Nigeria General Household Survey-Panel (Wave 5) 2023/2024
Tracking Nigerian Households to Understand Their Resilience Over Time

Summary of Key Findings by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics

Supported by the World Bank Living Standards Measurement Study (LSMS)

Key Highlights

- **This brief summarizes key results from Wave 5 (2023/24) of the General Household Survey—Panel (GHS-Panel), Nigeria's pioneering nationally representative longitudinal household survey.**

- **The panel nature of the data enables tracking household-level changes in critical areas of welfare, work, and socio-economic outcomes over time, yielding insights for policy.**

- **Findings give a granular sense of the current challenges that Nigerian households face. They also reveal levers for action to support household resilience.**

- **Comparing GHS-Panel Wave 5 results with findings from Wave 4 (2018/19) reveals concerning trends but also signs of promise:**

  - **Data point to increased food insecurity and rising levels of child stunting, for example, along with suboptimal literacy outcomes, particularly in rural areas.**

  - **On the other hand, results show encouraging gains in average years of schooling and high levels of household entrepreneurship in the creation of nonfarm enterprises.**

- **Presenting specific policy recommendations is beyond the scope of this brief. However, the latest GHS-Panel results can inform evidence-based policy making that will bolster resilience and benefit all Nigerians.**

The General Household Survey – Panel (GHS-Panel) is the only nationally representative longitudinal survey in Nigeria. Since the inception of the GHS-Panel in 2010, the National Bureau of Statistics has implemented five waves of the survey in collaboration with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank, providing invaluable insights into household welfare, income-generating activities, and socio-economic outcomes over time. The GHS-Panel offers a deep dive into important dimensions of the challenges Nigerian households face, while documenting features that may support resilience.

This brief summarizes select key results from GHS-Panel Wave 5, the latest round of the survey. In Wave 5, a total of 4,715 households were interviewed across 518 Enumeration Areas. Households were visited twice: first after the planting season (post-planting visit), between July and September 2023, and second after the harvest season (post-harvest visit), between January and March 2024. While a subsample (31 percent) of households from the original 2010 panel was retained as a long-term panel, a partial refresh was implemented in GHS-Panel Wave 4 and carried into Wave 5 to ensure sample integrity and representativeness. Although there has been a 13.5 percent attrition rate since 2010, the sample refresh design facilitates strong longitudinal analysis of household welfare and socio-economic dynamics in Nigeria.

Demographic Trends

While there are no significant changes in Nigeria's demographic trends when comparing results from GHS-Panel Wave 4 (2018/19) and Wave 5 (2023/24), the latest survey shows a slight increase (+3.7 percentage points) in the percentage of female-headed households at the national level. A considerable proportion of Nigeria's population (45.4 percent of households) has experienced the relocation of at least one household member. Migration aspirations are high among those who remain in their households, with one in four individuals ages 15 and older wishing to leave their community.

Countrywide, only 30.2 percent of Nigerians report having a National Birth Certificate, and zonal disparities are discernible (Figure 1). A substantial contrast in National Birth Certificate ownership emerges between urban and rural settings, with urban areas registering a markedly higher ownership rate of 52.5 percent compared to the modest 21.7 percent observed in rural areas. This disparity underscores the obstacles encountered by rural communities in acquiring official documentation and points to a pronounced accessibility gap between urban and rural inhabitants.

FIGURE 1 • **Individuals with a National Birth Certificate**

(Share of all individuals)
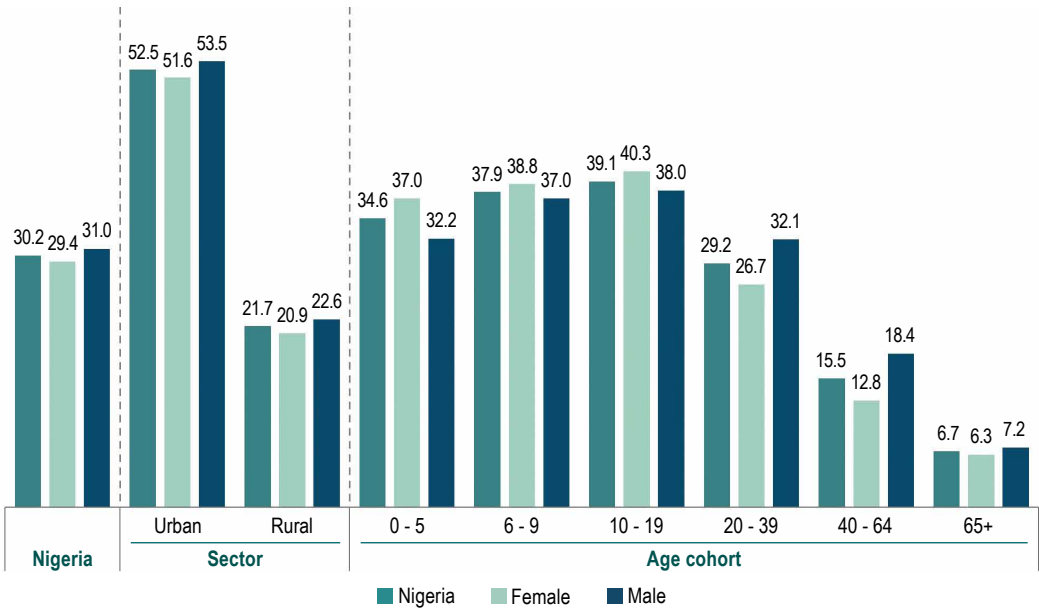
Education

The average years of schooling for individuals ages three and older has increased slightly since 2018/19, from 5.5 to 5.8 years. Literacy remains a challenge, particularly in rural areas, where only 54 percent of individuals are literate. Nationally, 76.1 percent of children five to 14 years old are attending school, but there are significant differences across sectors and zones.

While most Nigerian children ages four to six excel in executive functioning and social-emotional skills, more than half have not met essential literacy milestones. Children in the urban sector exhibit higher rates of early childhood development across all domains compared to rural children, with notable differences in literacy and numeracy outcomes (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2 • **Anchor Items for Early Childhood Development**

(Share of children ages four to six years)

Domain	Anchor Items	Nigeria	Urban	Rural
Literacy	Name at least ten letters	45.5	66.7	39.6
	Read four simple words	31.1	53.2	24.9
	Follow text in a correct direction, even if s/he cannot read	38.6	62.5	31.9
	Write at least three letters	38.6	65.2	31.1
	Write a simple word, besides his/her name	24.1	48.3	17.3
Numeracy	Count from 1 to 10	63.9	86.3	57.5
	Count from 1 to 20	42.5	69.5	34.9
	Differentiate between tall and short	62.8	76.7	58.9
	Differentiate between heavy and light	56.9	69.4	53.4
	Differentiate between yesterday, today, and tomorrow	43.5	53.4	40.8
	Know that a one-digit number is larger than another one-digit number	39.0	53.5	34.9
Executive Functioning & Social-emotional competencies	Pay attention when doing an activity	65.2	77.4	61.8
	Remember all the instructions when they were asked to do several things	41.2	49.1	38.9
	Able to plan ahead	20.4	30.7	17.4
	Stop an activity when told to do so	73.4	81.7	71.0
	Keep working at something until s/he is finished	45.1	55.4	42.1
	Get along with other children s/he plays with	84.6	91.2	82.7
	Adjust easily to transitions	61.5	71.8	58.7
	Accept responsibility for his/her actions	50.0	58.3	47.7
	Settle down after periods of exciting activity	69.9	74.0	68.7

Note: Data collection and analysis based on the Anchor Items for the Measurement of Early Child Development (AIM-ECD). See https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/earlychildhooddevelopment/brief/a-set-of-resources-to-help-countries-measure-and-improve-early-childhood-development

DATA SPOTLIGHT 1: **Education Trends from a Panel Perspective**

A key feature of the GHS-Panel is the ability to examine how certain characteristics of households or their members have evolved over time. By tracking members of survey households who were between 10 and 19 years old at the time of GHS-Panel Wave 4 (2018/19) into Wave 5, when these persons had reached ages between 15 and 24, we can examine how the young people's educational status has evolved, gain insights into their current activities, and identify key differences between those who remained in school and those who are out of school.

Figure DS1.1 visualizes changes in educational status across survey waves for the cohort who were ages 10 to 19 in Wave 4. For example, the figure shows that, during Wave 4, 13.4 percent of this age cohort had never attended school. Over the following five years, 4.1 percent of the "never-school" group attended school at some point, while 9.3 percent still reported never attending school when interviewed in 2023/24. The broad middle band in Figure DS1.1 shows that 73.0 percent of survey household members ages 10 to 19 were enrolled in school during Wave 4. By Wave 5, the proportion of the cohort who were in school had decreased to 44.8 percent, as 34.8 percent of those previously enrolled were now out of school. The lower band in the figure shows that 13.6 percent of the Wave 4 10-to-19 age cohort had attended school at some point but were out of school at the time of the 2018/19 survey. 5.6 percent of this subgroup returned to school by the time of Wave 5, leaving only 8 percent of the subpopulation still out of school in 2023/24. Overall, 45.9 percent of individuals who were between 10 and 19 years old in Wave 4 were out of school in Wave 5.

FIGURE DS1.1 • **Education Status from Wave 4 (2018/19) to Wave 5 (2023/24)**

(Share of persons who were ages 10 to 19 years in Wave 4)
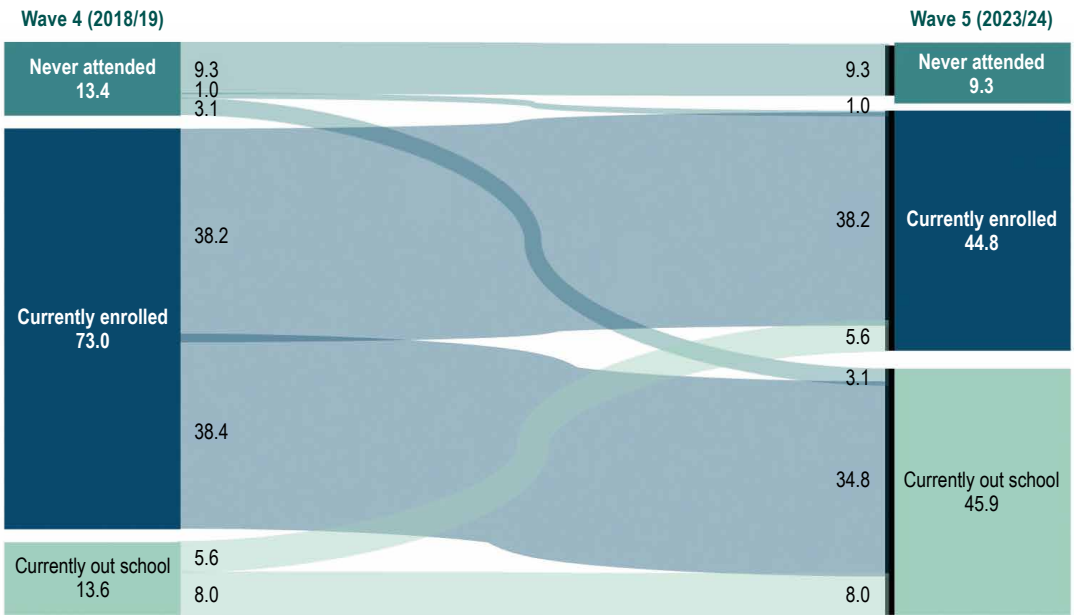
Note: This figure considers only household members who were included in Wave 4 and Wave 5 and who were between 10 and 19 years of age at the time of Wave 4 (N=3,222).
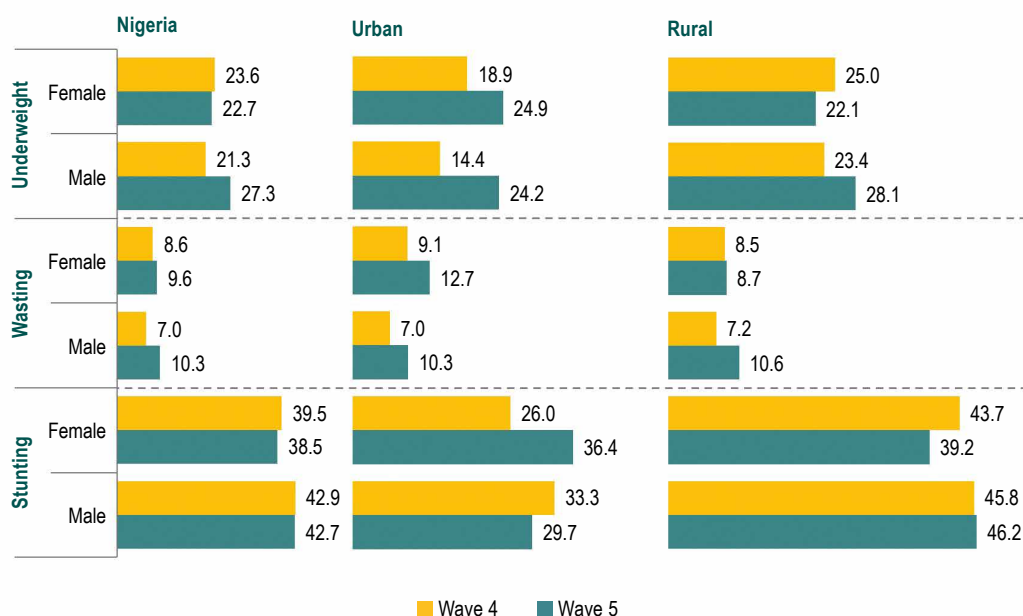
Health

Approximately two in 10 individuals reported having experienced a health problem in the previous four weeks. Malaria is the most-reported illness, affecting 66.8 percent of the population, including 70.7 percent in urban areas and 65.3 percent in rural areas.

Notably, about 7.0 percent of individuals ages five years and older report having a disability, with higher prevalence among the elderly and women. Child anthropometry shows that there has been a noticeable increase in stunting, wasting, and underweight levels since 2018/19, particularly among children in urban areas, with stunting rates slightly higher in boys than in girls (Figure 3).

FIGURE 3 • **Child Anthropometry**

(Share of children ages six to 59 months)

		Nigeria	Urban	Rural
Underweight	Female	23.6 / 22.7	18.9 / 24.9	25.0 / 22.1
	Male	21.3 / 27.3	14.4 / 24.2	23.4 / 28.1
Wasting	Female	8.6 / 9.6	9.1 / 12.7	8.5 / 8.7
	Male	7.0 / 10.3	7.0 / 10.3	7.2 / 10.6
Stunting	Female	39.5 / 38.5	26.0 / 36.4	43.7 / 39.2
	Male	42.9 / 42.7	33.3 / 29.7	45.8 / 46.2

■ Wave 4 ■ Wave 5

Housing Characteristics and Household Assets

Seven out of 10 households report owning the dwelling that they live in. However, there are important differences between urban and rural households, with rural ownership at 80.1 percent, compared to 49.1 percent in urban areas. Nationwide, the most common roofing material is zinc sheets (60.3 percent), while cement/concrete is most used for flooring (67.2 percent) and outer walls (61.5 percent). Cooking typically involves traditional three-stone stoves (65.0 percent), primarily using wood as fuel (70.2 percent). Data on cooking-fuel choices show a relevant increase in the use of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) or cooking gas (+13.1 percentage points) since 2018/19 (Figure 4), indicating a shift towards a cleaner energy source in the country.

FIGURE 4 • **Change in Cookstove Fuel between GHS-Panel Waves 4 and 5**

(Percentage point change between waves)
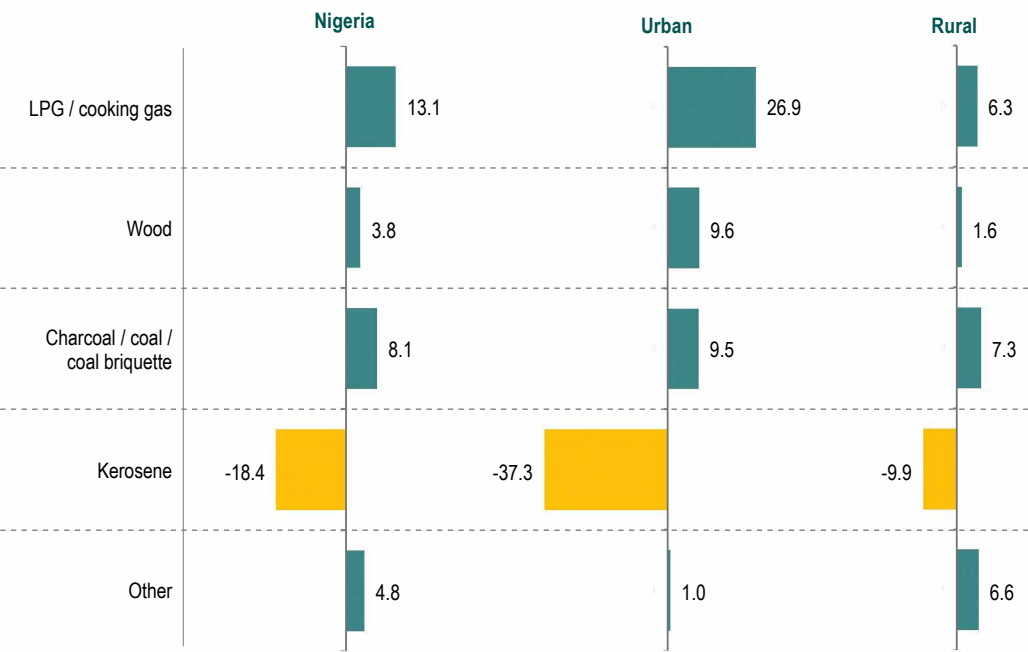
Electricity access shows a divide: 82.2 percent of urban households have electricity, compared to 40.4 percent of households in rural areas. Nationwide, households face an average of 6.7 electricity blackouts weekly. Many households lack toilet facilities and rely on tube wells or boreholes for drinking water.

DATA SPOTLIGHT 2: Understanding Wealth Mobility with Panel Data

The comparison of Wave 4 and Wave 5 data allows us to track the wealth mobility of households over the last five years. The panel nature of the data enables a unique view of wealth dynamics that cross-sectional surveys cannot capture, as it follows the same households over time, offering insights into factors influencing upward or downward mobility.

An asset index was created using the data from Wave 4 to Wave 5, and households were categorized into three groups based on whether they moved to different wealth quintiles between the waves. 41.7 percent of households remained in the same wealth quintile in Wave 5 as during Wave 4, while 29.4 percent experienced an upward shift, and 28.9 percent experienced a decline in their position in the wealth distribution (Figure DS2.1).

FIGURE DS2.1 • **Wealth Mobility Between GHS-Panel Waves 4 and 5**

(Share of households)
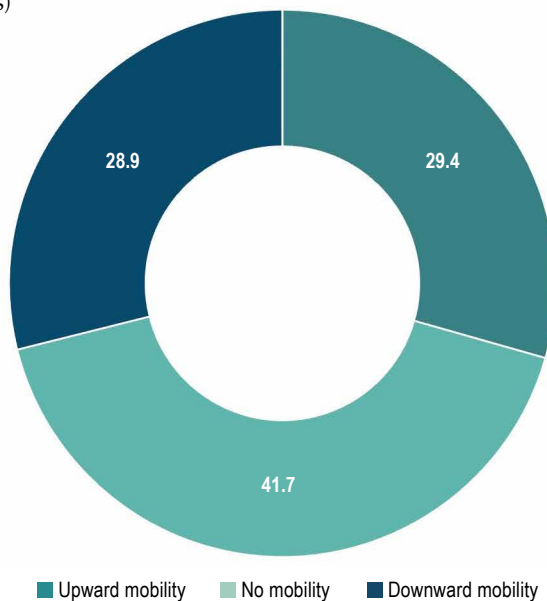
■ Upward mobility ■ No mobility ■ Downward mobility

Source: General Household Survey—Panel 2018-2019 (Wave 4) and 2023-2024 (Wave 5).
Note: This figure includes only households participating in both Wave 4 and Wave 5 (N=4,673).

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Waste disposal is mostly informal, with 45.6 percent using bushes or streets. The survey shows a high prevalence of access to mobile phones, with some two-thirds of individuals ages 10 years and older reporting access. However, the prevalence falls for internet access (around two in 10 individuals ages 10 years and older).

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DATA SPOTLIGHT 2: **Understanding Wealth Mobility with Panel Data**

Key factors influencing these changes included environmental and economic shocks. Households experiencing downward mobility were more likely to report being affected by floods and post-harvest losses, compared to other groups. Further analysis revealed that households that experienced upward mobility were more likely to report: (a) having saved money in the past 12 months; (b) attempting to borrow money; and (c) receiving domestic remittances. Conversely, households with downward mobility were less likely to report saving money, attempting to borrow money, or receiving remittances (Figure DS2.2).

FIGURE DS2.2 • **Financial Coping Mechanisms and Household Wealth Mobility**

(Share of households)
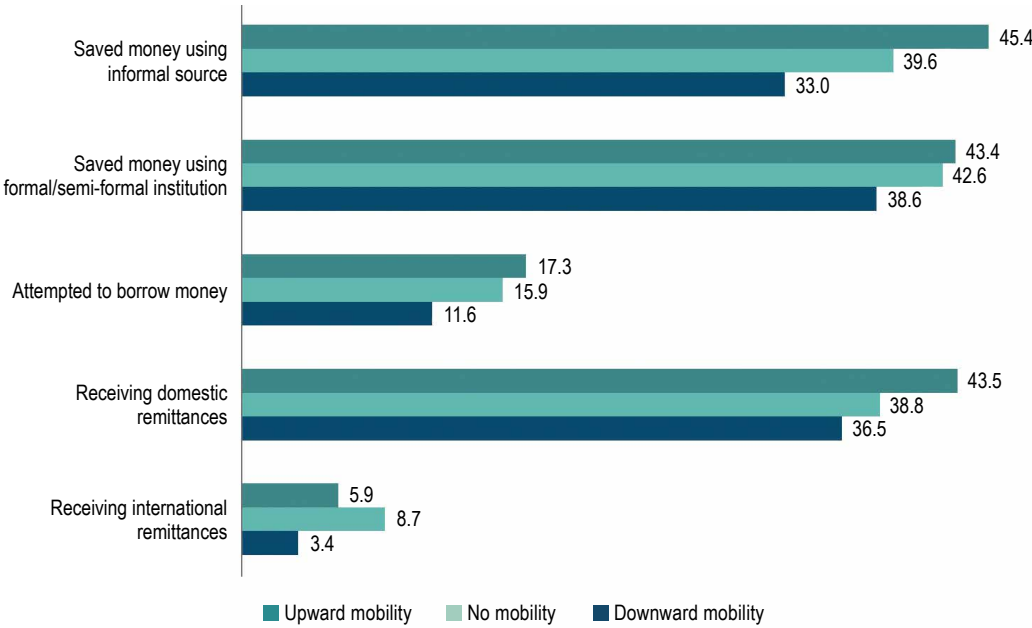
Source: General Household Survey—Panel 2018-2019 (Wave 4) and 2023-2024 (Wave 5).
Note: This figure includes only households participating in both Wave 4 and Wave 5 (N=4,673).
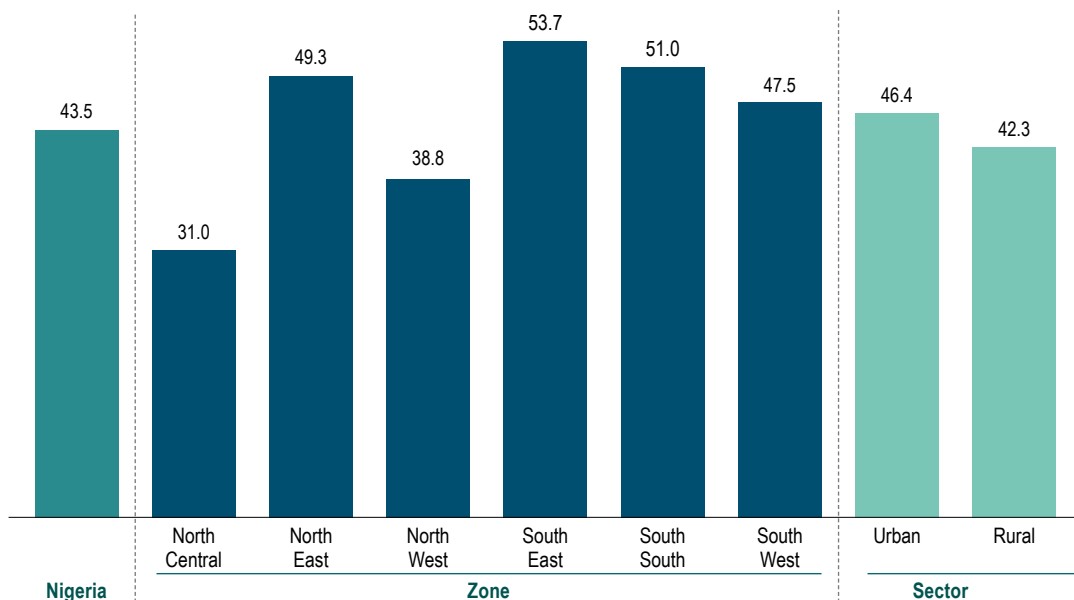
Consumption, Food Security, and Shocks

Only 43.5 percent of women of reproductive age (ages 15 to 49) reported consuming diets that meet standards for minimum dietary diversity (Figure 5)[1]. Nationally, only one in four individuals surveyed consumed all five recommended food groups (fruits; vegetables; pulses, nuts, or seeds; animal-source foods; and starchy staples) during the day before the survey interview ("All-5" indicator). Among the five food groups in All-5, the least-consumed food group was fruits (38 percent).

Approximately two out of three households (65.8 percent) indicated being unable to eat healthy, nutritious or preferred foods because of lack of money in the last 30 days. In general, households in the southern zones reported more incidents related to food security than those in northern zones, and a larger share of female-headed households report experiencing incidents related to food security, compared to male-headed household.

FIGURE 5 • **Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women of Reproductive Age (MDD-W)**

(Percentage distribution of women ages 15 to 49 years achieving minimum dietary diversity [MDD-W≥5])

	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Urban	Rural
Nigeria 43.5	31.0	49.3	38.8	53.7	51.0	47.5	46.4	42.3

Nigeria   **Zone**   **Sector**

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[1] Based on the internationally recognized Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) indicator.
     See https://www.dietquality.org/indicators/definitions

## DATA SPOTLIGHT 3: Food Insecurity from a Panel Perspective

Many households experienced changes in their levels of food insecurity between the post-harvest survey visit in 2018/19 (GHS-Panel Wave 4) and the corresponding visit in 2023/24 (Wave 5). The use of panel data offers the opportunity to track the same households across time and understand patterns in food security events.

To analyse food insecurity dynamics, households were categorized into the following groups: **(i) positive stability**, for those who did not face food insecurity experiences in either survey wave; **(ii) improvement**, for those who transitioned from a negative (food-insecure) condition during Wave 4 to a positive (more food-secure) condition in Wave 5; **(iii) decline**, for households that did not face food insecurity experiences during Wave 4, but did so in Wave 5; and **(iv) negative stability**, for those who reported food insecurity incidents in both waves.

As shown in Figure DS3.1, a greater proportion of households were categorized as experiencing a decline in food security compared to those reporting improvement. For instance, 35.3 percent of households were not worried about not having enough food to eat during Wave 4 but were concerned about this possibility when interviewed for Wave 5. On the same indicator, 27.1 percent of households reported being worried about not having enough food in Wave 4 and experiencing persistent worries in Wave 5. In contrast, 27.9 percent of households did not report such worries in either survey wave, while 9.7 percent reported concern about not having enough food in Wave 4 but not in Wave 5.

FIGURE DS3.1 • **Changes in Households' Food Insecurity Experiences Across Survey Waves**

(Share of households)
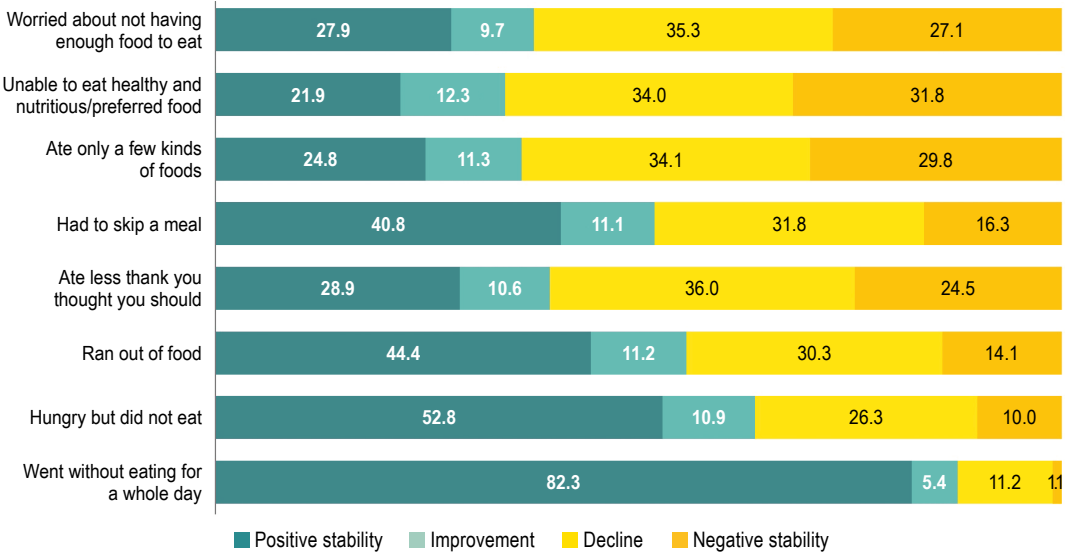
Source: General Household Survey—Panel 2018-2019 (Wave 4) and 2023-2024 (Wave 5).
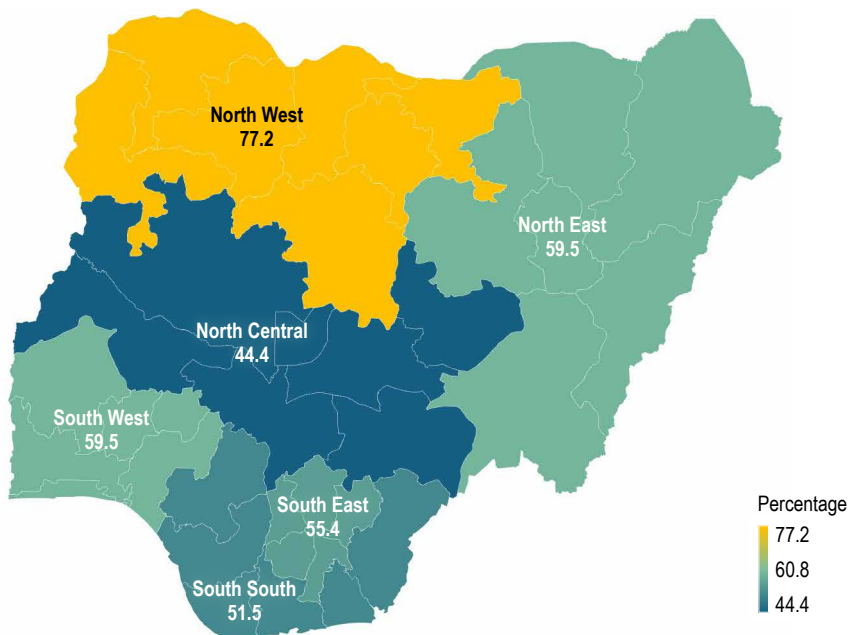*Note:* This figure includes only households that participated in both survey waves (N=4,682).

In the past 12 months, more than one-third of households faced food shortages, which occurred more frequently in the months of June, July, and August. Price increases on major food items were the most prevalent shock reported by households, affecting 71.0 percent of surveyed households. Households' main reported mechanism for coping with shocks was reducing food consumption (48.8 percent).

Income-Generating Activities and Remittances

Among Nigerians' different income-generating activities, farming ranked highest across almost all age groups in both the post-planting and post-harvest survey visits. On the other hand, more than half of households (59.2 percent) reported operating a nonfarm enterprise in the last 12 months, with retail being the most common activity (Figure 6). Seven out of 10 households most likely acquire the start-up capital for their nonfarm enterprises through household savings, while 32.2 percent obtain start-up capital through relatives and friends. Only 13.1 percent of household nonfarm enterprises are reported to be registered nationally, and only 9.0 percent have requested credit in the past 12 months.

FIGURE 6 • **Household Nonfarm Enterprises by Zone**

(Share of households reporting a nonfarm enterprise in the past 12 months)

Powered by Bing ©Microsoft. OpenStreetMap

North West 77.2
North East 59.5
North Central 44.4
South West 59.5
South East 55.4
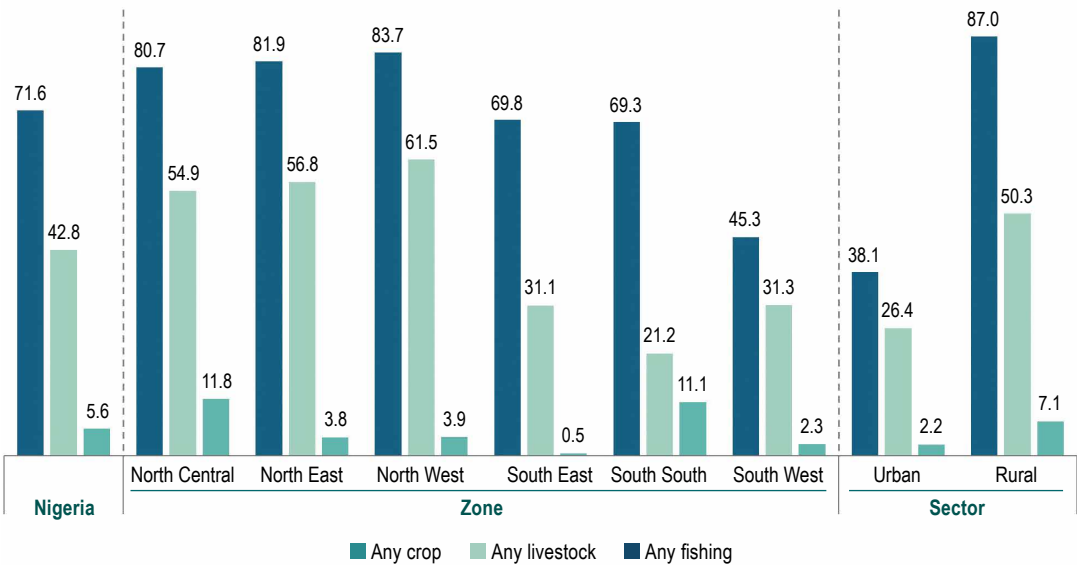South South 51.5

Percentage
77.2
60.8
44.4

Constraints on nonfarm enterprise operations and growth are mostly related to electricity (20.3 percent) and transportation (19.7 percent). Almost four out of 10 households reported domestic remittances in the past 12 months. Domestic remittances[2] are more prevalent among urban households (43.8 percent) than rural households (38.0 percent). 6.3 percent of households reported international remittances. Urban households (11.5 percent) received more international remittances than rural households (3.9 percent), indicating the importance of local family support systems.

Agriculture

Nationally, 71.6 percent of households are engaged in crop farming, and 42.8 percent are engaged in livestock activities (Figure 7). Nigerian households hold an average of 2.4 plots of land with an average plot size of 0.5 hectares. Nationally, herbicide was used in 32.6 percent of cultivated plots, pesticide in 16.3 percent, inorganic fertilizer in 30.6 percent, organic fertilizer in 26.2 percent, animal traction in 17.4 percent, and equipment machines in 8.7 percent. Male-managed plots recorded far higher usage of most farming inputs than female-managed plots.
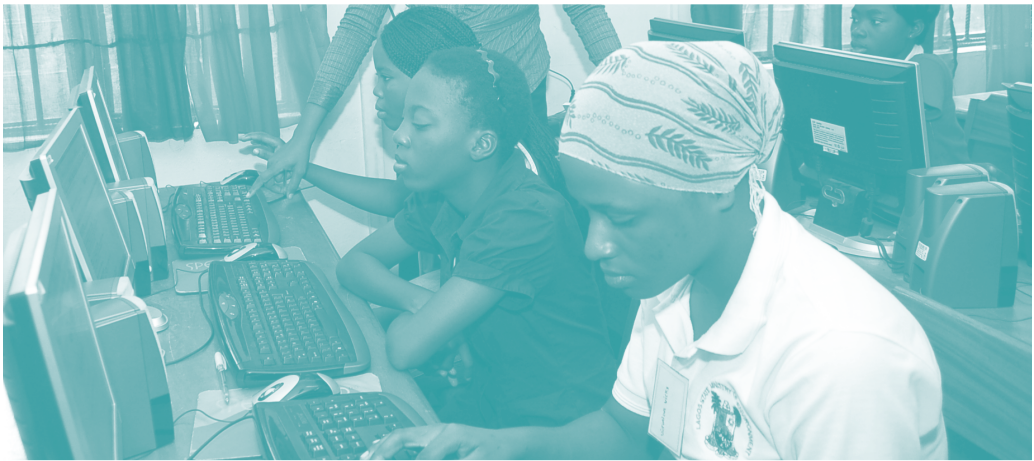
FIGURE 7 • **Percentage of Households that Engage in Various Agricultural Activities**

(Percentage distribution of households)

	Nigeria	North Central	North East	North West	South East	South South	South West	Urban	Rural
Any crop	71.6	80.7	81.9	83.7	69.8	69.3	45.3	38.1	87.0
Any livestock	42.8	54.9	56.8	61.5	31.1	21.2	31.3	26.4	50.3
Any fishing	5.6	11.8	3.8	3.9	0.5	11.1	2.3	2.2	7.1

Zone — Sector

■ Any crop ■ Any livestock ■ Any fishing

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[2] Domestic remittances include transfers in kind or in cash sent by people living in Nigeria but outside the community.

More than four out of 10 crop-farming households grew cassava and maize, making these the most popular crops cultivated in the country. Nationally, most harvested crops are sold unprocessed, consumed, or stored for future use, with low post-harvest crop losses reported. Among livestock-owning households, a notable 68.0 percent own sheep, goats, or pigs, while 56.2 percent of households nationwide own poultry.

There are differences in livestock ownership by the sex of the household head. Male-headed households most commonly own sheep, goats, and pigs (70.2 percent), while ownership of poultry was most common among female-headed households (61.2 percent). Only 24.4 percent of farming households reported having received extension services.