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Demographics

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Food Security Profiling Report KOKANG SPECIAL REGION April 2008

This Report summarizes the findings of the Food Security Profiling assessment carried out in Kokang in April 2008 and follows the situation snapshot taken 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 (Sept. 2006, January and September 2007¹) and present a snapshot of the level of food security in Kokang during the pre-monsoon period, Apr. 2008. 271 households in 27 villages in 5 different zones were covered under this assessment.

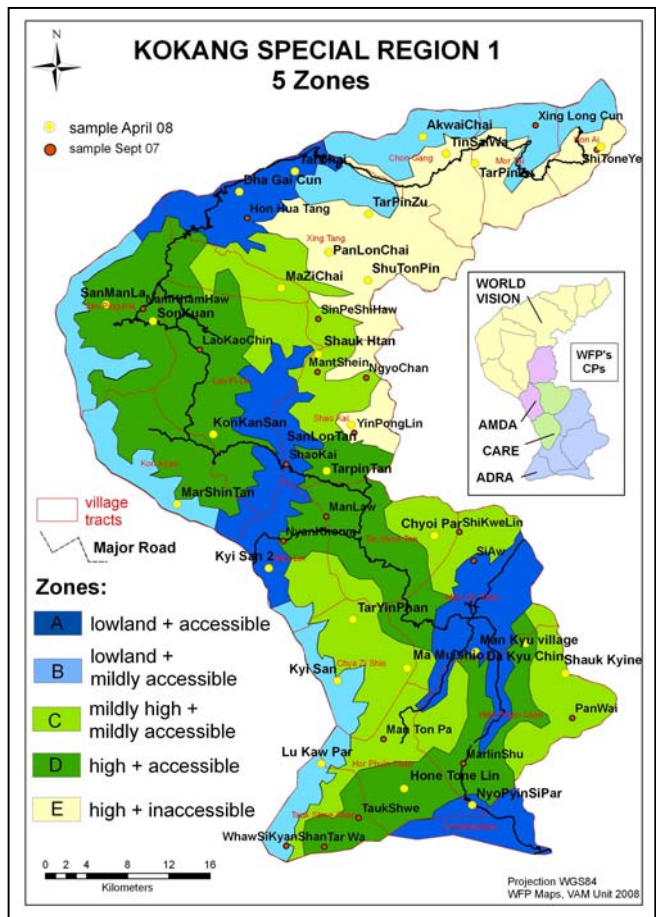
An agreed zoning prior to the assessment allowed to classify KK SR1 into 5 distinct agro-economical zones (road accessibility and altitude being the determinant factors): A, B, C, D, E (see map).

A 95% of male and 5% of female headed households were met during the exercise. The majority (82%) of the interviewees were Kokanese, the remnants were Wa (4%, esp. in zone A), Palaung (5%, zone C), Li Su (4%, and were found in zone A and E), and Miao Zi (5%, in both zones C and D).

The average size of the household was of 6.4, counting 2.27 potential earners. Thus for the sample it was seen that households had 2 sources of income, these most commonly being from labor and / or farming. The massive majority have been living here for more than 10 years. 2.5% of the households counted one disabled person (mental disability).

Main findings:

- More than 85% of the respondents eat 3 meals a day (73% in September '07);
- In all zones most of the households face some degree food insecurity, be it "moderate" (69%) or "severe" (18%);
- Zones D has the highest percentage of severely food insecure HHs while Zones E & D had the highest number of food insecure HHs (moderate and severely food insecure).
- Zone B's households aren't claiming more than two sources of income and two sources of expenditures;
- The dietary diversity has improved since last food Security Snapshot, since the average proportion of households under deficient diet has shifted from 16% to 5%;
- The worst dietary diversity can be found in villages situated in zone C, following the main road (16% are under deficient diet);
- Zone B shows a surprisingly high number of HHs with moderately deficient diet (53%);
- School absenteeism (average of 17%) is declared as being the result of expensive education, the necessity to join agricultural works or to the absence of schools. The first 2 reasons are more common and indicate the high opportunity cost of food security.



¹ Earlier Food Security Reports available from WFP Country Office in Yangon

Methodology and sampling:

Sampling for Special Region No.1, Kokang, as shown in map above is classified into 5 zones as defined by altitude and relative physical accessibility. 27 villages were selected in the five zones for primary data collection which entailed a key informant and household questionnaire. Approx. 10 households from each village were randomly selected totaling 271 households for the Food Security Profiling September exercise:

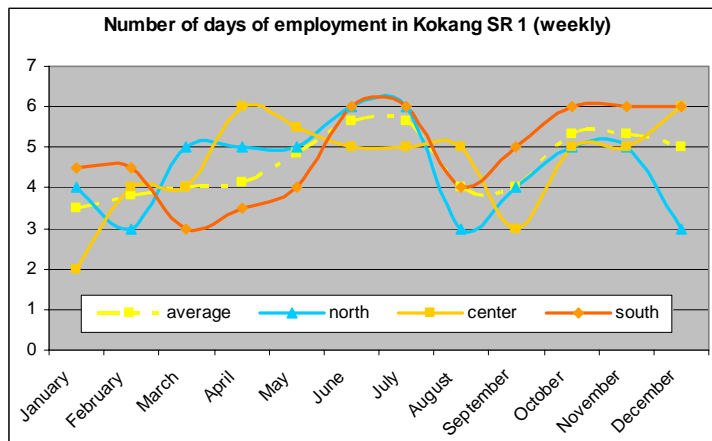
- 50 households in zone A (5 hamlets);
- 41 households in zone B (4 hamlets);
- 60 households in zone C (6 hamlets);
- 60 Households in zone D (6 hamlets);
- 60 households in zone E (6 hamlets).

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 households address their food access problems with coping mechanisms) and the dietary diversity (number of foods consumed regularly: two items per meal would mean “deficient”) under the framework of the Integrated Humanitarian Phase Classification (IPC, Coates, Swindale, Bilinsky 2005/2006).

Access to food:

Given that all households aren't relying on their own production for subsistence, wage-earning is of utmost importance in order to generate income and purchase essential and/or complementary food items.

Harvest occurred at the end of the last year (upland a bit earlier than lowland: August-September, when it occurs in October-December for lowlands), the range of activities in April being still relatively sustained: from land preparations (maize specially) to sugar cane planting and harvesting, maintenance of rubber plantations, pulses harvesting in the center of the area, or tea leaves plucking in the center and in the north of the region. An average of 4.15 working days has been estimated; interestingly, weekly labor guaranteed between 3 to 6 days were taken in zones D (high and accessible) and E (high and inaccessible).



At this time of the year, the **income generating activities** are ranked as follows:

1^{ary} source of income: Wages Farming (represents 70-80% of the total income)
 (concerns 100% of households):

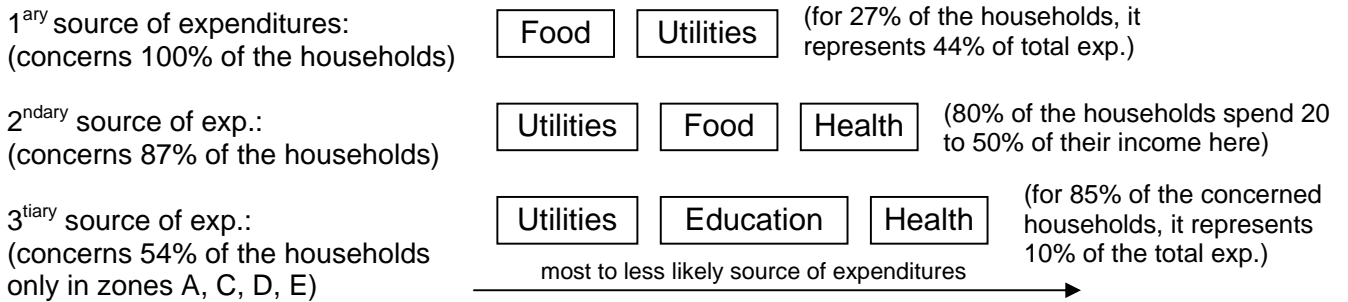
2^{ndary} source of income: Farming Wages (represents 20% of the total income)
 (concerns 30% of the households):

3^{tiary} source of income: Livestock Remittances Wood/bamboo (10% of the total income)
 (concerns 4% of the households only in zones A, C, D and E)

→
 most to less likely source of income

Key Informants, however, claimed that the first source of income of the households would be wage-earning, at 92%. Farming would be relegated as a secondary source of income, concerning 44% only of the households.

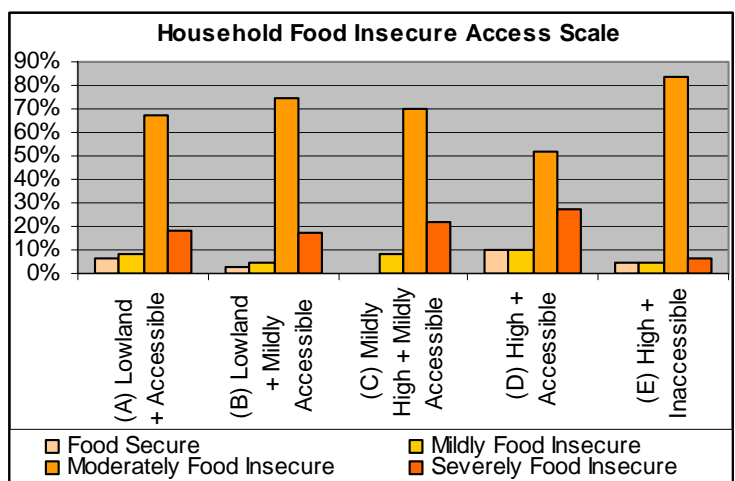
The **expenditures** are very much food-oriented:



Here again, zone B's households were claiming very insignificant tertiary expenditures.

The HFIAS² scale indicates an aggravating situation in term of food access across the sample (with no household reported as "food secure" in zone C). The amount of "moderately food insecure" is notable, being never less than 50% (zone D) and reaching 84% in zone E.

The larger number of "food insecure" households is found in zone D (28%), along with 52% of "moderately food insecure" households. Zone E depicts - rather surprisingly, given it's higher "moderately food insecure" score - the smallest amount of "severely food insecure" households (8%). This for zones A, B and C is much higher (approx. 20%).



Talking in term of rough "food insecurity" (*moderately* and *severe* put together), the worst situation would be in B, C and E (more than 90% of households). Compared to September 07, the situation has aggravated with an increase in food insecurity when compared to the prior survey.

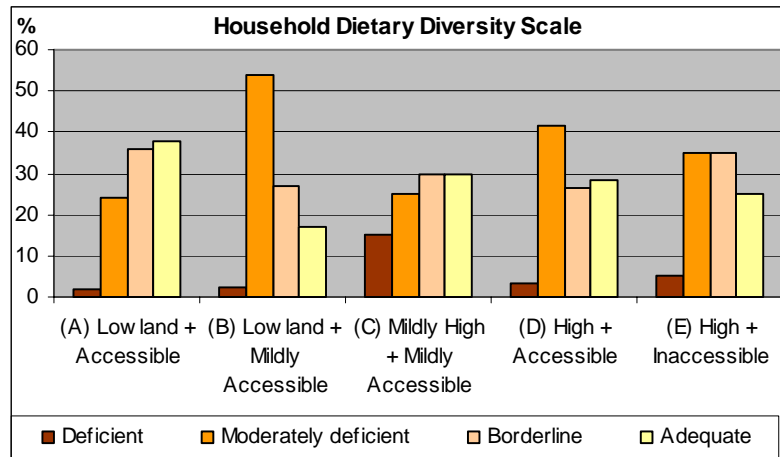
The survey revealed that 73% (47% in average) of the households were "worried about food" at least once every month in zone C when they were only 26% (39% in average) in the same situation in zone A in September 2007.

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.

Utilization of food:

The majority of households reports consuming 3 meals per day (90% of the households in zones A, B and C, 80% of households in zones D and E), with quantities of 3.3kg of food per day (as compared to an average of 2.8 kg in September).

The Households Dietary Diversity Scale³ indicates a slight improvement situation: when an average of 16% of the Households used to have a deficient dietary intake in September 2007, this category only concerns 5% of the households at the present time.



By considering *moderately deficient* and *deficient intake* groups together, zone B appears to be in the most worrying situation as 53% of Households are found in this category in April 2008, followed by zone D (45% of the households).

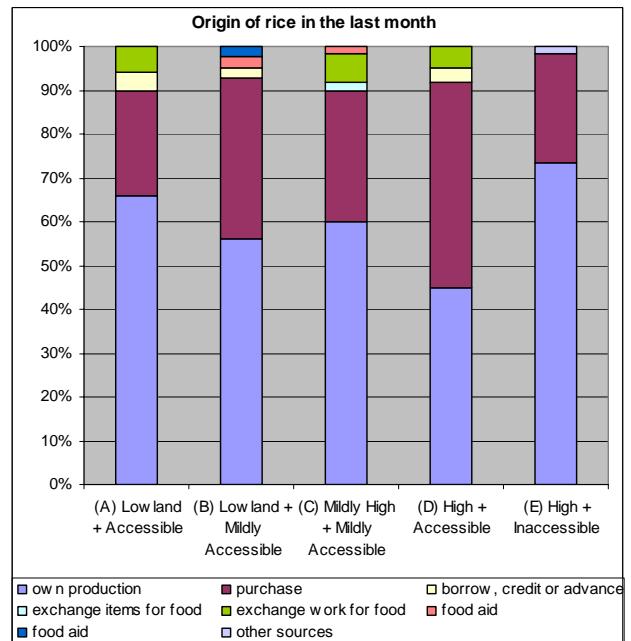
In zone E, the situation of dietary diversity is seen as acceptable with 60% of the households that have either an adequate or borderline adequate diet.

Availability of food:

Sixty percent of the sample reported having enough food stocks to last them for up to 6 months while across zone there were some differences. Zone D for instance reported that 40% of the population had stocks to last them up to 4 months, while for Zone E this figure was 13%.

Access to agriculture was reported to up to 90% in September 2007 (pre-harvest time), and was estimated to 93% this time again. The reason why the land owners wouldn't increase their land surface was declared as the limited available surfaces (35%) and the shortage in labor force (54%).

The origin of the rice is approximately 45% from own production, indicating that the granaries are far from reaching depletion at that period of the year. Self-sustainability however cannot be generalized as 50% of land holdings reported in the sample are less than 2 acres.



The majority of lands is between 2 and 4 acres (38%), but 25% are reported being of 1 acre surface (keeping in mind the average households size of 6 members). There was a wider diversity of lands in zone A, that also bears the bigger lands (10% were owning 12 acres-lands and 2% the 16 acres-lands)

³ the Household Dietary Diversity 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.

Irrigation systems, that are of utmost importance in rain-fed paddy terraces are found in average in 38% of the households (43% in zones A, B, C, and 35% in zones C and D).

The main crops are reported as being primarily rice, in lowland especially (zones A and B report up to 30-39%), less in higher grounds (zones C, D and E report 17%). Maize on the contrary is cultivated mostly in highlands (sloping cultivation) by 36-46% of the farmers in zones A, B and C, and from 58 to 62% of the farmers in zones D and E. Peas are found remotely all across Kokang SR1, 7 to 11% of the respondents declared cultivating such species. Other crops cultivated across zones, albeit to a lesser extent, are seen below:

Zone A	Sugarcane, Cassava, Vegetables
Zone B	Vegetables, Rubber, Walnuts
Zone C	Tea, Groundnuts, Potatoes
Zone D	Sugarcane
Zone E	Walnut, Tea, Wheat, Potatoes

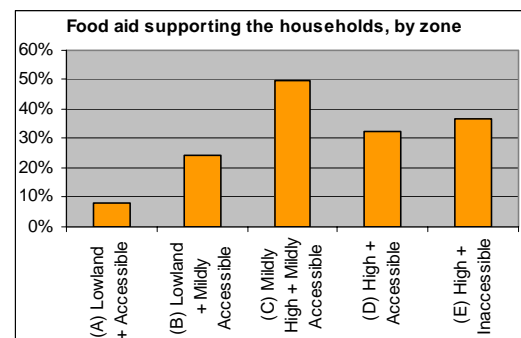
In term of cattle owned by the households, the survey picture reveals the following: 86% of the respondents owned pigs (one or two in average), 77% owned poultry (usually 3), 43% owned buffaloes (one or two), 27% had cows (usually only one), 23% had one mule.

Health:

Only 13% of the households alleged receiving education in health and nutrition. No latrine at home is a situation reported in 67% of the cases (similarly as in September 2007). Zones A, C and D reported having latrines (be they fly-proof or direct pits), in 12 to 18% of cases.

Assistance:

The food and non-food assistance across the sample was reported as follows: FFE negligible in zone A and B, but present in the other zones. MCN was reported as small, yet in three zones (C, D and E). Zone B reported seven cases of FFW. Cases of “Others” were referring to private sector support (mostly Chinese), through cash cropping activities.



Non-food aid amongst the sample was also significant beneficiaries mainly in the form of agricultural support in zone A and C (12% and 35% of sampled households respectively) through seeds, tools and fertilizers. However non-food aid in the form of the Income generation project was negligible for this sample (two cases in total).

Groups of social welfare exist in zones C (as declared by 87% of respondents) and E (13%).

Concerns/Protection:

The first concern of communities (seeking the broader picture as compared to “Level of priorities” reported by households) according to interviews held at key informants level, are access to water, health and agriculture. The second tiers of concerns of the communities on the whole include water, health and protection issues (see below). Agriculture (some issues on the price of hybrids) and taxation constitute the next set of concerns for the community. The fourth concerns were all devoted to Protection issues.

Very few issues relating to Protection were raised through this assessment at household level. Most of the concerns at the household level related to (by degree of concern of the HH):

Food insecurity (very high in zone C, limited in zone E),

Access to water (zone A, B and C) or Agricultural inputs (zones D and E)

Education (B), Health (A and C) or Agriculture (D and E)

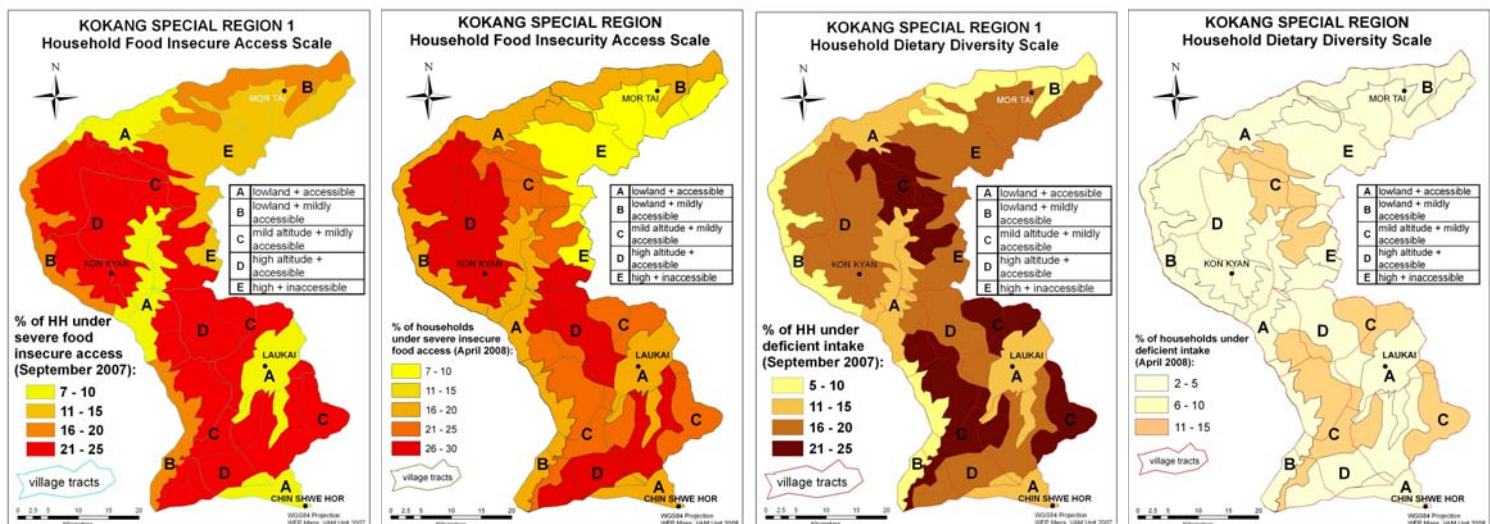
Note: Agriculture, education, health and credit issues were key concerns across the sample.

Curiously enough, it was during Key Informant interviews, in public, that the Protection issues were mentioned the most. Issues reported include land confiscation (three villages), forced labor (two villages), intimidation by army (three villages), forced to cultivate a particular crop (one village) or taxes (including one specifically on tea leaves).

Recommendations

1. Zone D needs immediate attention as this zone has the highest percentage of severely food insecure HHs across the sample.
2. Wages are the main source of income for the sample. In other words there is a sizeable population that depends on casual labour. Thus Food for Education & Food for Work activities can be introduced in areas where labour opportunities are lower than average, thus indicating areas likely to have higher unemployment rates.
3. From the data it can be seen that the opportunity cost for some HHs (approximately 17% of the sample) to educate their children is very high. Thus, there is a clear need for Food for Education activities, which can act as a powerful incentive for HHs to send or keep their children in school.
4. Agricultural extension activities (with regards to input, cropping practices, access to markets etc) can help households make optimum use of their land.

The various criteria used for the current report, mapped according to the zoning system in use among WFP and its cooperating partners is mapped below:



Integrated (Humanitarian) Phase Classification chart (updated in view of April 2008's results):

Risks affecting livelihoods	Zone A	Zone B	Zone C	Zone D	Zone E	comments
Mortality rates						No data
U-5 Mortality						No data
Acute and Chronic Malnutrition						No data
Disease						No data
Public policy / governance (R1)						Poor governance, esp. on public services (education, agriculture)
Taxation and administrative fees (R2)						No abuses recorded on protection issues (no data)
Access to credit (R2)						Access to credit through communities and NGOs
Inflation: (R1)						Pls refer chart below: prices increasing so far according to normal trend
Social restrictions on women (R1)						No restrictions on women (apart from lower wages)
Reliance on social network (R1)						Good social network within ethnic groups
Access to market (R1)						Markets are mostly reachable
Road infrastructures (R1)						Relatively bad road network
Coping strategies: (R1)						Zones C, D & E relying more on CS (fewer meals, less food,...)
Land access: (R1)						90% of HHs have a land, 30% have 1 or more acres
Land productiveness (R2)						Zone D: high altitude + lack of irrigation systems
Access to water for crop production (R1)						Lack of irrigation systems in zone D: less than 40% of HHs
Environmental damage (R1)						All zones highly erosion-prone
R1->R3: more to less reliable						= food secure -> humanitarian emergency