

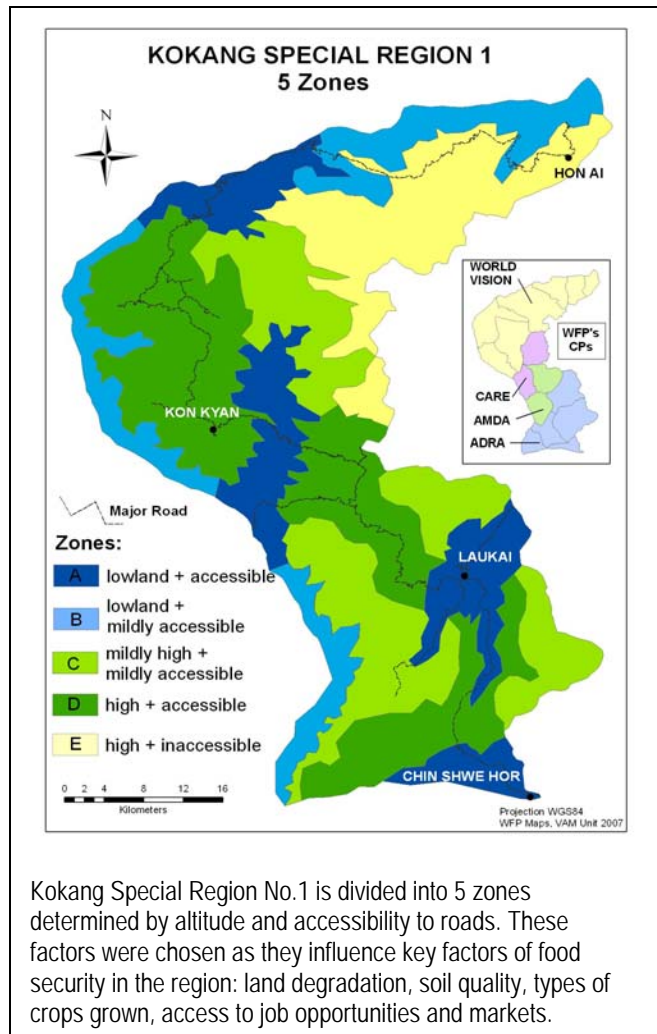


Food Security Profiling Report KOKANG SPECIAL REGION September 2007

This Report summarizes the findings of the Food Security Profiling assessment carried out in Kokang Special Region No. 1 in September 2007.

It follows the periodic Food Security Profiling exercises that WFP and its Cooperating Partners, namely **ADRA**, **AMDA**, **CARE** and **World Vision**, have been carrying out since last year (September 2006 and January 2007¹). It attempts to present a snapshot of the food security situation in Kokang in September 2007, when food security is normally at its worse due to the gradual exhaustion of household food stocks prior to the harvest and the lack of income earning opportunities during the rainy season.

Two-hundred and fifty (250) households in 25 villages were covered under this food security profiling assessment. Key informants, one from each site, were also interviewed. The 25 villages were randomly selected within the 5 pre-categorized zones, Kokang Special Region divided into 5 zones as shown in adjacent map.



Kokang Special Region No.1 is divided into 5 zones determined by altitude and accessibility to roads. These factors were chosen as they influence key factors of food security in the region: land degradation, soil quality, types of crops grown, access to job opportunities and markets.

Main Findings

- Food insecurity is widespread in all Zones, whether “moderate” (50%) or “severe” (28%);
- Households characterized as living in higher altitudes and where access is limited to ‘non-motorable tracks’ have the worst household food insecurity (Zones C and D), where over 20% of the population is defined as ‘severely food insecure’ (nearly 90% of zone D is “food insecure”);
- Households living in Zones C and D tend to have less dietary diversity. Up to 20% experience inadequate dietary variety. 64% are moderate to deficient in dietary diversity;
- Households cope with food insecurity by eating less (81%) and by borrowing more; up to 55% take an advance on their labor/harvest;
- Female-headed households tend to be less indebted than male headed households;
- Households are relying more on purchase of food (41%) and less on their own production (only 35% versus 73% in January 2007);
- Results from zone E (inaccessible and high altitude) require more in-depth analysis.

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¹ Previous Food Security Reports are available from WFP Country Office in Yangon

Household Access to Food

As of September 2007, food insecurity affected a majority (78%) of the households surveyed, of which 18% were severely food insecure as measured by the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS²).

Households in Zones C and D (see map), were the most affected while those living in lowlands with greater access to roads were found to be better-off (28% of the households in Zone A were found to be food secure). One hypothesis is that the households living in Zones C and D have recently made a transition from food to cash crops (sugar cane) and these cash crops are not yet productive, thereby increasing their food insecurity in the short term. The findings show that those living in least accessible highland areas (zone E) are not the most food insecure. This finding will be further reviewed and analyzed.

More than 30% of households reported “worrying about food”, reducing the quantity (34%) and frequency (24%) of meals.

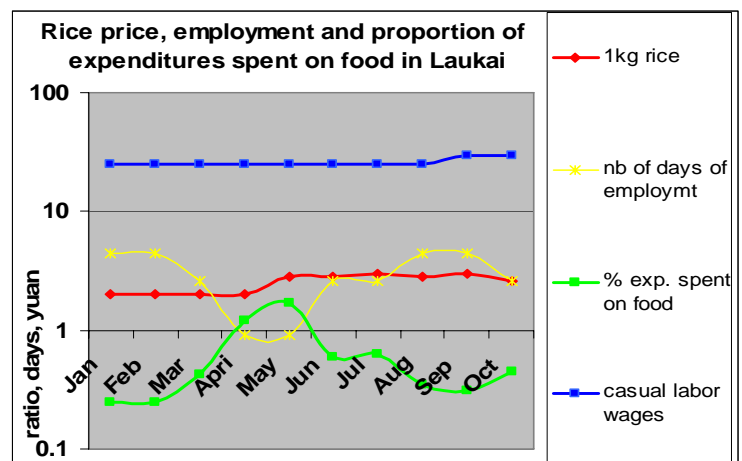
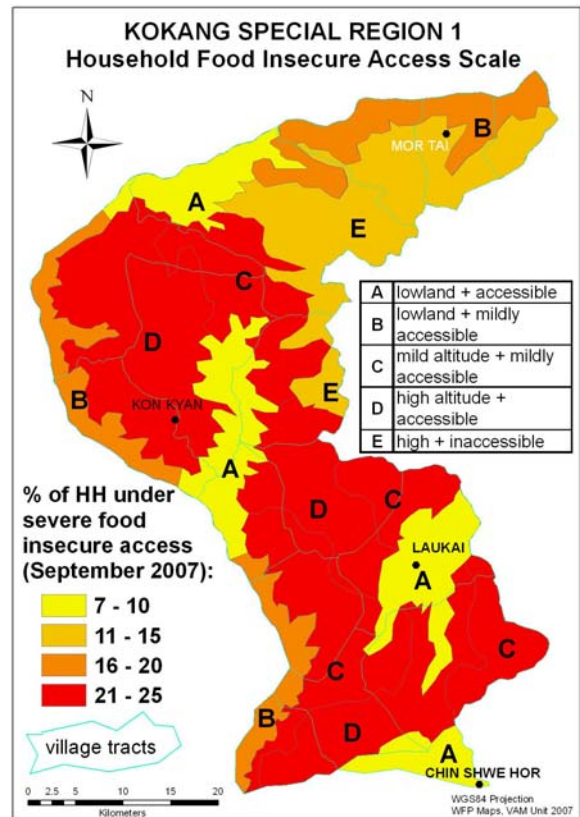
During this pre-harvest period, as expected, the major source of food was through purchases. 45% of the households reported obtaining their primary food needs through purchases obtained through casual wage labor. The findings showed that 41% of the households rely on wage labor to purchase food. Approximately, 10% of the households reported food aid as the primary source of food.

In January 2007 (post-harvest period) 73% of the households reported they were able to rely on food they had produced themselves. This number declined to 38% based on findings from the present assessment. In September only 35% of the households stated subsistence agricultural activities as their primary source of income. Other income sources such as small trade, artisanal activities and timber sales presented much smaller percentages.

Prices of low quality rice have remained stable for the last three months (2 Yuan/kg), while income earning opportunities have increased slightly since July (see chart).

Food presented the largest household expenditure item, followed by health and education.

Households are coping with food insecurity by eating less preferred foods (80%) or by purchasing food on credit (90%), often against their future harvest or the promise of work (35%). More than half have sought credit at least three times during the preceeding month (August- September 2007).



² The **Household Food Insecurity Access Scale** is a series of questions regarding the household's perception of its own food security status. Questions asked (in indicative order of increasing food insecurity) include worrying about not having enough food, not eating preferred foods, reducing the frequency or quantity of food eaten, and skipping meals.

Female headed-households have less access to credit (in-kind) or advances (in-cash) and instead rely on food in exchange for work.

25% of households are reported to rely on remittances from family members who have migrated, slightly higher in Zones A and E. However, further data is needed in order to explain this geographic discrepancy. Children have rarely been taken out school due to food insecurity (only 5% of respondents)

Utilization of food

The majority (73%) of the households eat 3 meals a day consuming an average of 2.8 kg of food. This translated into 480 grammes per person per day representing 1920 kcal of the required 2100 kcal per day.

The Households Dietary Diversity Scale³ indicated nearly half of the households have an inadequate dietary intake. Consistent with HFIAS, households in Zones C and D are most affected where more than 40% have deficient dietary intake, i.e. consume less than 2 food groups per day.

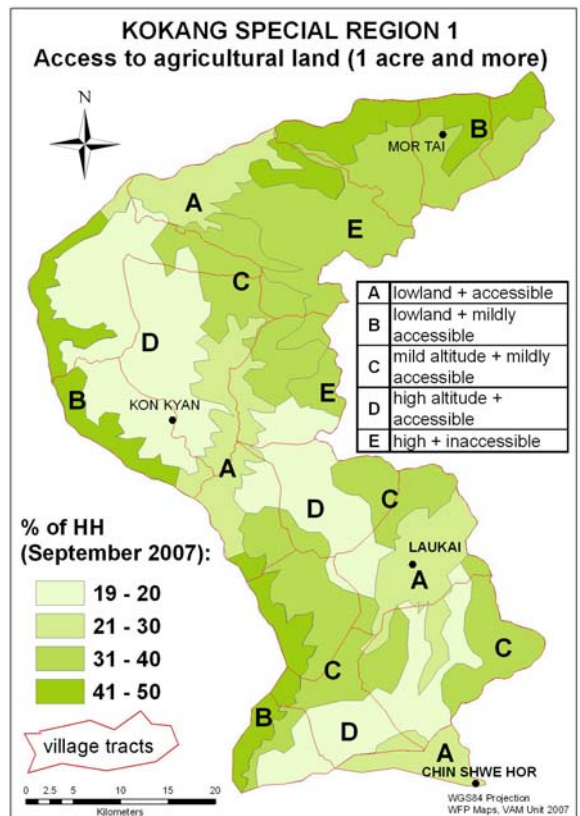
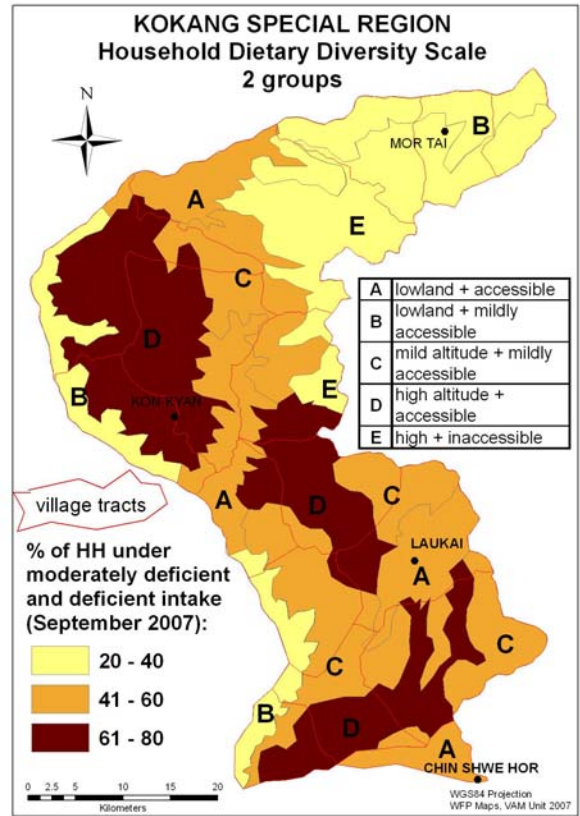
When grouping moderately deficient and deficient intake groups together, zone D appears as in the most worrying situation as 63% of households have moderate to deficient diets (see map).

Again, surprisingly, Zone E results indicates that less than 20% are under deficient intake (40% are moderately deficient and deficient) and more than 30% of household have adequate dietary diversity. Further analysis is needed to understand why this is.

Land Access

Although 90% of the households reported having some access to land, slightly over two-thirds of these had less than one acre. As a result, agricultural output is limited and insufficient for self-subsistence agriculture.

The households having access to smaller lands are mainly located in zone D. Cultivation of cash-crops such as sugar cane, rubber, tea, or physic nuts is widespread and limits the households' ability to cultivate. Road proximity is crucial for cash crop production, hence, the more distant from the road, the larger the household's lands. Zone A is densely populated and bears richer soils, the land having been subdivided among a few wealthy and established families.



³ the Household Dietary Diversity Scale measures eating habits out of 10 different food groups, 5 and more classifies the meal as "adequate intake", 4 as "borderline", 3 as "moderate", less than 2 as "deficient". It is a complementary tool to the HFIAS. The HDDS monitors the consumption patterns of 8 food groups. This tool is particularly useful in the absence of nutritional data as it may be an indicator of a worsening situation that may require a more in-depth emergency food security assessment.

Key-informant interviews revealed that access to productive land was the main concern among community members. The majority of households (90%) reported that the agricultural season was progressing normally, food security prospects were also as normal, suggesting that food availability was improved.

Additional alternative methods for collecting primary data on availability of food is being planned in order to enrich the profiling exercise in terms of agricultural productivity, yields and output.

External Assistance

Just under half (46%) of the households reported having received food assistance within the last month. The most widespread source of food was through WFP's food for education (FFE projects via primary schools) in 20 out of 25 villages surveyed.

Infrastructure

Access to drinking water	67%	Access to Primary Education	80%
Households with latrines	68%	Access to Secondary Education	8%
Access to health care facilities	8%	Road access	12% motor-able (all year) 36% only dry season
Access to Markets		Access to Land	
- Daily	0%	- small garden	41%
- Within 0-3 hrs	50%	- less than 1 acre	27%
- More than 3 hrs	50%	- 1-3acres	23%
		- more than 3 acres	9%

Note: This data is collected during the periodic profiling exercise and is being compiled for an eventual complete Kokang village baseline.

Protection

While protection issues related to food security were incorporated in the questionnaires, the results from September indicated that more awareness and training of the enumerators is required. There were no direct responses from the households, even when anecdotal evidence was picked up in the field regarding cases of land confiscation without compensation for building a road, or appropriation of goods by the authorities.

Food Security Profiling Details: Sampling & Methodology

Sampling for Special Region No.1, Kokang, as shown in map on page 1, is classified into 5 zones as defined by altitude and relative physical accessibility. 25 villages were selected in the five zones for primary data collection which entailed a key informant and household questionnaire. 10 households from each village were randomly selected totaling 250 households for the Food Security Profiling September exercise:

- 40 households in zone A (4 hamlets);
- 40 households in zone B (4 hamlets);
- 60 households in zone C (6 hamlets);
- 60 Households in zone D (6 hamlets);
- 50 households in zone E (5 hamlets).

Methodology of the Food Security Profiling utilizes the methodology formulated by FANTA with a special focus on household access to food (related to the frequency with which the HHs address their food access problems with coping mechanisms) and the dietary diversity (number of foods consumed regularly: 2-3 items per meal would mean "deficient") under the framework of the Integrated Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC, Coates, Swindale, Bilinsky 2005/2006).