

Question: What is an aid worker?

An aid worker is someone whose mission is to do humanitarian aid work, both nationally or internationally. They are also called ‘humanitarians’ and are professionals who have studied or received training in specific aspects of humanitarian assistance, follow international working guidelines and best practices. They have experience working in complex emergency situations, such as the one in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states, resulting from over ten years of conflict in the north-east. Aid workers are guided in their work by the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. In Nigeria, there are more than 2,500 aid workers, with more than 80 per cent being Nigerians, many of them from Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

Question: What exactly is an aid worker doing?

An aid worker provides humanitarian assistance, at no financial cost, to people in need. This includes food, shelter, water, medical care, education, latrines, protection services such as vulnerability screening and legal aid and many other forms of practical support that people in an emergency need to survive. An aid worker also gives information to communities so that people know what is going on and can make well-informed decisions.

Question: Why are aid workers in Nigeria focusing on Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states only?

The three states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe, located in north-east Nigeria, are facing one of the most severe humanitarian crises in the world today. A ten-year conflict with non-state armed groups is uprooting the life of millions, even beyond Nigerian borders into Cameroon, Chad and Niger. As is the case in many emergency situations, the Government invited humanitarian organisations to support their efforts in responding to people in need across these three states. Nigeria faces other types of crises or challenges in other parts of the country and some UN and International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) are working in in other states and/or areas across Nigeria.

Question: Who receives humanitarian assistance?

The number of people in need of urgent assistance in 2020 is estimated to be 7.9 million, compared to 7.1 million in 2019. Some of those people are inaccessible for aid workers, which is one of the major challenges facing humanitarians. Across the three states, some 1.2 million people are beyond the reach of humanitarian actors and deprived of much needed assistance and civil authority services.

Question: What are the accomplishments of aid workers in Nigeria so far?

In 2019, we reached 5.2 million people with humanitarian aid. About 2.4 million people received food security assistance on average each month. We also provided emergency health treatment or support to over 4 million people; and saved the lives of 650 children per day who were suffering from severe acute malnutrition.

Question: What are aid workers doing in response to COVID-19?

The United Nations and international organisations are supporting various Nigerian authorities in their efforts to inform people, prevent the spread of the virus and ensure people can receive treatment in case they contract COVID-19.

For example, aid actors are establishing spaces where people coming from neighbouring states or countries and anybody experiencing symptoms of the virus can go into quarantine. These are shelters or centers that humanitarian actors are establishing in coordination with the State Government and the Ministry of Health at key points of entry into the state and in various LGAs across the State.

Humanitarian organisations are setting up water points and handwashing stations in IDP camps but also in host communities. They are distributing hygiene kits, which include soap or chlorinated solutions where water is not directly available. Humanitarian actors are also multiplying awareness-raising campaigns so that a maximum of people, wherever they are in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states can have information about the COVID-19 virus and have the opportunity to ask questions or raise concerns.

All humanitarian staff are being trained on prevention and protection measures and have adapted the way they work to reduce the risk of spreading the virus. Distributions and awareness-raising sessions have been adapted to avoid large gatherings and all beneficiaries, partners and others in the community are encouraged to support our efforts and respect social distancing and other prevention measures to help you and us keeping safe.

Question: What are the other priorities?

The priority is to help the women, children and men who have been forced to flee their homes as a result of the conflict, as well as the communities that host and support them. We also provide support to people when they return home because we know that it can be very challenging to start your life after a long period of time away. However, we provide emergency, life-saving assistance to all affected communities irrespective of tribe, creed, religion or ethnicity: we strongly believe that all Nigerians should live in safety and in dignity. Our aim is for people to be able to rebuild their lives, their families and their communities so that they would not need humanitarian assistance anymore and could receive other kind of support.

Question: Where is the money coming from and what do you do with it?

International donors are funding the humanitarian work carried out by the United Nations and many international and national NGOs in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. In 2019, we received \$581 million from different countries. This however was only a little more than two-thirds of what was required to provide life-saving assistance to those who urgently needed it.

Additional funds are needed to do everything we have set out to do for the vulnerable people of Nigeria, but there are humanitarian crises in many other parts of the world that also need to be funded and resources are limited.

We believe it is important for anybody to be able to see where funds are coming from and how the money is being used. Therefore, we report all funding on an online platform (fts.unocha.org) so that anybody anywhere in the world can, at any time, see how much money the UN and NGOs have received for which projects in Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states and how it is being used.