and participatory tools, make questions on equal access to education more specific, and potentially sub-divide them into questions with relevance for particular types of equality, whether between religious, ethnic, socio-economic, gender, or other groups.
- In the household survey tool and participatory tools, add specificity to questions about government services, such as inquiring separately whether services are present, accessible, and of high quality.

For Interventions Seeking to Prevent or Counter VE:

The following recommendations are for government actors, donors, implementing partners, and other civil society organizations that are seeking to prevent or reduce VE in the specific areas evaluated by VRAI:

- Focus on governance-related interventions that are most salient to vulnerability to VE. It should be noted that most literature states that access to services alone is unlikely to address grievances. Governments should work to include communities in participatory decision-making processes about services in their communities, and then establish a feedback mechanism that will enable communities to ensure quality over time.
- Increase the quality and importantly, the administration of justice, including by creating accountability mechanisms within communities and through democratic structures that can hold government and security actors to account. Strengthen the quality of education, in the following ways:
 - Increase tolerance and peacebuilding education within formal and informal schools;
 - Increase the number of children and youth who understand the peaceful nature of Islam.
- Provide alternative options for youth to earn money, enter into adulthood, and advance and build social capital in society.
- Expand on existing dialogue efforts between communities that appear to be making an important positive impact on community resilience to VE.
- Strengthen relationships and social cohesion across different ethnic groups; look at historical, traditional mediation or conflict resolutions models as potential approaches to re-introduce.
- Strengthen the existing culture of non-violence through community-based activities and campaigns that reinforce the importance of peaceful behavior.

Annex 1: Village Selection Tool Criteria

Recommended VST Criteria for Future Use

No.	Revised VST Criteria used in Tillabéry and Oudalan	Recommended for Future Use	Remove for Future Use	Comments
1.	Level of education available in the village	X		
2.	Equal access to education	X		
3.	Frustrations of the poor study/education system and environment		X	Suggest removing, did not provide clear results
4.	Existence of several religious sects/ tendencies	X		
5.	Job/economic opportunities	X		
6.	Unequal access to health and services	X		
7.	Unequal access to potable water	X		
8.	Equal access to the market(s)	X		
9.	Existence of conflicts: intra-community and inter-community	X		
10.	Existence of social relations and various exchanges with committed people		X	Suggest removing, did not provide clear results
11.	Protection by military/ Military coverage of the zone	X		
12.	Influence stemming from closeness to the border and social mixing across borders with people from countries with extremist groups (Mali)	X		Relevant given fluid border and influence
13.	Radicalization of community leaders		X	Suggest removing, did not provide adequate information
14.	Proliferation of mosques without regulation or oversight	X		This is something of concern in Northern Burkina, especially
15.	Incidents of sermons preaching or inciting violence	X		
16.	Negative impact of security measures on the local economy and the well-being of the population	X		
17.	Errors or abuses made by defense forces (in targeting, killing or imprisoning civilians, etc.)	X		
18.	Reprisals by extremists groups	X		
19.	Inter-ethnic marriage and cultural mixing	X		
20.	Dialogue in general	X		
21.	Existence of intergenerational dialogue	X		
22.	Existence of family and community dialogue	X		
23.	Existence of formal or informal mediation institutions in the village	X		

Original VST Criteria piloted in Diffa

1. Level of education in the village
2. Equal access to education
3. Available jobs are in line with the education students are receiving
4. People feel the need to defend their religion or a specific ideology
5. Divergences or differences in the interpretation of certain religious precepts
6. Susceptibility of people to propaganda messages
7. Existence of job opportunities
8. Income generating activities led by extremist groups
9. Basic social services are accessible to all
10. Social cohesion at the community level (inter-community conflicts)
11. Social relationships and exchanges with members of extremist groups (recruitment via friends and family)
12. Young women see Boko Haram as presenting marriage opportunities
13. Harshness of the climate
14. Military coverage of the zone
15. Influence stemming from closeness to the border and social mixing across borders with people from countries with extremist groups (Nigeria)
16. Honest management of public funds
17. Fair distribution of public resources
18. Feeling of impunity of government officials
19. Level of confidence in judicial institutions
20. Radicalization of community leaders
21. Proliferation of mosques without regulation or oversight
22. Incidents of sermons preaching or inciting violence
23. Negative impact of security measures on the local economy and the well-being of the population
24. Errors or abuses made by defense forces (in targeting, killing or imprisoning civilians, etc.)
25. Reprisals by extremists groups
26. Susceptibility to the messages of violent extremists
27. Feeling of failure in life
28. Demonstration of masculinity and bravery in a society predisposed to value such qualities
29. Social recognition through belonging to a group led by a charismatic leader
30. Desire to ensure one's own security and that of those close to you
31. Predisposition to privilege non-violence in the face of conflict
32. Common values and a shared way of life
33. "Joking Cousins"/Tradition of inter-ethnic joking
34. Inter-ethnic marriage and cultural mixing
35. Existence of community self-defense groups
36. Capacity for repentance
37. Existence of inter- and intra-religious dialogue
38. Existence of intergenerational dialogue
39. Existence of family and community dialogue
40. Security forces intervene to prevent violence
41. Existence of formal or informal mediation institutions in the village
42. Positive impact of civil society on social cohesion in the community
43. Security forces take human rights into account

Annex 2: Revised Questionnaires/Guides

Given their length, the revised questionnaires and guides have been submitted as separate attachments to this report.

Annex 3: Detailed Research Findings

Phase One: Diffa, Niger

Community Perception of Vulnerability and Resilience Factors

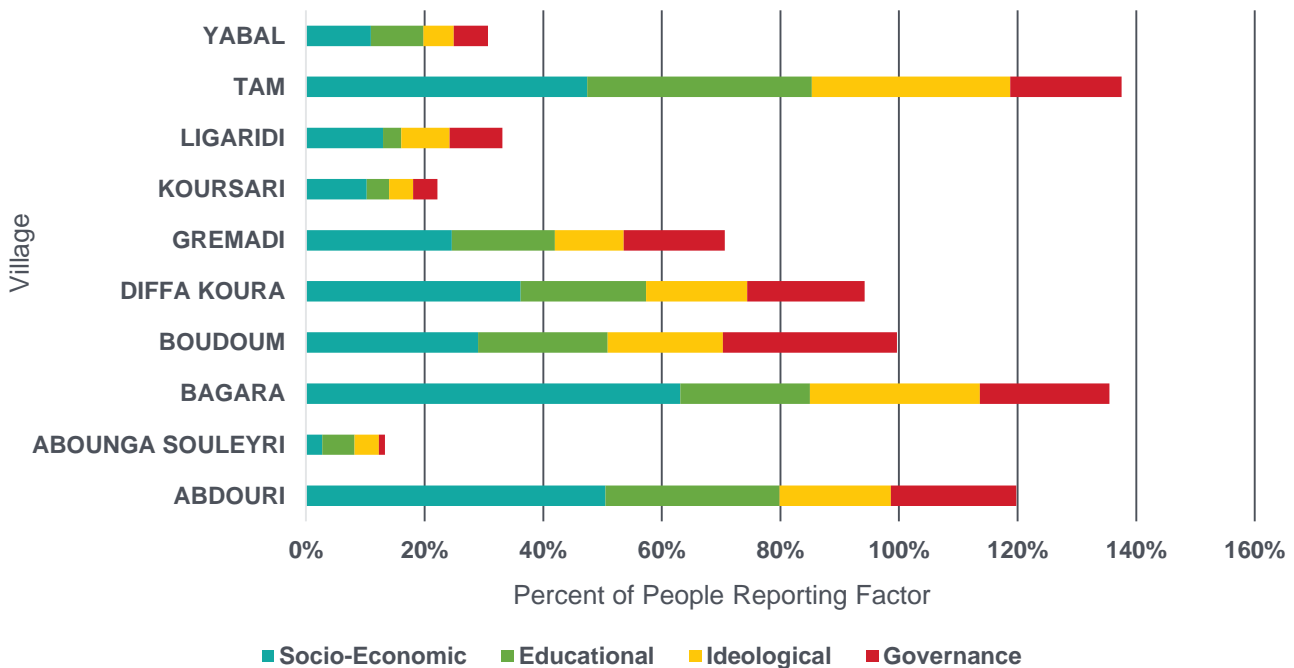
Categories of Vulnerability Factors

The data collected from Diffa indicates that multiple factors play a role in driving people to engage in VE, which is supported by previous Mercy Corps' research on ISIS/WA's and Boko Haram's recruitment tactics.⁴ We have grouped these factors into broad categories to align with survey tools used in this first study. The categories include socio-economic, governance, ideological, and educational. **While factors under each of the above mentioned categories were identified, participants perceived socio-economic factors as the most significant category of vulnerability in Diffa.**

In five out of 10 villages, socio-economic-related factors were identified as the primary drivers (Ligardi, Koursari, Diffa Koura, Bagara, and Abdouri). There does not appear to be significant differences in the perceived significance of these categories of factors when comparing the most vulnerable villages to the least vulnerable villages, as identified through the VST.

⁴ [“Motivations and Empty Promises,”](#) Mercy Corps, April 2016 and [“Gifts and Graft,”](#) Mercy Corps, September 2016.

Categories of Vulnerability, Diffa, Niger



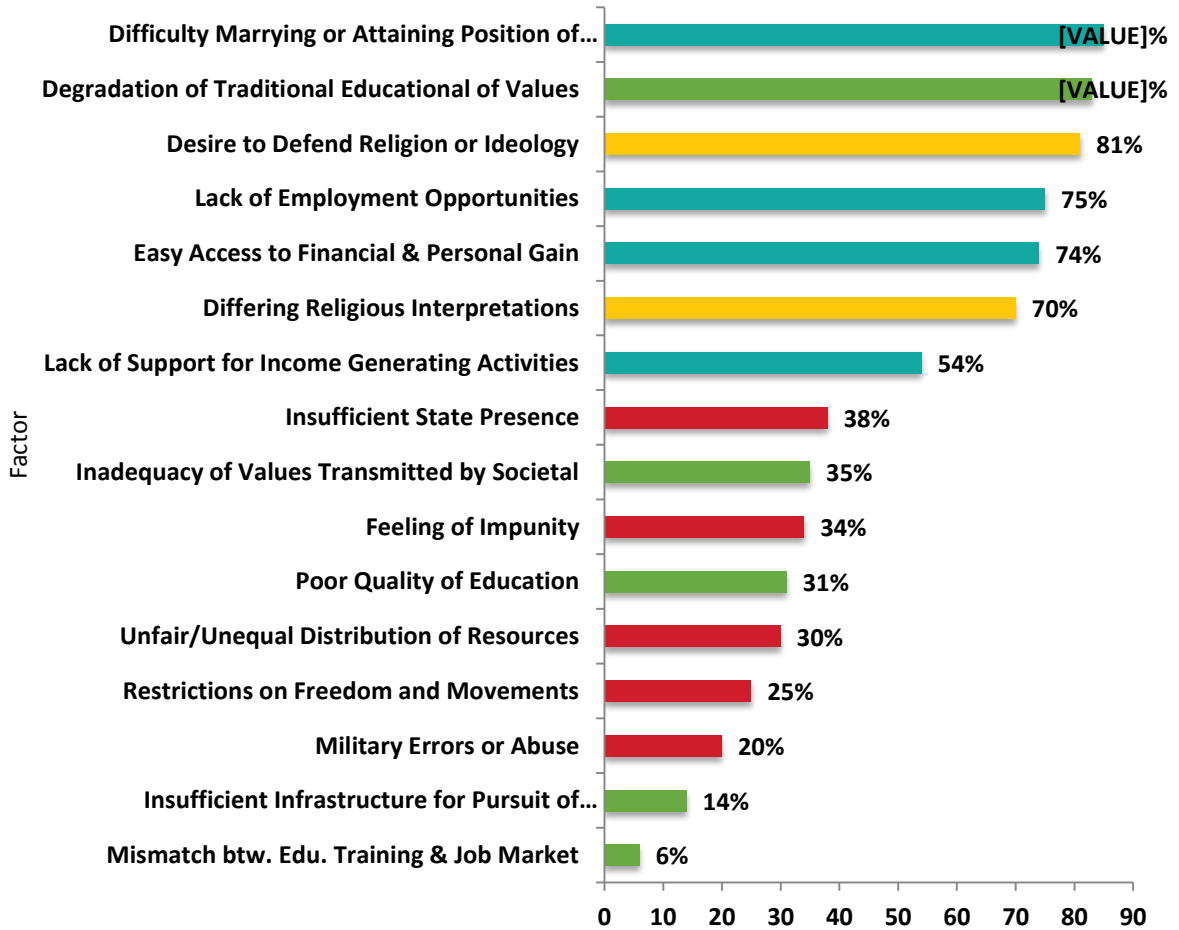
Individual Vulnerability Factors

Within each of the categories of drivers listed above, enumerators asked respondents to report which individual factors within those categories motivated people to join VEOs or not. It should be noted that in each case, respondents were asked about whether a particular factor was relevant or not for men, women, male youth, and female youth in pushing or pulling them toward a VEO. Respondents could provide a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer for each factor; enumerators did not ask respondents to rank or compare different factors. Further, as is clear in the table below, many factors are related, and factors are not mutually exclusive. The main purpose of the questions was to produce a rough picture of the perceived importance of each factor. Participants were asked about anywhere between two and five individual drivers in each category, including both push and pull factors.

The individual vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: difficulty in marrying or attaining a position of respect within communities, which was identified by 85% of the 293 survey households. This was followed by degradation of traditional educational values (meaning traditional activities, initiations and community/elder to youth teaching is being lost) (83%), desire to defend a religion or an ideology (specifically to defend one’s chosen sect or interpretation) (81%), lack of employment opportunities (75%), easy access to financial and personal gain (74%), and differing interpretations of religious ideas,

for example, differences in interpreting the Koran in a conservative and rigorous way, versus a more “modern” or moderate interpretation (70%). Interestingly, no governance-related factor received more than a 38% response rate.

Individual Vulnerability Factors, Diffa, Niger



Categories	
Education	Green
Governance	Red
Socio-Economic	Teal
Ideological	Yellow

Category by Category Analysis

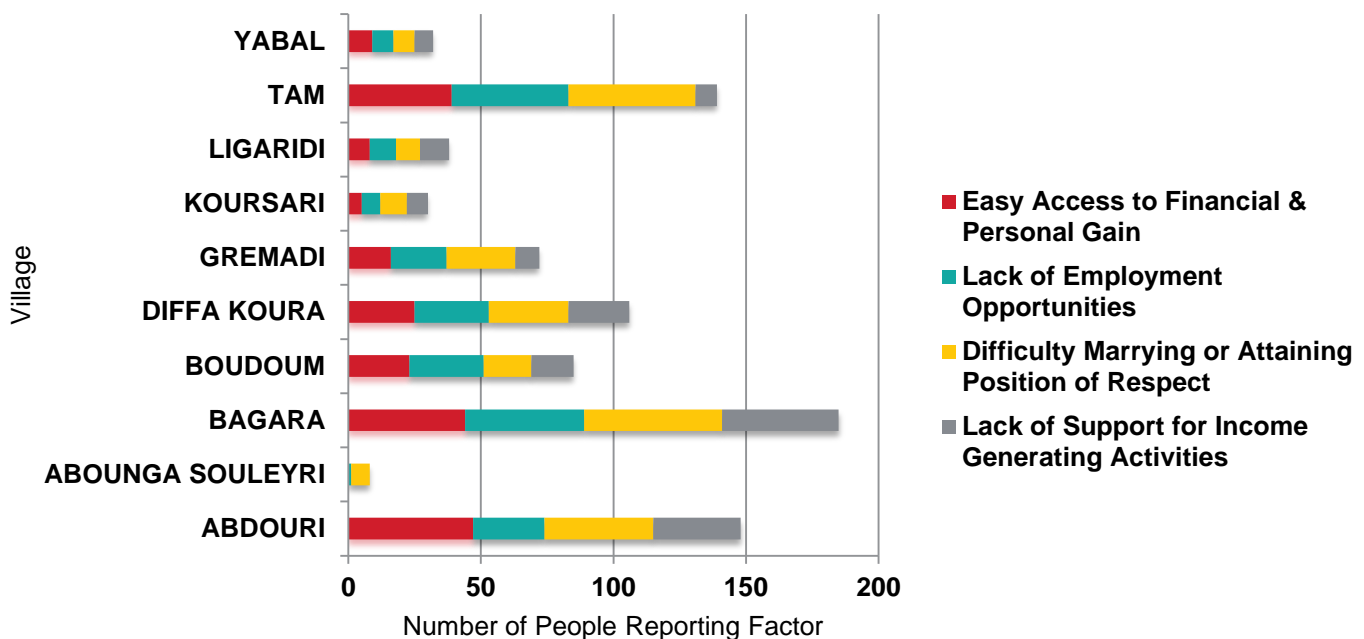
The following section provides more detail on the perceptions of the significant individual factors within each category of VE drivers. Survey results are discussed at an individual level, by category, and then disaggregated by village.

Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: difficulty in marrying or attaining a position of respect within communities, which was identified by 85% of the 293 survey households. This was also the number one factor identified in six of the 10 villages (Bagara, Tam, Coursari, Diffa Koura, Gremadi, and Abounga Souleyri). As marriage is a key measure of success among the population of Niger and West Africa in general, it is intrinsically linked to attaining a position of respect within communities. The other key socio-economic factors identified by participants were: lack of employment opportunities (75%) and easy access to financial and personal gain (74%). These two factors are linked closely to difficulty in marrying or attaining a position of respect within communities, as financial means are often required in order for young men to get married and support a family.

The survey data and focus group discussions demonstrated that these socio-economic factors were perceived as key drivers to support VE even regardless of an individual's ideology. Focus groups also stated that these factors were used by ISIS/WA to entice potential recruits. For example, focus group participants stated that ISIS/WA would supply motorcycles in exchange for transporting foodstuff and basic goods to their fighters in the camps, illustrating that ISIS/WA used locals for logistical support and not just as potential soldiers.

Socio-Economic Category, Diffa, Niger

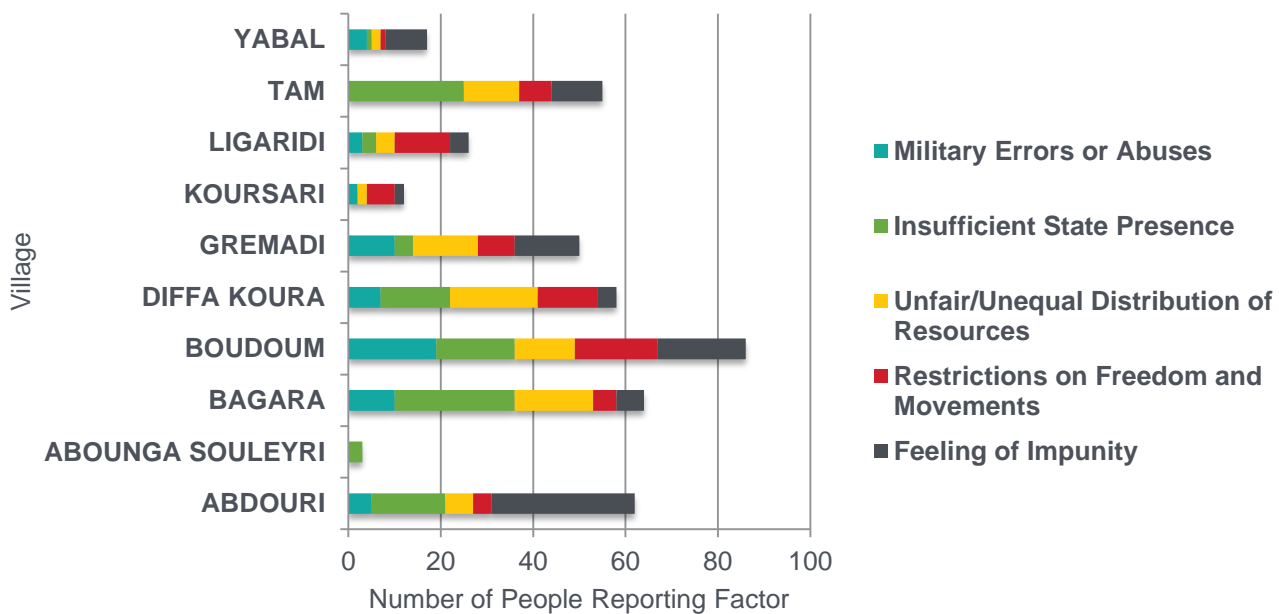


Governance Factors

The governance factor identified by the greatest number of participants was lack of sufficient state presence, which was identified by 38 percent of the 293 surveyed households. This was followed by a sentiment of impunity (34%)⁵, unfair distribution of resources (30%), restriction on movements and freedom (25%), and military errors or abuses (20%). Interestingly, no governance-related factor received more than a 38 percent response rate; however, if respondents connected the insufficient state presence with their economic situation, they may not have responded as favorably to state governance in their areas. This was noted though in focus group discussions: it was revealed that male youth from Bagara and Boudoum were the most likely to express grievances related to the lack of a sufficient state presence. These youths were also the most likely to identify socio-economic factors, indicating that there is a potential relationship between governance-related factors and socio-economic factors.

Additional information from focus groups revealed certain nuances relating to the lack of sufficient state presence. For example, certain participants noted that the lack of sufficient state presence does not necessarily imply unwillingness from the government, but is rather the result of a lack of resources to effectively control its territory.

Governance Category, Diffa, Niger

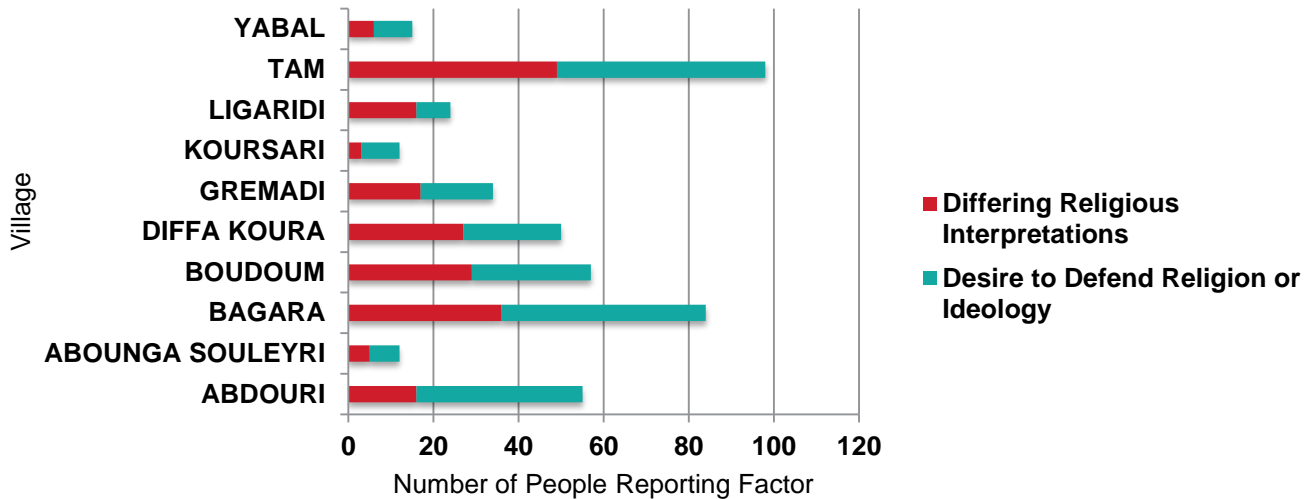


⁵ That government officials are exempt from punishment even if they commit illegal acts (e.g. corruption).

Ideological Factors

The ideological factor identified by the greatest number of participants was desire to defend a religion or an ideology, which was identified by 81 percent of the 293 surveyed households. This was followed by differing interpretations of religious ideas (70%).

Ideological Category, Diffa, Niger



Given its proximity, the population of Diffa has a strong historical relationship with communities in Nigeria. These ties – and Diffa’s proximity to Maiduguri, where Boko Haram was founded by Mohammed Yusuf in 2002 – facilitated the influence and spread of reformist Islamic movements from Nigeria to Niger.⁶ While the majority of Diffa’s population practices Islam, there are variations, which could explain why participants identified differing interpretations of religious ideas as a source of vulnerability, specifically more conservative or militant interpretations versus more moderate interpretations. In focus group discussions it was noted that differing interpretations of religious ideas were a source of vulnerability; for example, certain sects of Islam were “blamed” for “allowing” or creating conditions for VE to come into their communities – this was particularly noted in relation to the Salafists.

Education Factors

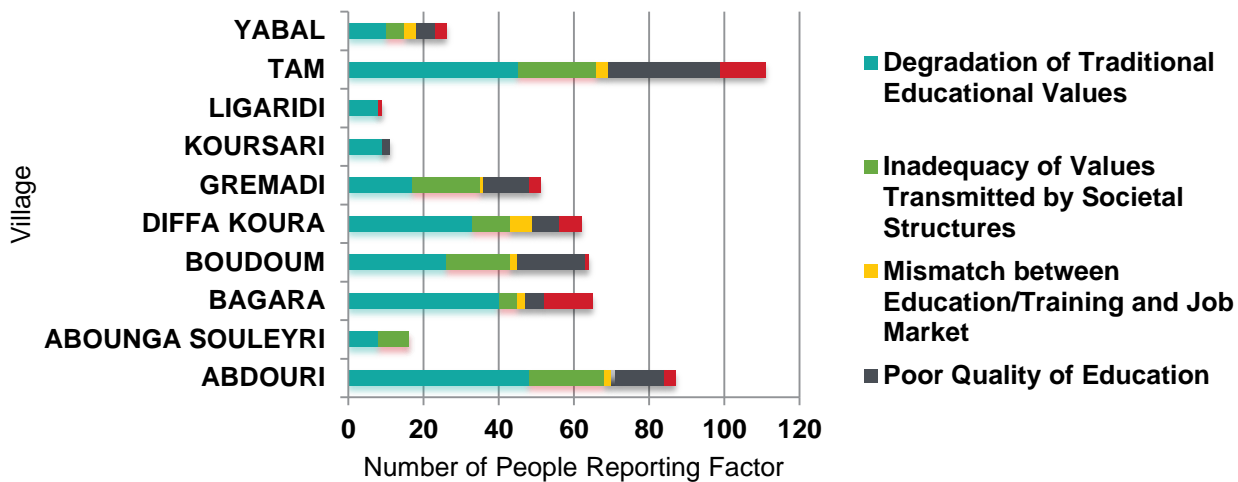
Several factors under the Education category were identified, and the factor with the greatest number of participant responses as a factor of vulnerability was degradation of traditional educational values, which was identified by 83% of the 293 surveyed households. This was also the number one educational factor

⁶ [“Niger and Boko Haram,”](#) ICG, February 27, 2017.

identified in all 10 villages. This was followed by: inadequacy of values transmitted by societal structures (35%) and poor quality of education in the school system (31%).

Information gathered from focus groups showed that participants felt traditional values and cultural norms were not being adequately taught in schools. Certain participants perceived this to be a result of the increased presence of private schools (Koranic schools, specifically) – which are not controlled or monitored by the government.

Education Category, Diffa, Niger



Additional Factors Identified by Participants

Participants were also asked to identify among a selection of “psychosocial” or “emotional” factors they perceive as driving people to join VE. The psychosocial factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: lack of understanding of ISIS/WA, which was identified by 77 percent of 293 surveyed households. The majority of community members believed that if individuals did not have a clear understanding of the goals of ISIS/WA, their violent tactics, or the dangers involved in joining the group, then they might be more susceptible to recruitment messages that cast ISIS/WA in positive light.

The next most frequently cited factor was personal conviction (52%), which stands in contrast to the most frequently cited psychosocial factor of lack of understanding of ISIS/WA, as it indicates that another key factor of vulnerability is that some individuals do buy into—or even actively support—the narratives of ISIS/WA.

Participants in focus groups also identified a lack of understanding of ISIS/WA as a primary vulnerability factor. This lack of understanding could explain the ability of ISIS/WA recruiters to have a psychological influence on potential recruits that are unequipped with knowledge to question the group’s agenda and to challenge preachers with religious questions.⁷ Furthermore, participants in focus groups highlighted the combination of a lack of understanding and personal conviction. For instance, young women in an FGD in Tam stated that they perceive joining as part of fulfilling a personal belief. In addition, other young women perceived that joining was fueled by a desire to fight for a cause even without understanding the cause fully.

While not the most dominant factors, vengeance and fear, which are closely related to the factor of protection, were noted as significant drivers. Vengeance was cited by 49% of respondents, indicating people might join ISIS/WA if they had experienced or perceived injustice at the hands of authorities, traditional leaders, or other figures opposing ISIS/WA and felt that joining ISIS/WA was their best—or only—chance to avenge this wrongdoing. This factor of vengeance is supported by other Mercy Corps studies demonstrating the power of injustice in motivating youth to join armed groups. Although vengeance as a driver to join ISIS/WA is likely related to perceived injustices perpetrated by the government or military, or potentially other leaders who oppose ISIS/WA, this requires further exploration.

The next most frequently cited factor was fear (47%), which is closely related to the protection factor. Fear is evident by the brutality of ISIS/WA and its use of forced recruitment. The fear that drives people to join, or perhaps, protection measures people are forced to take against ISIS/WA was illustrated by a young man from one of the one-on-one interviews in Abdouri.

EXPERIENCE OF A YOUNG MAN FROM ABDOURI

“One day, two friends from the village asked me to drop them off by the banks of the Komadougou. I told them I did not have any gas, so they paid for the gas. When I wanted to go back to the village, they ordered me to stay with them and told me they had kidnapped me on behalf of Boko Haram. I started talking to them and promised to leave my motorbike, but they told me I had to stay and join the movement. When I tried to resist, one of the young men drew a gun on me and ordered me to take my bike and follow them. We got on the road for their base in Nigeria. I could see that it was very organized, with a health center here, a garage over there, preaching areas, food supplies... basically it felt like a real guerrilla camp. They took my motorbike and the two friends from my village disappeared, leaving others to watch me. One day after a week or so in the camp, I saw a motorbike

⁷ Reinforced in [“Journey to Extremism in Africa,”](#) UNDP, 2017.

with a full tank of gas, so I decided to make my escape. They chased after me and shot at me with rifles, so I was forced to leave the motorbike and hide in a tree until the people hunting for me went away. The next day I kept running and ended up in a Peul camp, where I spent the night. My rescuer took me to a village where it was market day, and negotiated transport for me to go to Gaidam.”

Resilience Factors

In addition to the vulnerability factors discussed above, the VRAI research also seeks to gain a better understanding of the resilience factors that allow communities to resist recruitment into violent extremist groups. These resilience factors could help explain why ISIS/WA has thus far failed to establish a strong operational base in Niger like it has accomplished in Nigeria. Communities in Diffa identified the existence of multiple sources of resilience among individuals who resisted joining ISIS/WA.

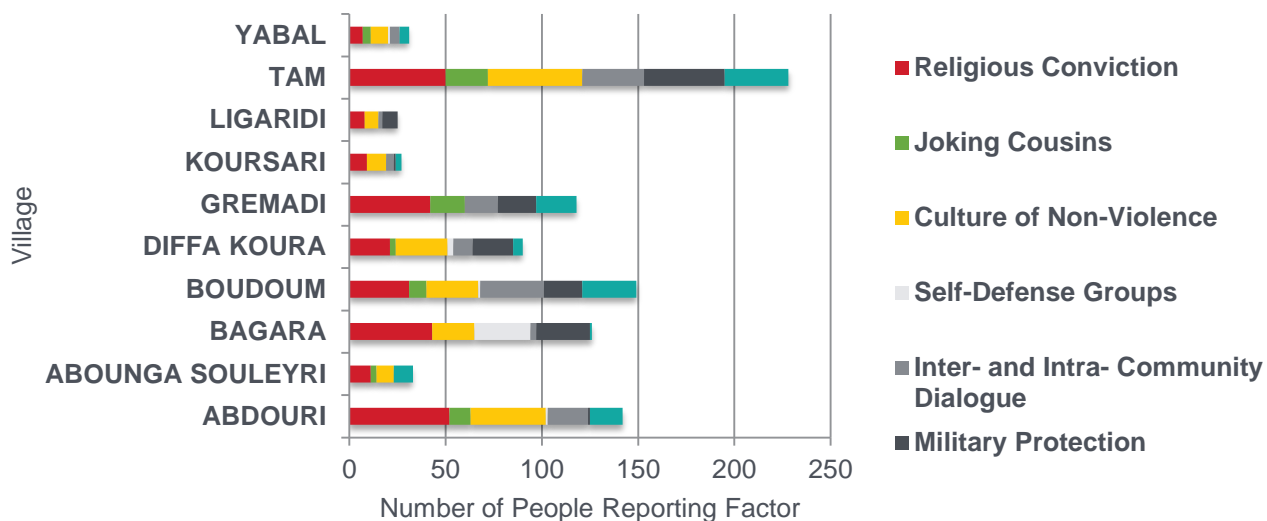
The resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was having a religious conviction that opposes ISIS/WA, which was identified by 94 percent of the 293 surveyed households. This perceived source of resilience relates closely to the sources of vulnerability noted earlier; community members largely perceive that people who already possess a sufficient understanding of Islam are less likely to be persuaded by recruitment messages from ISIS/WA.⁸ This factor was followed by having a culture of non-violence (68%), which also would provide a bulwark against recruitment messages provided individuals in communities have a general understanding of the violent tactics of ISIS/WA. Having military protection (48%) was the next most cited factor of resilience, which relates to resilience specifically at the institutional community level and which would prevent vulnerability around fear and protection. The existence of inter- and intra-community dialogue was cited by 43% of respondents, closely related to the next most cited factor, accepting others in spite of differences (42%). Both of these sources of resilience point to the importance within communities of fostering resilience by promoting tolerance of difference and reducing the effectiveness of divisive ISIS/WA recruitment messages.

The above sources of resilience have clear and important implications for programming in order to increase communities’ capacities to resist VEO recruitment. Initiatives that seek to build communities’ resolve to remain non-violent and promote understanding and tolerance across religious and other identity divides may be important for creating an obstacle for VEO recruiters.

⁸ Reinforced in “[Journey to Extremism in Africa](#),” UNDP, 2017.

Interestingly, while military protection was identified by nearly half of all survey households, only 12 percent of respondents identified the existence of community self-defense groups as a source of resilience. This could suggest that communities place a greater level of trust in the military than in self-defense groups. More understanding of this area will be important, especially deeper discussion in focus groups to try to understand how the perceptions that people have of the military influence their level of vulnerability or resilience to VE. Will they trust the military and refuse to join VEOs or to fight the state military if they perceive VEOs as abusive? This is a question that we should further explore in follow up studies. There are two issues present here: 1) Greater confidence in the Niger Armed Forces than militias, which may highlight the better capability of the Niger Armed Forces versus the Nigerian Army and the Cameroonian Armed Forces. In both of these countries, the troops are from other regions and therefore potentially less able to identify potential violent extremists. Meanwhile, the community-based militias have intimate knowledge of their own citizens and can easily identify outsiders. This makes them more effective than the respective National Army. Additionally, 2) the prior work by VRAI has shown a contradiction between the citizen’s need for security versus the State of Emergency. Mercy Corps’ body of research showed that the Niger Armed Forces presence was appreciated by the communities since it resulted immediately in fewer attacks and threats. But on the other hand, they did not like the State of Emergency since it limited their access to economic activities.

Resilience Category, Diffa, Niger



“Joking cousins” (sometime called “cousinage” or “joking relationship”) is a phenomenon experienced in certain West African countries in which two willing participants who have “broken the ice” treat one another as if cousins or close family members with whom familiar jokes or humorous insults are exchanged. This can serve to diffuse tensions and create bonds.

Phase Two: Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso

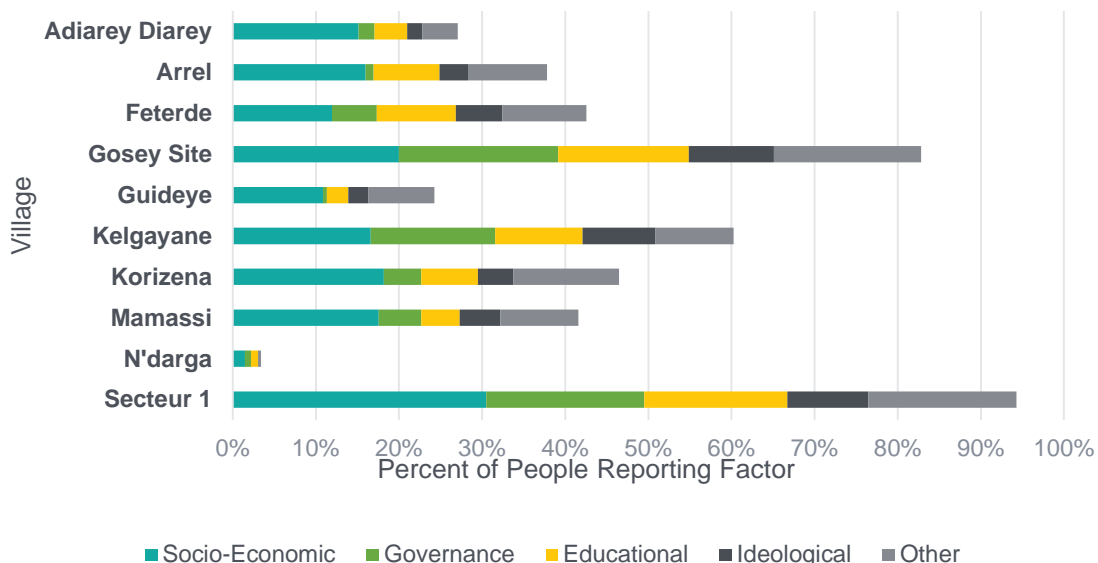
Community Perception of Vulnerability and Resilience Factors

Categories of Vulnerability Factors

As was done in Diffa, enumerators asked respondents to report what kind of factors they believe play a possible role in driving people to engage in VE. These include socio-economic factors, governance factors, ideological factors, and educational factors. There is a combination of factors making communities vulnerable to VE, however, socio-economic factors appear to dominate perceptions among participants.

Socio-economic factors were perceived as the leading factor in increased vulnerability by all 10 villages included in this study according to the 205 surveyed households. Overall, there do not appear to be major differences regarding the perception of the vulnerable factors across the 10 different villages. As with the Diffa study, this general consensus about the major sources of vulnerability means that the VST factors may indeed be valid for comparing across different villages, and should be a sign of encouragement about the utility of the VST.

Categories of Vulnerability Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso

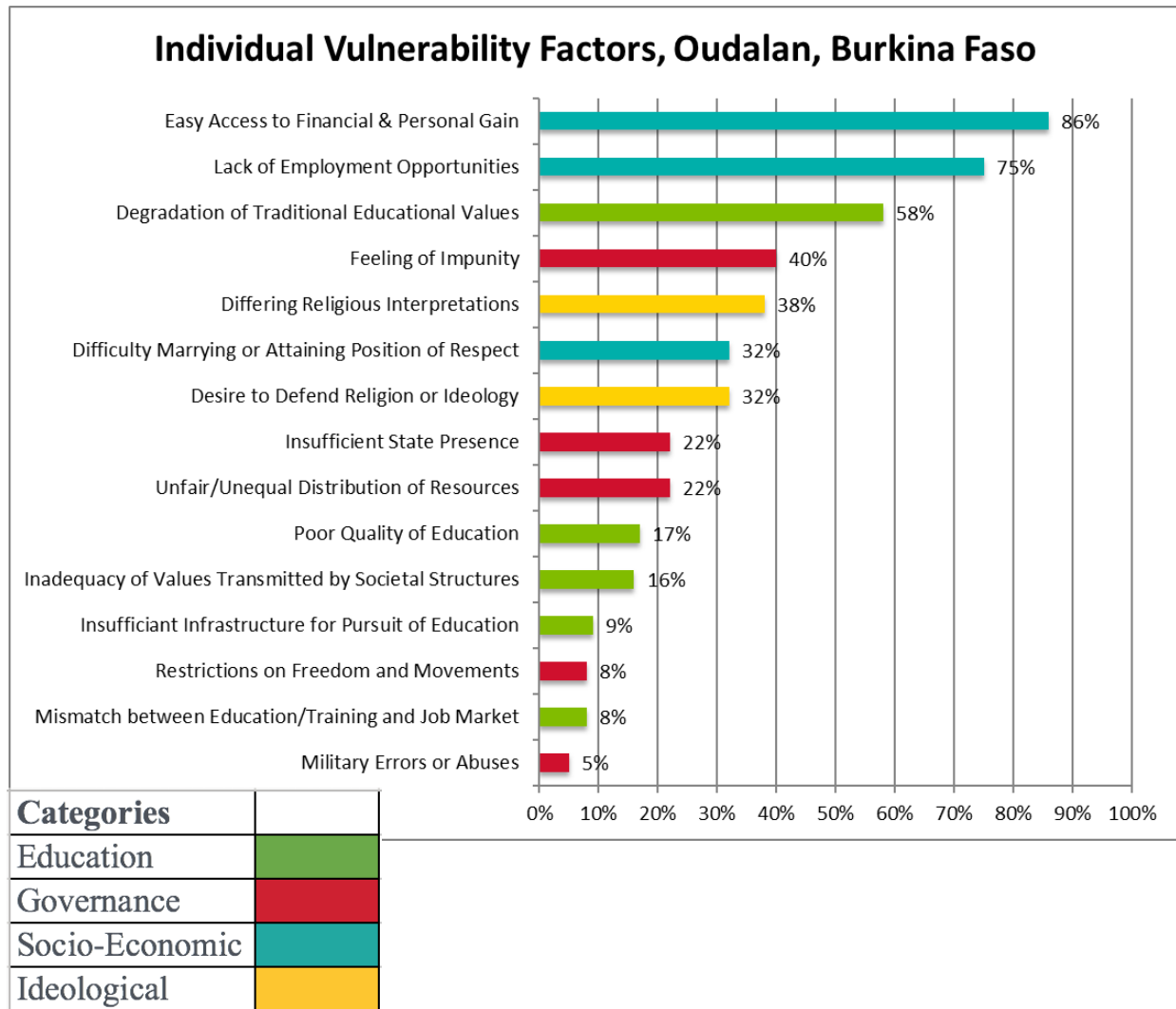


Individual Vulnerability Factors

Within each of these five categories of drivers listed above, enumerators then asked respondents to report which individual factors within those categories motivated

people to join VEOs or not. Participants were asked about anywhere between two and eight individual drivers in each category, including both push and pull factors.

The individual vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was identified by 86 percent of the 205 surveyed households. This was followed by lack of employment and opportunities (75%), degradation of traditional educational values (58%), the feeling of impunity (40%), and differing religious interpretations (38%).



Category by Category Analysis

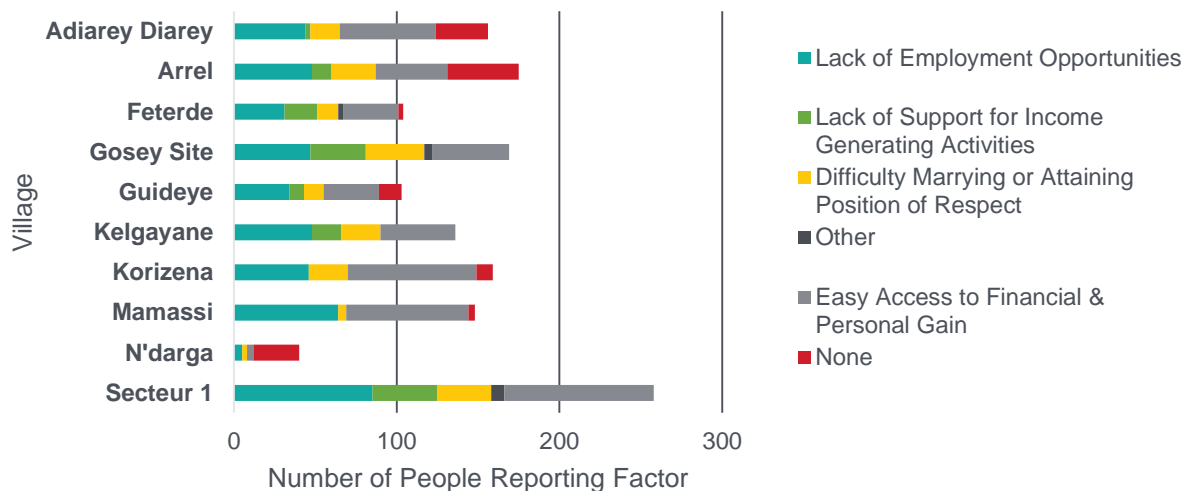
The following section provides more detail on the perceptions of the significant individual factors within each category of VE drivers. Survey results are discussed at an individual level, by category, and then disaggregated by demographic characteristics.

Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was identified by 86 percent of the 205 households surveyed. Lack of employment opportunities was the second greatest identified factor.

Extremist groups in Mali and Niger exploited socio-economic factors and used financial means to motivate people to join or support them; however it remains unclear if this is practiced by Ansaroul Islam or ISGS in Burkina Faso. The Sahel region of Burkina Faso where Ansaroul Islam has a stronghold has a poverty rate of 21 percent compared to 40 percent throughout the country.⁹ Agriculture, mining, and pastoral resources are improving the economies of the Sahel region, however local populations appear to be frustrated due to lack of development.

Socio-Economic Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso



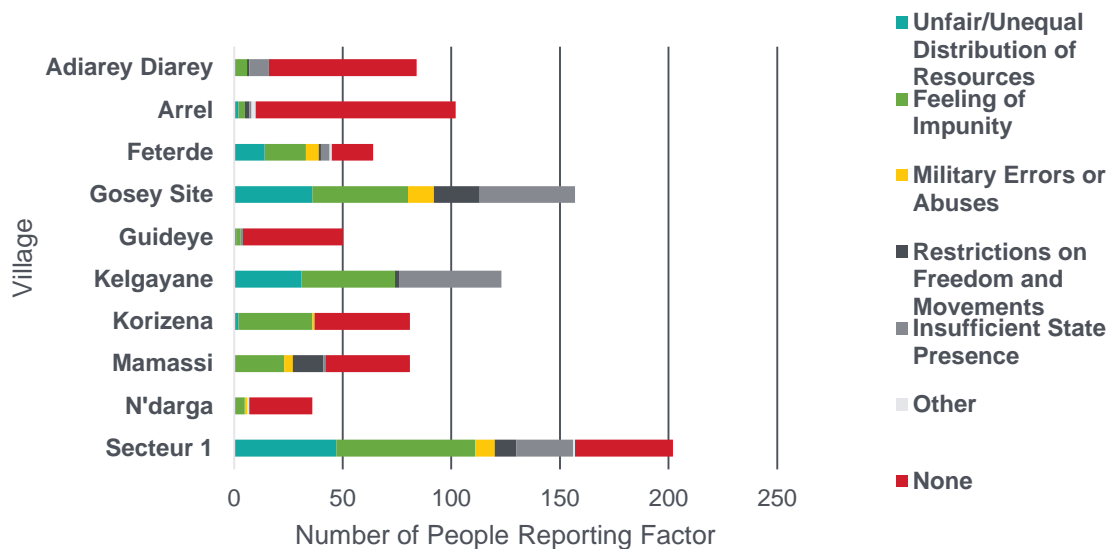
⁹ “Profil de pauvreté et d’inégalités. Enquête multisectorielle continue (EMC) 2014”, Institut national de la statistique et de la démographie (INSD), November 2015, p. 30, <http://bit.ly/2qFvrSj>

Governance Factors

The governance factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: the feeling of impunity, which was mentioned by (40% of the 205 households surveyed) as the leading governance factor to vulnerability. Other notable vulnerability factors related to governance included insufficient state presence and unequal distribution of resources.

Many of the population of the Sahel region remain frustrated by poor infrastructure and neglect. Respondents from vulnerable villages reported feeling abandoned by the government because of the need for health centers, schools, roads, water and electricity. In areas like the Sahel region of Burkina Faso where government has little to no visibility, religious groups, though not necessarily VEOs, often intervene to fill that void by providing health, education and infrastructure services, and humanitarian assistance. The feeling of impunity described by participants can perhaps be explained by the high level of corruption and abuse of government resources by local civil servants and government employees.

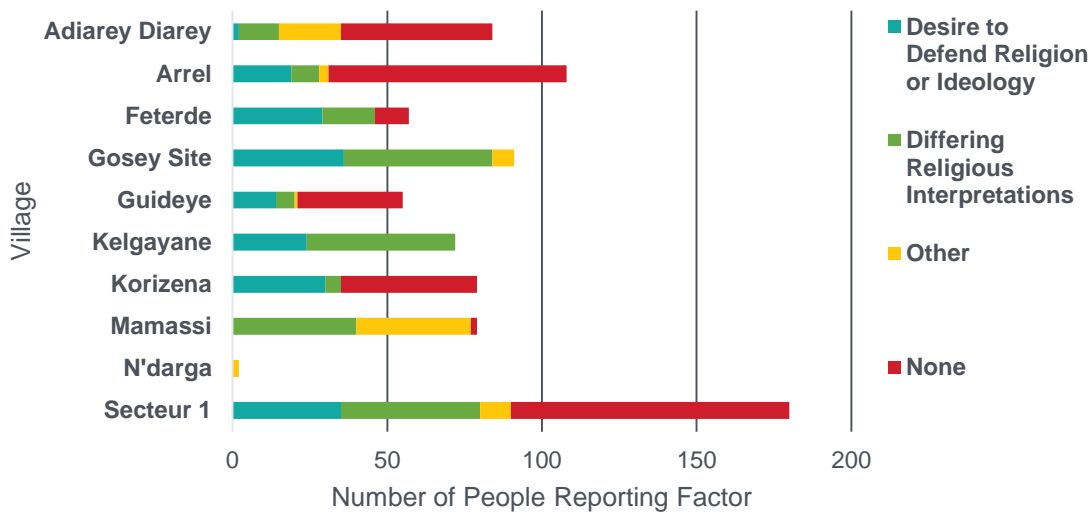
Governance Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso



Ideological Factors

The ideological factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: differing religious interpretations, identified by 38% of the 205 surveyed households. Second was the desire to defend a religion or ideology. Interestingly, 51% of people surveyed said there are no religious or ideology factors making people vulnerable to VE.

Ideological Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso



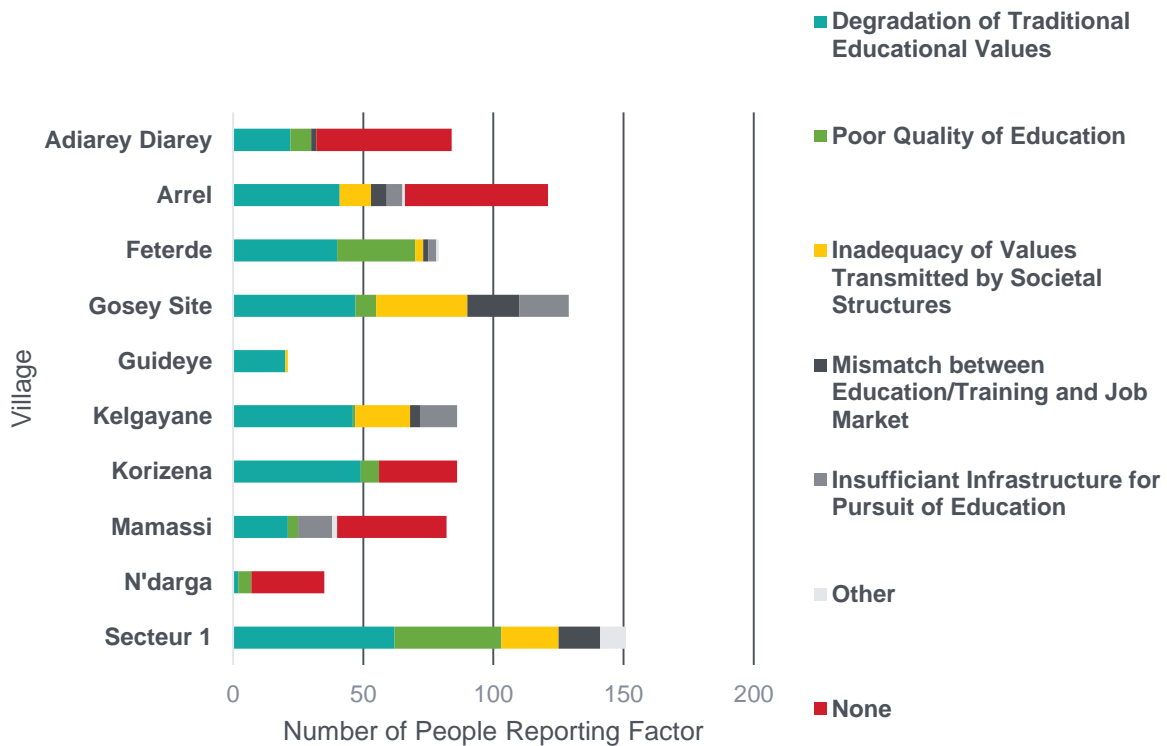
Education Factors

The educational factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: degradation of traditional educational values, which was identified by 58% of the 205 surveyed households. Other factors, including poor quality of education, inadequacy of values transmitted by societal structures, mismatch between education and job market, and insufficient infrastructure for the pursuit of education all scored very low.

Reportedly, the Sahel region of Burkina Faso has the lowest rate for primary school attendance in the country at a rate of 32.7% (compared to 73.9% country-wide).¹⁰ This is more noticeable among Fulani communities whom are resistant to send their children to French schools. It is important to note that 35% of participants said there are no education factors encouraging or making people vulnerable to VE.

¹⁰ Ministry of Economy and Finance, "La Region du Sahel en Chiffres," 2015, www.cns.bf/IMG/pdf/sahel_en_chiffres_2014.pdf

Educational Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso



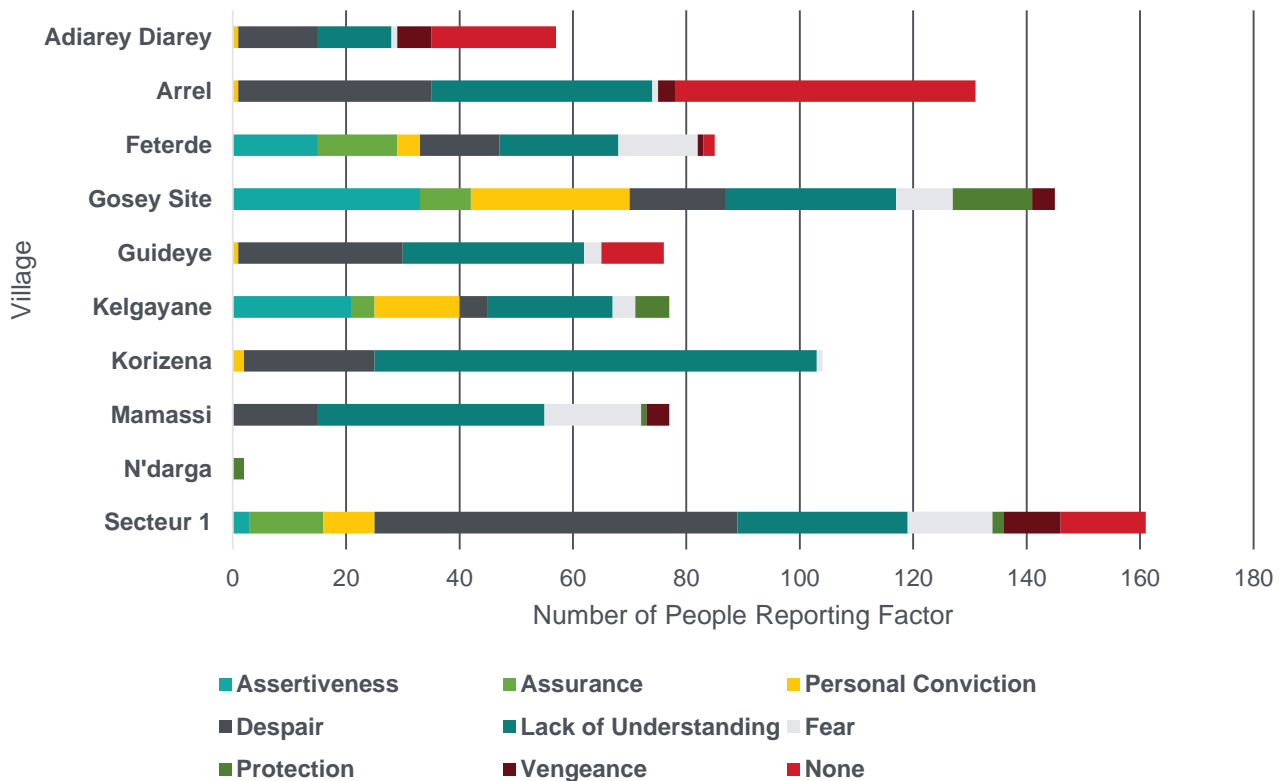
Additional Factors Identified by Participants

Additional factors observed by participants included lack of understanding of VEOs, fear, vengeance, despair, personal conviction, and others. However, the two most cited factors identified by participants were lack of understanding and despair. Recent reporting supports this finding as it points to the unclear agenda of the group and also desperate conditions of people sympathizing with the group.¹¹

Lack of understanding was mostly noticeable at Korizena, Mamassi, and Arrel villages. Personal conviction was not mentioned by a high number of participants, but was apparent among Gosey Site and Kelgayane villages compared to other factors.

¹¹ Le Cam, Morgane, "Confessions d'un Djihadiste du Burkina: Vu ce que Font les Forces de Sécurité a Nos Parents, je ne Regretterai Jamais leur Mort," 10 December 2017, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/10/confessions-d-un-djihadiste-du-burkina-vu-ce-que-font-les-forces-de-securite-a-nos-parents-je-ne-regretterai-jamais-leur-mort_5227587_3212.html

Other Factors by Location



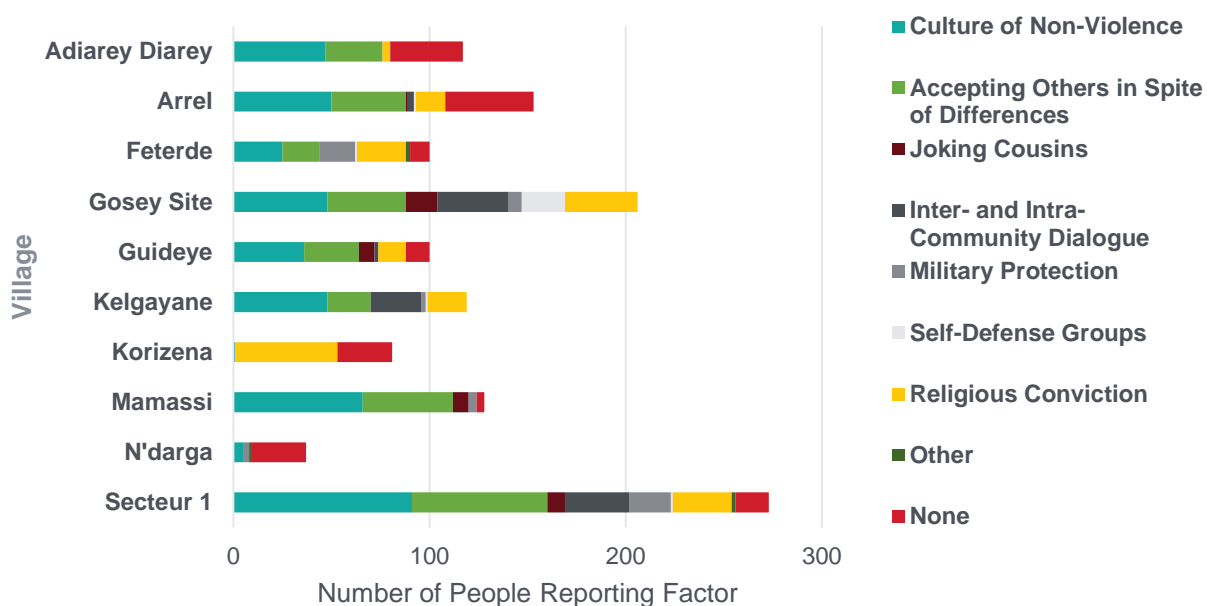
Resilience Factors

In addition to the vulnerability factors discussed above, the VRAI research also seeks to gain a better understanding of the resilience factors that allow communities to resist recruitment into violent extremist groups. These resilience factors could help prevent Ansaroul Islam from strengthening and expanding its presence in Burkina Faso. Communities in Oudalan province identified the existence of multiple sources of resilience.

The resilience factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: having a culture of non-violence, which was identified by 70% of the 205 surveyed households. This was followed by: accepting others in spite of differences (49%), religious conviction (33%), and inter- and intra- community dialogue (17%). Although they had relatively lower scores, other factors included joking cousins¹², inter- and intra- community dialogue, and military protection. The presence of self-defense groups scored the lowest, with only 4 percent of respondents perceiving that having these groups was a resilience factor in their community.

¹² “Joking cousins” (sometime called “cousinage” or “joking relationship”) is a phenomenon experienced in certain West African countries in which two willing participants who have “broken the ice” treat one another as if cousins or close family members with whom familiar jokes or humorous insults are exchanged. This can serve to diffuse tensions and create bonds.

Resilience Factors, Oudalan, Burkina Faso



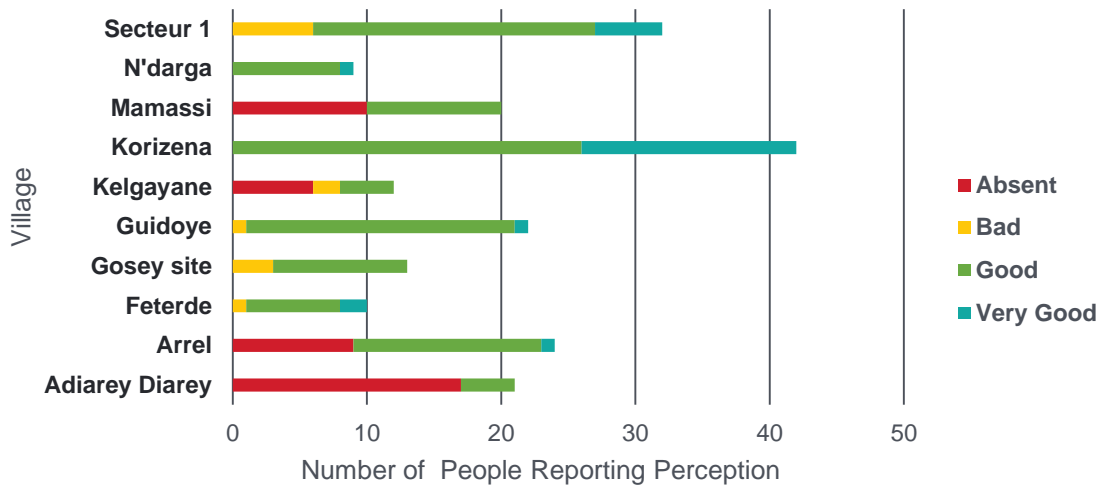
Sources of Community Grievances

Public Services

Respondents were asked how they perceived the current state of public services in their respective areas. Interestingly, 73 percent of 205 households surveyed stated they believe services are either good or very good. However, 41 of 205 households (20%) – all from four villages (Mamassi, Kelgayane, Adiarey Diarey, and Arrel) – stated that public services were absent. Most of the negative perception toward public services was recorded in the villages perceived as vulnerable, notably Mamassi, Adiarey Diarey, and Arrel. Surprisingly at the other two most vulnerable villages, Guideye and D’arga, public services were perceived either good or very good.

The lack of public services in villages indicated that the state/government might find it challenging to gain the trust of local communities, as they feel excluded given the limited or absent state-run services. Lack of access to health centers and water (described in more detail in the next sections) in Mamassi, Kelgayane, Arrel, and Adiarey Diarey explains the perception shared in these villages about the absence of state/government services. Importantly, three of these villages were categorized as most vulnerable in the VST, indicating a degree of accuracy in the VST scoring system.

Perception of Public Services, Oudalan, Burkina Faso

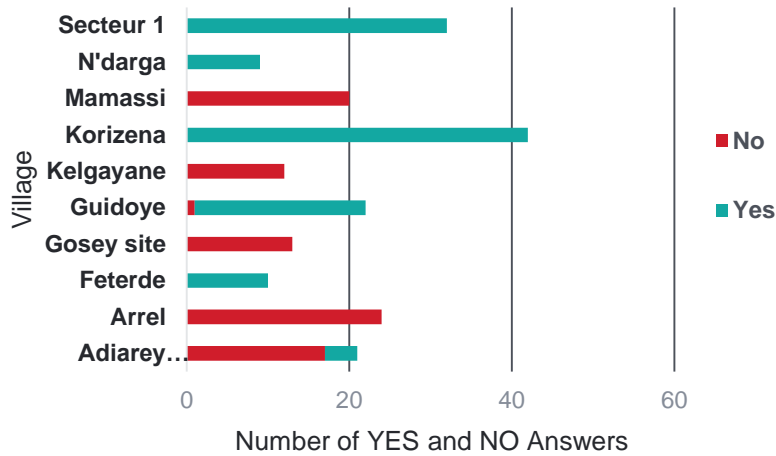


Water Access

Respondents were directly asked if they have access to drinking water. The majority of participants (95%) from Mamassi, Kelgayane, Arrel, Gosey Site, and Adiarey Diarey said there is no access to water. In the other five villages, Feterde, N'darga, Korizena, Guideye, and Secteur, 99 percent said they have access to potable water. In the villages where there is no access to water, three of them are among those identified as the most vulnerable villages according to VST. Further, three of the least vulnerable villages have access to water. While not perfect, the VST demonstrated increased accuracy in Gorom-Gorom when compared to Diffa.

In general, the majority of men and women surveyed indicated that efforts have been made by the state to improve access to water. This perception was indicated by 69% of women and 66.5% of men surveyed. Focus group participants' indicated their awareness about government efforts. For example, one female participant stated: *"With regards to water, the government is building fountains and digging wells to help women."* At the same time, other focus group participants highlighted issues related to maintenance: *"There are infrastructure problems in more populated areas and the issue gets worse when the only water fountain is broken. It is difficult to get it repaired in a short period of time so more installations are needed to increase accessibility to water."*

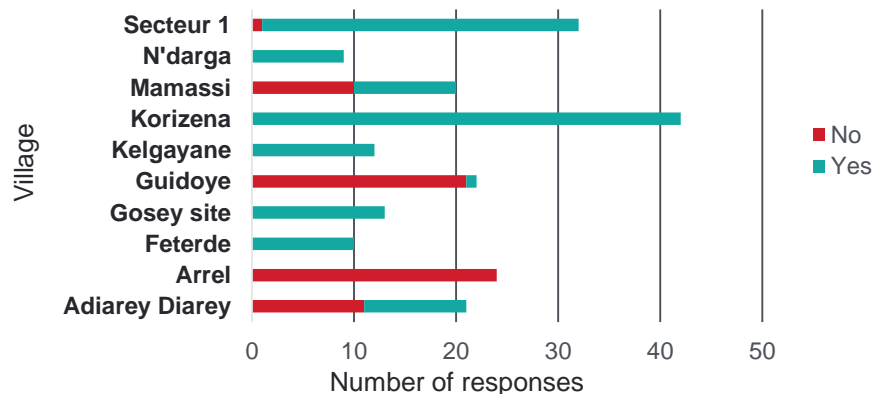
Do you have access to potable water?



Access to Health Services

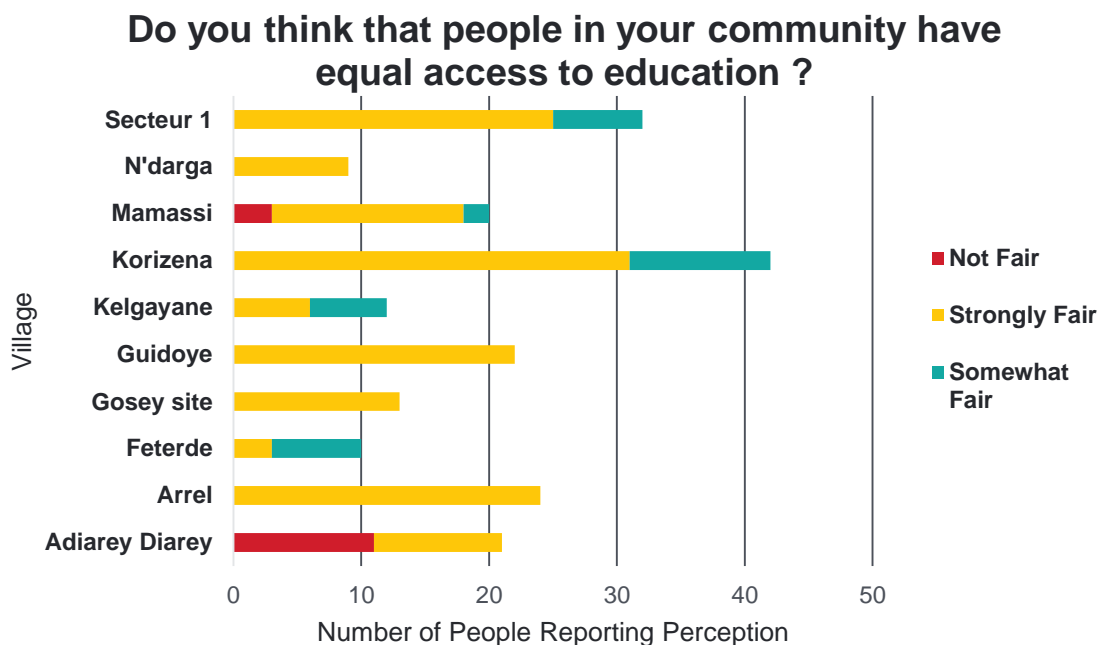
According to data collected, access to health centers is available for at least half of the population in seven villages and partially or totally absent in three. At least half of the populations of Secteur 1, Mamassi, N'Darga, Korizena, Kelgayane, Gosey Site, and Feterde said yes when asked if they had access to a health center. The only village where 100% of participants said they don't have access to a health center was Arrel village. Villages where at least 50 percent of participants said they don't have access to health center were predicted to be the most vulnerable by the VST. Five villages predicted to be the least vulnerable have access to health center according to the surveyed population.

Do you have access to a health center?



Perception Towards Education

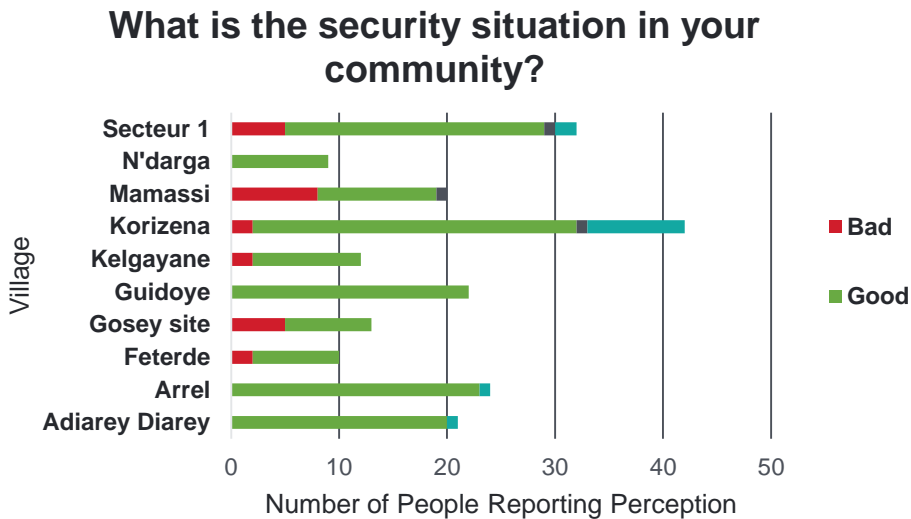
People surveyed were asked: “Do you think that people in your community have equal access to education,” in order to understand if an entire community has access to education equal to other communities and if people within a community feel they have equal access to education – the question was trying to get at both of these things, looking at access to education regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity and religion. Access to education was perceived by 93 percent of the 205 households surveyed to be equal, contrasted against 7 percent perceiving it to be unequal. Only participants in N’darga and Adiarey Diarey villages indicated that their access to education was unequal. Participants in both villages also shared the perception that the state was absent, and that they lacked access to both water and health centers.



Security

The majority of the population surveyed in Gorom-Gorom province has a positive view on the security situation in their respective areas (asked specifically, “How do you evaluate your security situation in your community?”). This perception was recorded among 80 percent of the 205 households surveyed and shared with the majority of their counterparts in focus groups. Only in the village of Mamasi was the perception toward security split between bad and good. The general positive perception toward security conditions is somewhat surprising due to the increase in violent incidents. Since surveys were conducted (July – August 2017), there was a notable increase in violence by the extremist group Ansaroul Islam in Soum province and participants expressed concerns about the spread into their communities.

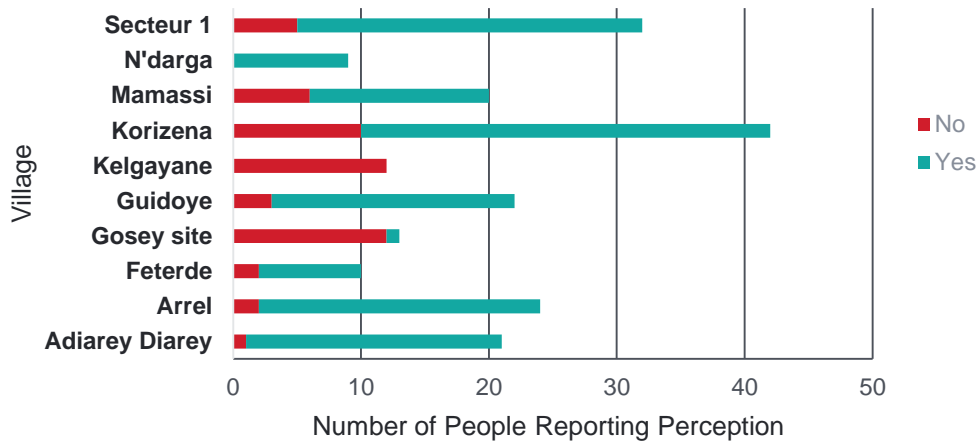
This also could indicate positive perception toward the security response of Burkina Faso authorities, and that none of the villages where research was conducted experienced an attack by extremist group. For instance, members of focus groups pointed out that security forces conduct patrols through their villages and would like to see that regularly. However, it could also indicate fear to speak out against security authorities, particularly among Muslims who risk stigmatization by security forces. More analysis would be required to understand fully this response, especially after recent allegations against abuses by security forces in neighboring commune Soum.¹³



Participants were asked if Burkinabe security forces are up to the task of protecting their communities, 26 percent of the 205 households surveyed said no and 74 percent said yes. While in most villages participants agreed security forces are up to the task, participants in Gosey site and Kelgayane strongly disagree and don't think that security forces are capable. In addition to security forces, focus groups participants expressed their confidence in their communities to face this challenge.

¹³ Le Cam, Morgane, "Confessions d'un Djihadiste du Burkina: Vu ce que Font les Forces de Sécurité a Nos Parents, je ne Regretterai Jamais leur Mort," 10 December 2017, http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2017/12/10/confessions-d-un-djihadiste-du-burkina-vu-ce-que-font-les-forces-de-securite-a-nos-parents-je-ne-regretterai-jamais-leur-mort_5227587_3212.html

Do you think security forces are capable of maintaining security in your community?



Perception of Religious Freedom

The population surveyed was asked to provide their perception toward the degree of freedom in regards to religious practice. Local populations surveyed in the 10 villages indicated that religious practices are not restricted and are totally free. The majority, 99.5% of participants stated that their religious practice was either free or extremely free.

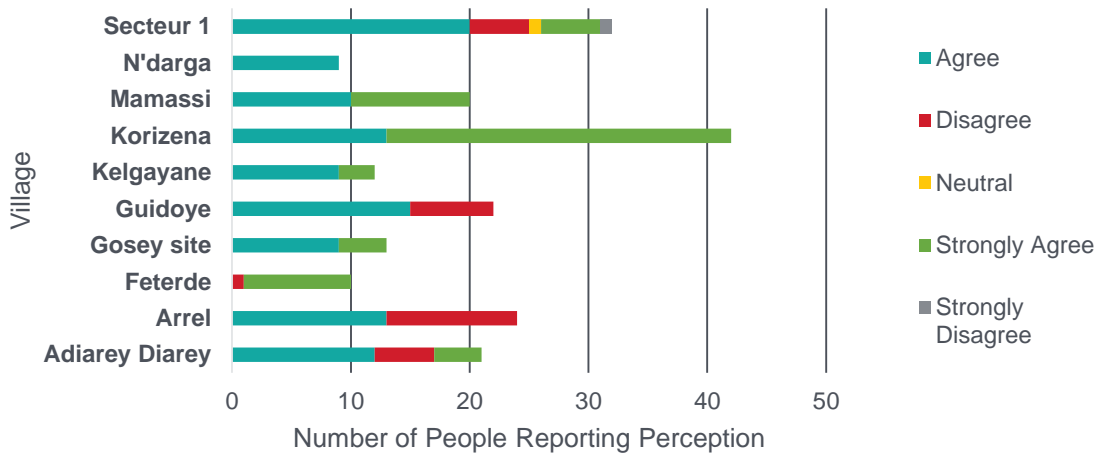
What is your freedom level about religious practice?



Perception Towards Religious Interpretation and Extremism

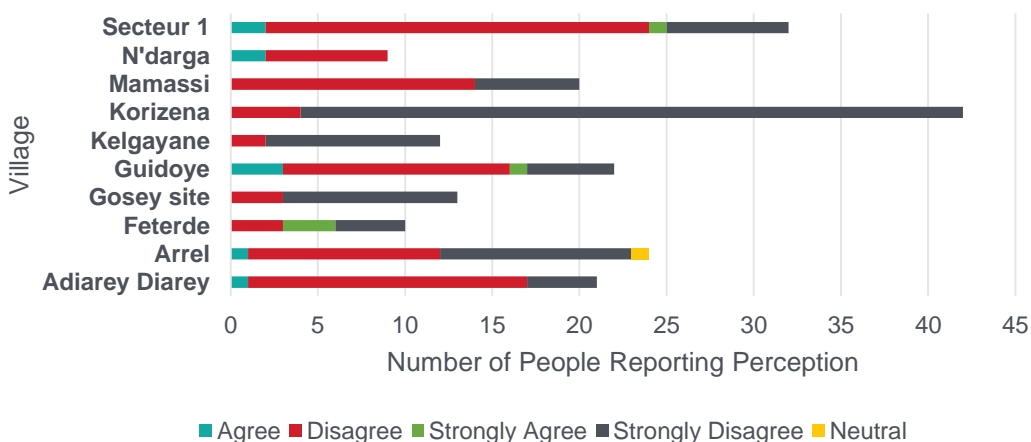
Participants were asked to provide their degree of agreement or disagreement with the current religious interpretations and practices in their communities, and 85 percent of the 205 households said they agreed. The same perception was shared among members of focus groups. Disagreement with current interpretations and practices was mainly recorded in Secteur 1, Guidoye, Arrel, and Adiarey Diarey villages.

How much do you agree with those around you on religious interpretations of concepts/practices?



Participants were also asked to provide their perception about hate and violent narratives preached or promoted in their communities (*“What is your level of agreement / acceptance of hate speech and violence in public?”*): 93 percent out of 205 households expressed their discontent and disagreement with religious preaching for hate and violence, and every person surveyed or interviewed indicated none of their family members or people they know have joined or supported extremist groups operating in the region. The high level of disagreement with hate speech and violence is unsurprising given a likely response bias, as is the absence of any respondents citing family members or acquaintances in VEOs. A household survey generally does not allow for researchers to spend enough time with participants to gain their trust, and so the results here may not fully reflect the reality.

What is your level of agreement / acceptance of hate speech and violence in public?



Phase Three: Tillabéry, Niger

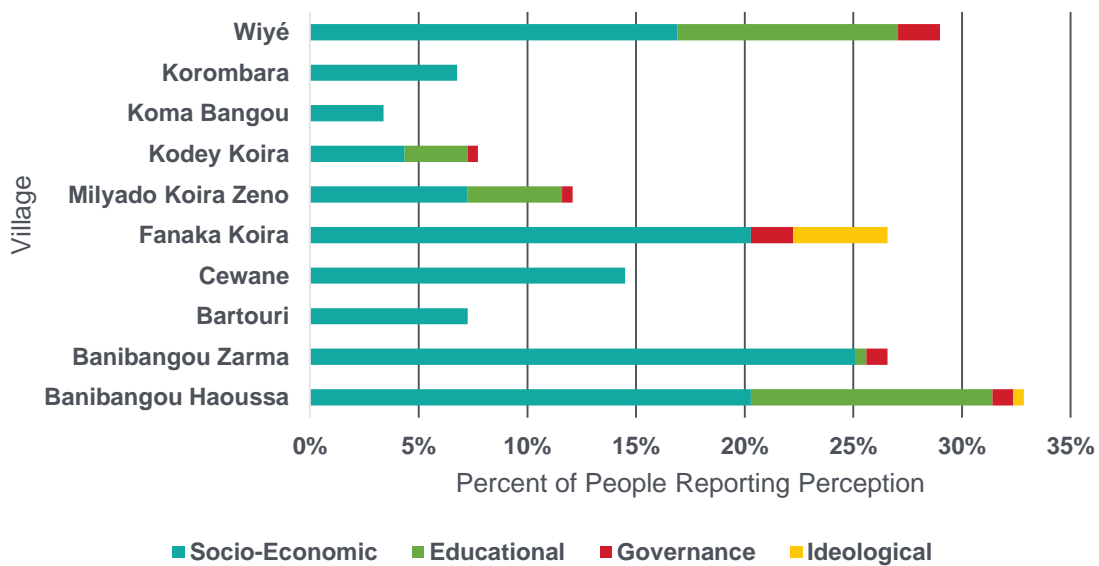
Community Perception of Vulnerability and Resilience Factors

Categories of Vulnerability Factors

As was done in Diffa, Niger and Gorom-Gorom, Burkina Faso enumerators asked respondents to report what kind of factors play a possible role in making their community vulnerable and possibly driving people to engage in VE. These include socio-economic factors, governance factors, ideological factors, and educational factors. While there is a combination of factors making communities vulnerable to VE, socio-economic factors were overwhelmingly perceived as the most important vulnerability factor in all 10 villages.

While this is similar to the results from phases one and two in Diffa and Gorom-Gorom, in which socio-economic factors were also perceived to be the most significant, it is different in an important way: in Diffa and Gorom-Gorom, non-socio-economic factors, while secondary, were nevertheless perceived to be relatively important; in Tillabéry however, the gap in perceived importance between socio-economic factors and non-socio-economic factors was much larger.

Categories of Vulnerability Factors, Tillabéry, Niger

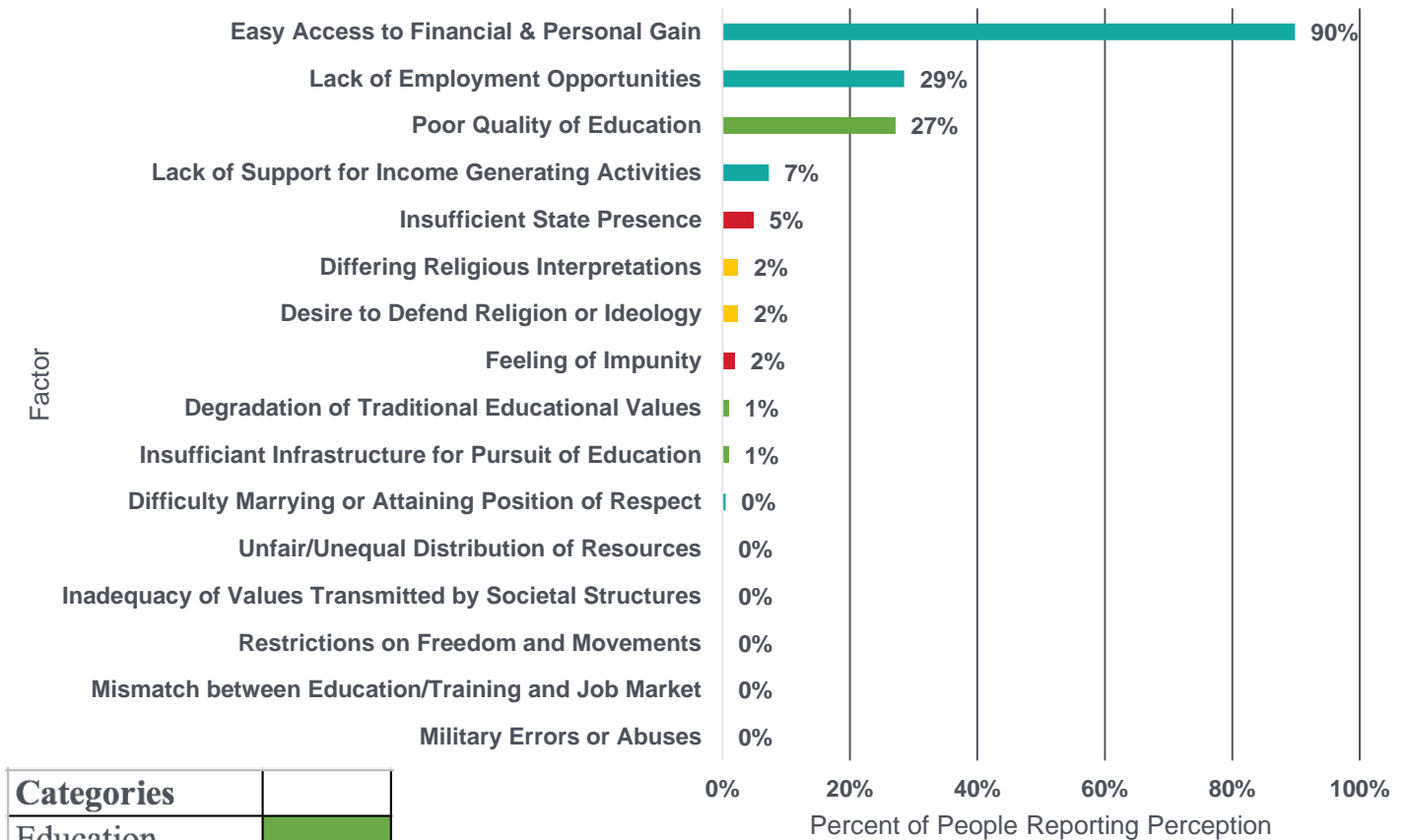


Individual Vulnerability Factors

Within each of these four categories of drivers listed above, enumerators then asked respondents to report which individual factors within those categories motivated people to join VEOs or not. Participants were asked about anywhere between two and eight individual drivers in each category, including both push and pull factors.

The individual vulnerability factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was identified by 90 percent of the 207 participants. This was far and away the individual vulnerability factor that participants perceived to be the most important and the only one cited by over 30 percent of the population. The next closest factor was lack of employment opportunities (29%), followed by poor quality of education (27%). It should be noted that there was a higher rate of non-responses in these questions than during phases one or two. It is not clear why, however the recent violence and insecurity, could be one potential explanation as to why respondents were more hesitant to respond.

Individual Vulnerability Factors, Tillabéry, Niger



Category by Category Analysis

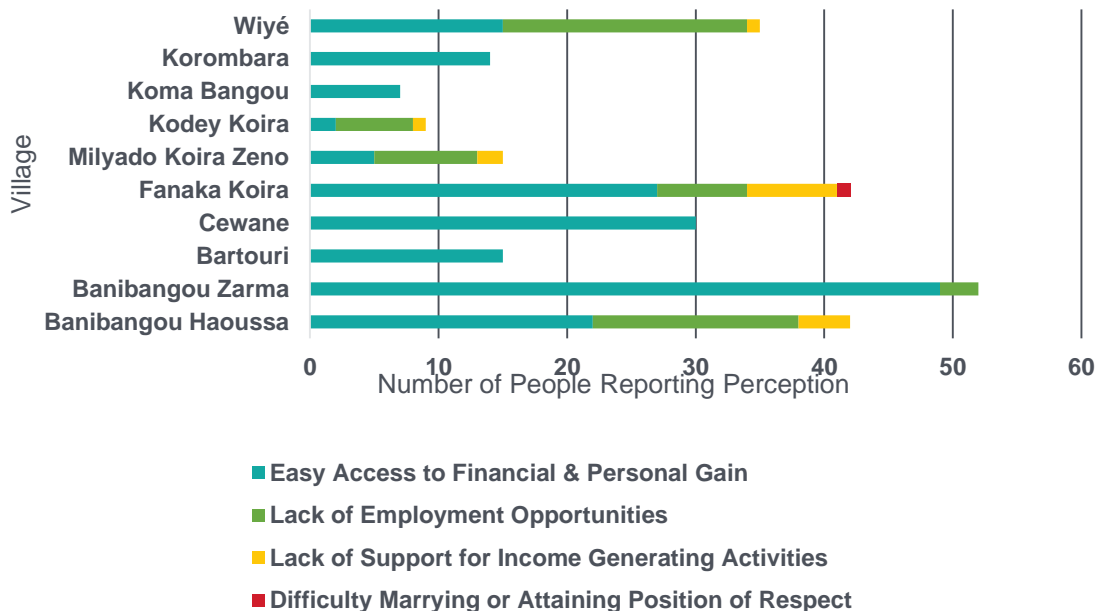
The following section provides more detail on the perceptions of the significant individual factors within each category of VE drivers. Survey results are discussed at an individual level, by category, and village by village where necessary.

Socio-Economic Factors

The socio-economic factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: easy access to financial and personal gain, which was identified by 90 percent of the 207 participants surveyed. Lack of employment opportunities was the second greatest identified factor with 29 percent. The perception of easy access to financial and personal gain was common in all 10 villages and shared among FGD participants as well.

As a result of increased activities by groups like JNIM and ISGS in Tillabéry, the security situation deteriorated along with economic conditions. For instance, local merchants became hesitant to travel to weekly markets to sell and buy products, while seasonal workers were unable to travel to Mali for work.¹⁴ The lack of viable alternative economic activities likely increased tolerance toward criminal activities, and created an enabling environment for VEOs to recruit. Extremist groups in Mali and Niger exploited these poor economic conditions and used financial means to motivate people to join or support them.

Socio-Economic Factors, Tillabéry, Niger

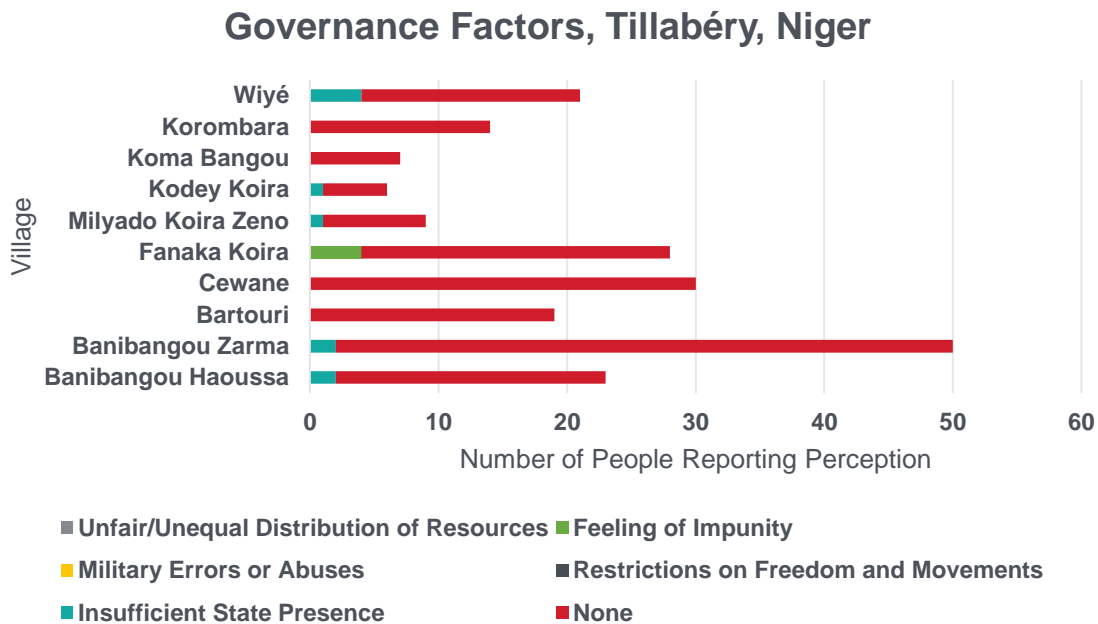


¹⁴ Haute Autorité à la Consolidation de la Paix, “Analyse Conflit Nord Tillabéri,” August 2017, <http://www.hacp-niger.org/note-finale-nord-tillaberi/>

Governance Factors

Surprisingly, participants overwhelmingly perceived that there are no governance-related vulnerability factors. Out of 207, 193 (93%) participants said no governance-related factors are connected to VE, while only 2 percent and 5 percent said sentiment of impunity and insufficient state presence are sources of vulnerability, respectively. Additionally, no participants viewed unequal distribution of resources, military errors, or restrictions on freedom as factors leading people to join VEOs. This held true even in the two villages where public services were perceived to be absent (Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira).

More research would be required to determine the cause of this finding. One potential explanation is that unlike in Mali and Burkina Faso, there haven't been major reports of abuses by security forces against civilians suspected of collaborating with jihadist groups, which may lead to more positive feelings related to governance in general. Response bias – that participants may be hesitant to speak poorly of the government – is another potential explanation. It should be noted however, that while very few people cited a governance-related vulnerability factor, of the six villages where at least one respondent cited a governance-related factor, four of those six were identified as vulnerable by the VST.

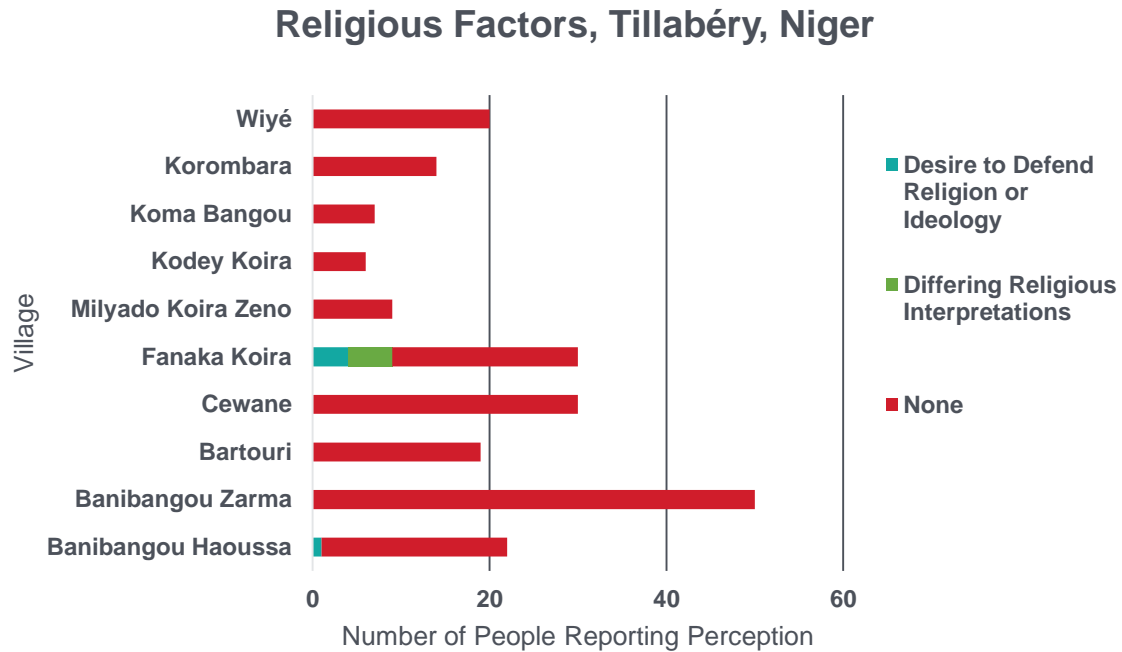


Ideological Factors

Religion is a common factor and a source of unity to local communities in Tillabéry. Islam is almost exclusively the only religion practiced in the area.¹⁵ This could explain why 197 out of 207 (95%) participants said no religious factors are leading

¹⁵ Ibid. p.39

people to join VE. A similar perception was also shared among participants during FGDs.

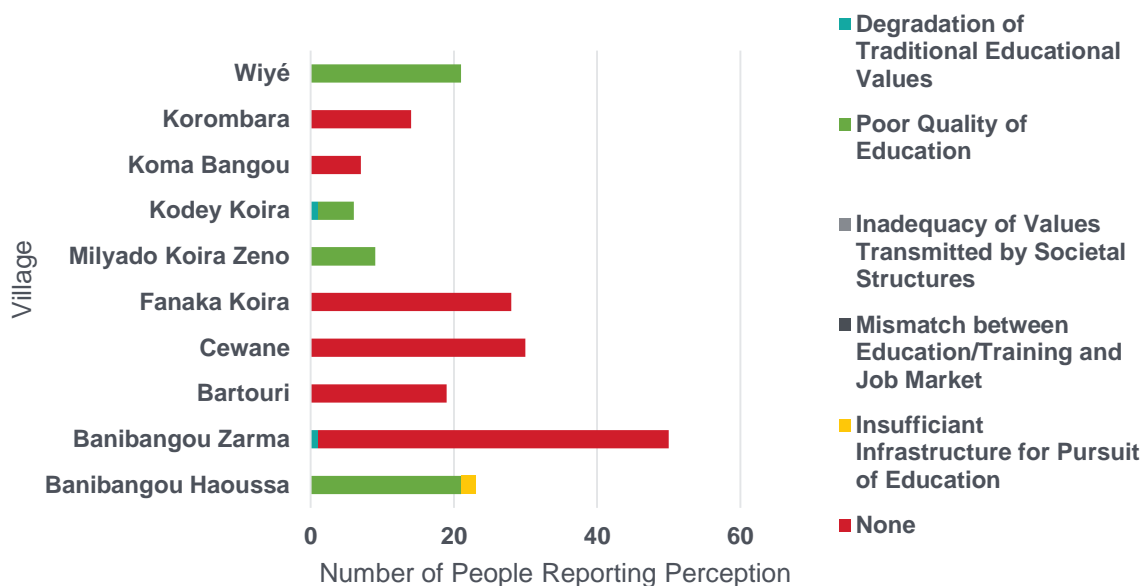


Education Factors

The educational factor identified by the greatest number of participants was: poor quality education, which was identified by 56 out of 207 participants (27%). While generally, people surveyed said public services, including education, are accessible in at least eight out of the 10 villages, it appears that the degree of satisfaction regarding the quality of the schools is not as positive. Even so, 71 percent perceived no educational factors as playing a role in encouraging people to join VE.

It is important to note however, that of the four villages where people cited education-related vulnerability factors (Wiyé, Kodey Koira, Milyado Koira Zeno, and Banibangou Haoussa), three were identified as vulnerable by the VST. Further, in the six villages where people did not cite education-related vulnerability factors, four were among the least vulnerable group as identified by the VST.

Education Factors, Tillabéry, Niger



Additional Factors Identified by Participants

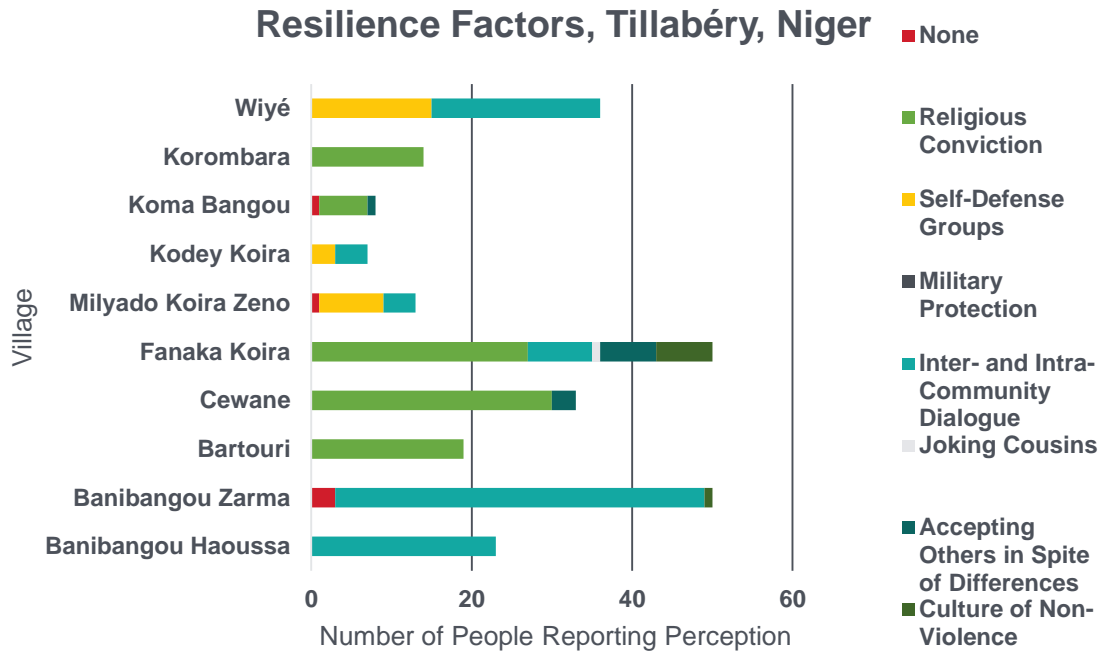
Participants were also asked to identify among a selection of “psychosocial” or “emotional” factors they perceive as driving people to join VE. These factors included fear, personal conviction, a lack of understanding of VEO’s ideology, and others. Although there has been no confirmed reporting of recruitment by force by VEOs in Tillabéry, fear was selected by the highest number of participants, but was still only at 15 percent of the 207 surveyed households. This was followed by personal conviction (12%) vengeance (11%), lack of understanding (6%), and despair with (3%).

Due to limited access to the area and the relatively recent phenomena of VE in Tillabéry, there is a lack of research and open-source reporting to provide granular analysis about these factors. The region might have some common trends and similarities with VE in Mali and Burkina Faso, but the rise of VE in Tillabéry is relatively new.

Resilience Factors

In addition to the vulnerability factors discussed above, the VRAI research also seeks to gain a better understanding of the resilience factors that allow communities to resist recruitment into violent extremist groups. These resilience factors could help prevent JNIM and ISGS from strengthening and expanding their presence in Niger in general, and in Tillabéry in particular. Communities in Tillabéry identified the existence of multiple sources of resilience. Inter- and intra-community dialogue was perceived by 51 percent of the surveyed population as the key source of resilience. This was followed by religious conviction with 46 percent, self-defense

groups with 12 percent, accepting others despite differences with 5 percent, and non-violence culture with 4 percent.



Sources of Community Grievances

Public Services

Respondents were asked how they perceived public services provided in their respective areas. Overall perception toward public services is positive as 187 out of 207 (90%) participants rated the services to be good or very good. This perception was evident in eight out of 10 villages with the exception of Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira – villages where all participants surveyed stated that public services are non-existent. This same observation was also noted during FGDs. Interestingly, while Kodey Koira was identified by the VST as one of the more vulnerable villages, Milyado Koira Zeno was not.

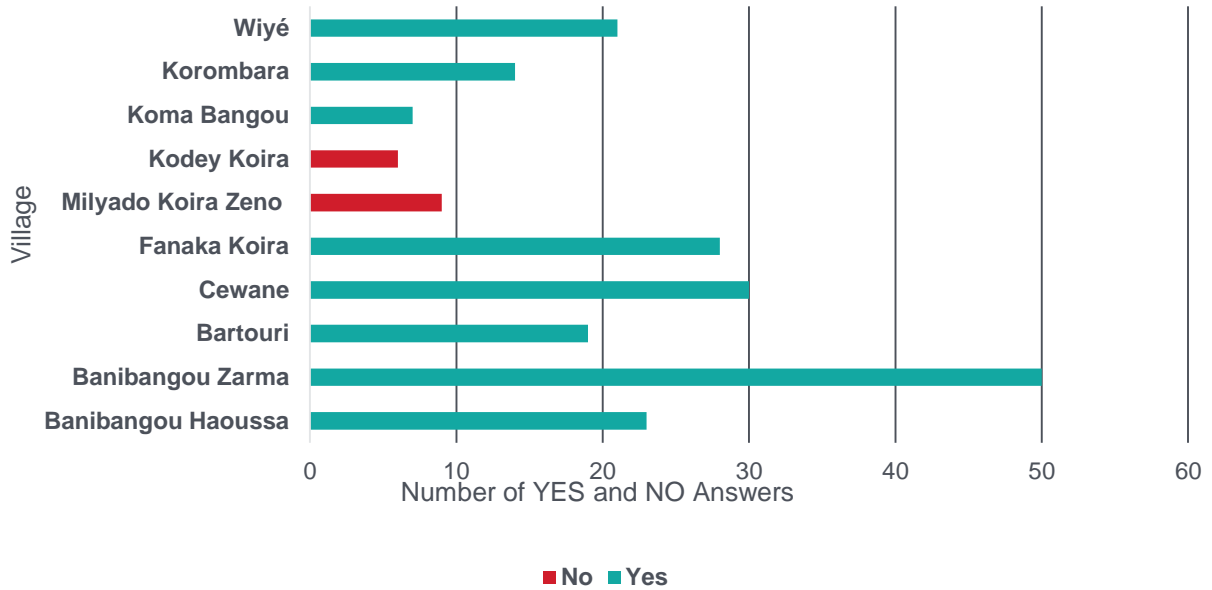
Perception of Public Services, Tillabéry, Niger



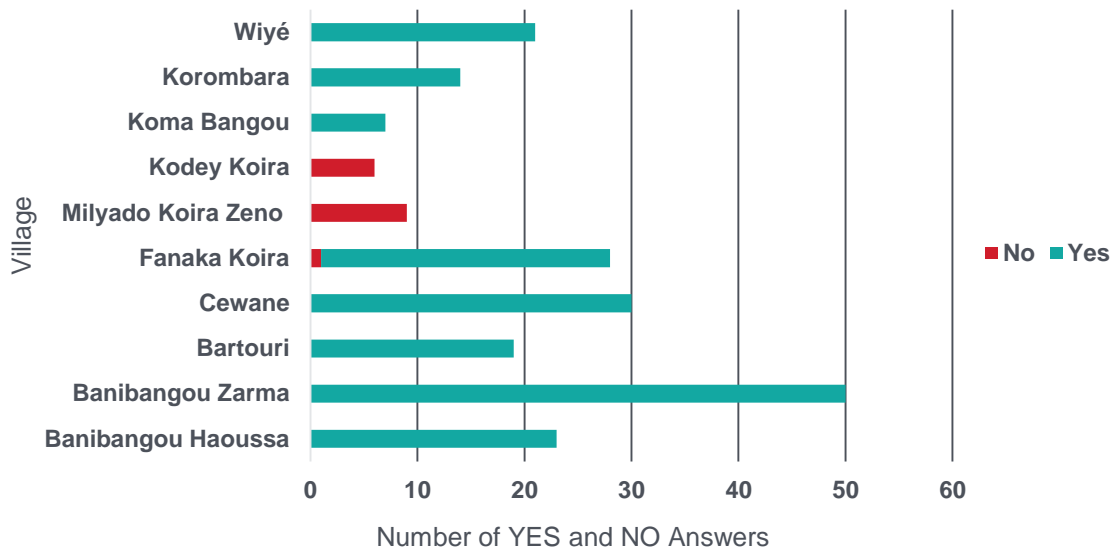
Water and Health Center Access

People were also directly asked if they have access to drinking water and to a health center. All participants from eight out of 10 villages said they do have access to potable water and to health center (93% of 207 total households), while all participants of Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira villages said they do not. This confirms previous observation where participants of these two villages stated public services are non-existent in their villages.

Do you have access to potable water?



Do you have access to health center?

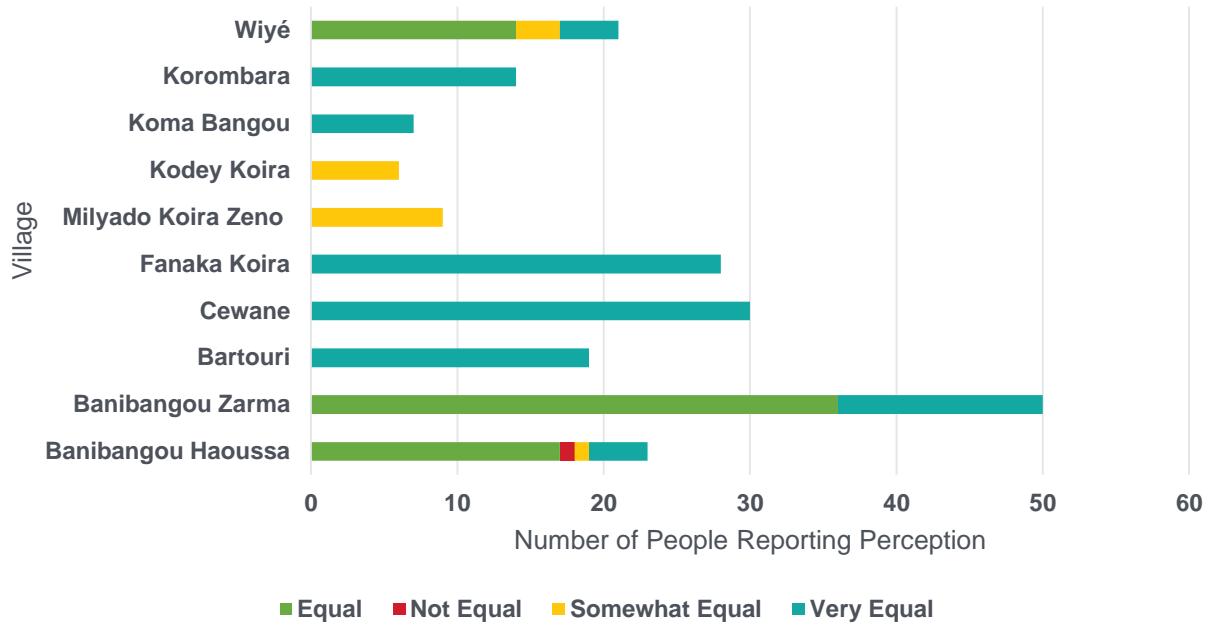


Perception Toward Education

Mercy Corps asked, “Do you think that people in your community have equal access to education?” Access to education was perceived by 206 out of 207 (99.5%) as equal, strongly equal, or somewhat equal. The perception of only “somewhat equal” was observed mostly in the Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira villages, the same locations that had strong negative perceptions toward public services. This

perception was also noted during FGDs where all participants from Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira villages stated access to education was only “somewhat equal.”

Do you think that people in your community have equal access to education?

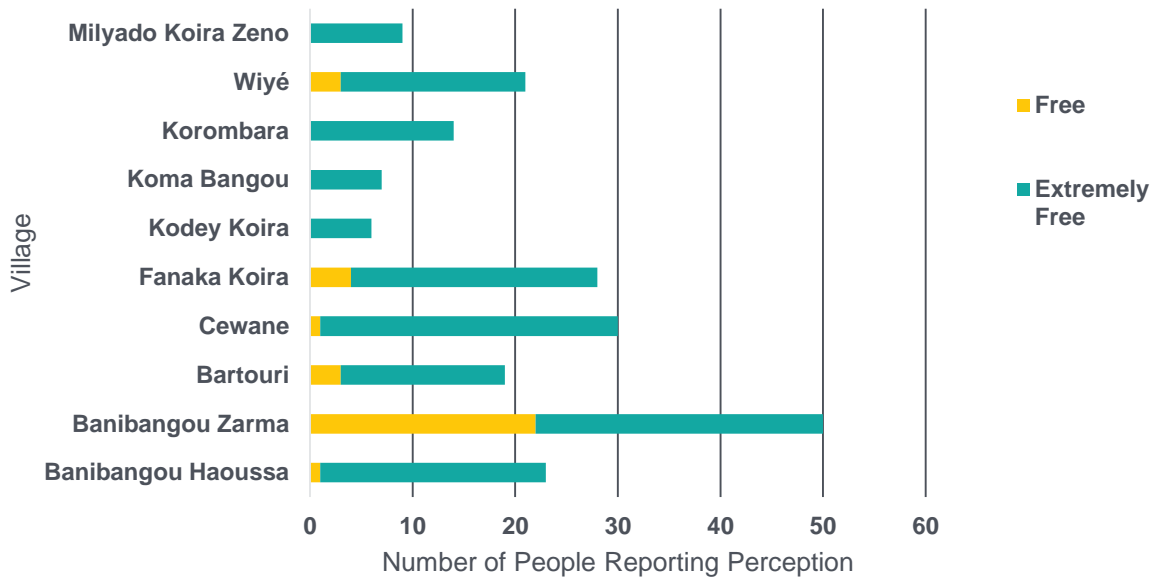


Religious Practice

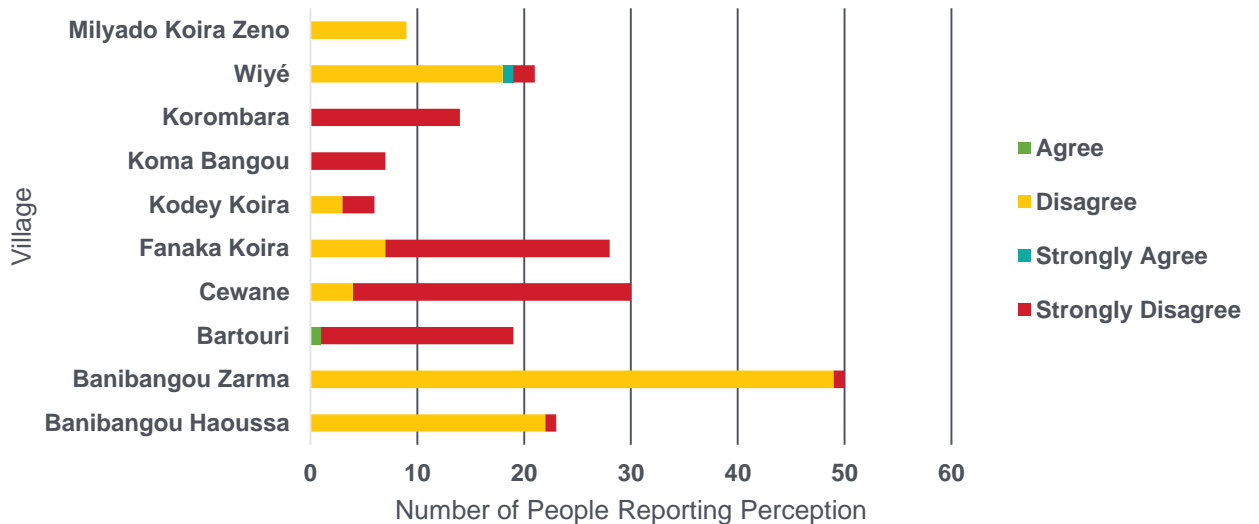
The population surveyed was asked to provide their perception toward the degree of freedom in regards to religious practice. Local populations surveyed in the 10 villages indicated with no exception (100%) that religious practices are not restricted and are extremely free or free. The majority (83.5%) of participants stated that their religious practice was extremely free, while 12.5% said religious practice was free. This perception was also shared among participants during FGDs.

Participants were also asked: “What is your level of agreement / acceptance of hate speech and violence in public?” In total, 205 out of 207 participants (99%) expressed their discontent and disagreement with religious preaching for hate and violence, similar to the perception noted among participants in Oudalan Province during the Burkina Faso study. Also, every person surveyed indicated none of their family members or people they know have joined or supported extremist groups operating in the region. However, as was noted following the Burkina Faso study, the high level of disagreement with hate speech and violence is unsurprising given a likely response bias, as is the absence of any respondents citing family members or acquaintances in VEOs. A household survey generally does not allow for researchers to spend enough time with participants to gain their trust, and so the results here may not fully reflect the reality.

What is your level of religious freedom?



What is your level of agreement/acceptance of hate speech and violence in public?



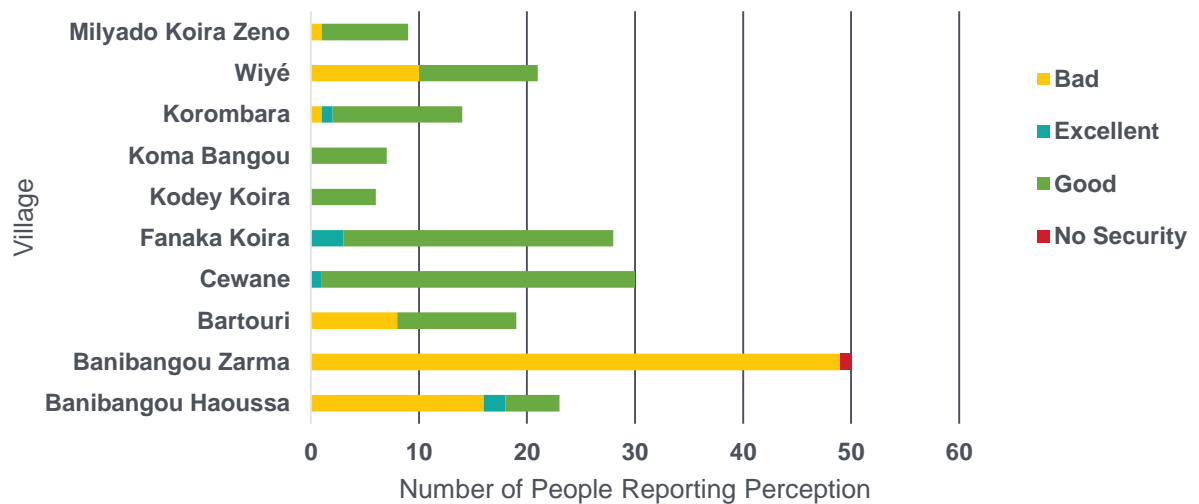
Security

The population surveyed in Tillabéry was asked to provide its perception on the security situation in their respective areas. Perception appears to be split as 58% of

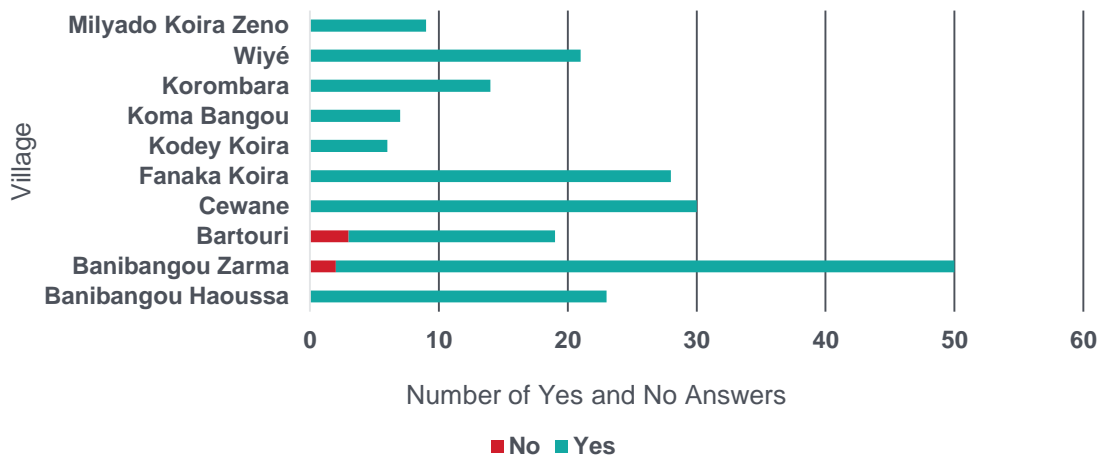
participants saw the security situation to be good or excellent while 42% perceived it to be bad. In Milyado Koira Zeno and Kodey Koira where public services are perceived to be non-existent by participants, the security situation is overwhelmingly perceived to be good. On the other hand, in Banibangou Haoussa, Banibangou Zarma, Wiyé, and Bartouri where public services are perceived accessible, the security situation is perceived by many to be bad. Importantly, these four villages were all among the vulnerable villages as identified by the VST.

The population surveyed also overwhelmingly (97.5% out of 207) perceived security forces as capable of providing necessary protection to their respective communities, and this was confirmed by the FGDs.

What is the security situation in your community?



Do you think security forces are capable of maintaining security in your community?



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