



**WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME – SIERRA LEONE
TECHNICAL SUPPORT UNIT**

COMMUNITY FOOD SECURITY PROFILING

*A Community Level Assessment of Food Security
Summary of Findings from the Six Study Areas*

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1 SUMMARY

Sierra Leone is hopefully moving from a period of conflict to one of relative peace and stability. Between May and December 2001, UN peacekeepers were deployed and disarmament exercises completed in all 13 districts of the country. The prospects for lasting peace seem better than at any time within the last ten years and this has encouraged some of the many thousands of internally displaced people (IDPs) and former returnees to return to their home areas. A considerable adjustment in food aid programming will be required to reflect this new situation, and the aim of the current assessment was to guide World Food Programme (WFP) decision making for 2002, based upon an understanding of food security at community level.

Field work was undertaken in six rural ‘case study’ areas, selected to represent the range of conditions existing in WFP’s operational areas in Sierra Leone. The purpose of the current report is to synthesise the overall findings and conclusions from all six areas, not to provide a detailed account of each case study area (individual reports are being prepared for each area).

Critical questions addressed by the assessment team included:

- Is there a current deficit in food intake in any of the areas assessed that would call for an immediate emergency intervention such as Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF)?
- How quickly can returnees (whether previously refugees or IDPs) restart their lives once they return home? And what impact will the arrival of returnees have on the local resident population? How can food assistance most effectively assist the resettlement and reintegration processes?

The assessment was conducted from 11 November to 3 December, and was a joint exercise led by the WFP Technical Support Unit (TSU), with assistance from The Food Economy Group, the participation of government staff from MAF&MR and MODEP, and field assistants from the international NGO Africare.

The current Community Food Security Profiling exercise (CFSP) was part of a larger exercise that includes an extensive literature review and secondary data analysis. These are in the process of being finalised. It was also designed to complement other food security assessments currently being undertaken by other agencies – Goal’s assessment of the whole of Kenema district, and ACF’s assessment of the IDP camps in Freetown and Bo (both of which used a similar methodology to that used by WFP).

The current methodology made use of the household food economy analytical framework, which aims to build a comprehensive understanding of access to food at household level. There are three basic steps in the analysis:

- *Food Economy Zoning*, to define and map geographical areas within which people share basically similar options for obtaining food and income (i.e. similar patterns of food and cash crop production, similar access to wild plants and game etc.)
- *Socio-Economic Breakdown*, to define the various types of household within the zone (recognising that not all households within a zone have the same access) and to try and understand the nature of differences in their access to food and income.
- *Analysis of Access to Food and Income*, to identify and quantify sources of food and income for selected types of household during a baseline period, and to prepare a projection of access for a future period. In the current assessment the focus was on ‘poor’ resident and returnee households. The baseline period was 2001, and the period for projection was 2002.

The Food Economy Zoning exercise defined eight preliminary rural zones at national level (cash-cropping, diamond-based, gold-based, food and livestock, fishing and food crop, service and market gardening, mixed and trading zones), of which four were selected for field assessment.

Security is a major factor affecting access to food in Sierra Leone. It causes population displacement and affects patterns of agricultural production and trade. Very generally, the country can be divided into three areas according to the history of recent security:

- Safe: i.e. under government control, safe and accessible to humanitarian agencies for some time (i.e. a year or more)
- Recently safe: i.e. recently declared safe for the resettlement of IDPs and refugees. An area is only declared safe once a series of conditions have been met, including the completion of a disarmament process and the deployment of the Sierra Leone police.
- Accessible: This means that the area is accessible to humanitarian agencies and others, but the conditions have not yet been met for the area to be declared safe for resettlement.

The case study areas were selected to represent a variety of food economy and security ‘zones’:

District	Case Study Areas					
	Kambia	Kambia & Port Loko	Bombali	Bo	Bo	Kailahun
FEZ	Fishing	Trading	Mixed	Trading	Mixed	Cash crop
Access	Recently safe	Recently safe	Accessible	Safe	Safe	Accessible

The four districts (or groups of districts if Kambia & Port Loko are considered together) have had very different recent experiences in terms of insecurity. The most significant events affecting all four areas occurred in May 2000, when the Lome peace accord broke down and the main rebel force, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) took UN peacekeepers hostage, moved on Freetown and began incursions into Guinea. Bo was least affected, with movement between Bo and Freetown disrupted, but with little effect on cultivation and no large population movements. Bombali, and Kambia experienced considerable insecurity and large displacements of the population. In both areas, however, the situation calmed towards the end of 2000, allowing the spontaneous return of both IDPs and refugees in time to cultivate during 2001. Only Kailahun remained relatively insecure throughout 2000 and much of 2001.

Sierra Leone is relatively favoured compared to many other African countries in terms of the range of food and income options that are available. Rainfall is relatively high throughout the country, creating conditions that are generally favourable to vegetative growth and crop production. The same basic pattern of food crop production is practised throughout much of the country (shifting cultivation of mixed stands of rice, cassava and other crops on the uplands and regular cultivation of rice in the lowland swamps). The dense bush and secondary forest mean that there is also good access to wild foods, game and natural products, including wild palm oil and palm wine.

The major findings were as follows:

There was no immediate deficit during the baseline period (2001) for either ‘poor’ residents or ‘poor’ returnees in any of the case study areas except Kailahun. Persistent insecurity in Kailahun limited access to farms and to markets, reducing access to food and lowering cash incomes and purchasing power. In other areas both ‘poor’ residents and ‘poor’ returnees were able to access food and income in a variety of ways. Major sources of food were own crop production, purchase and wild foods. Major sources of income were sale of crops (mainly food crops rather than cash crops) and sale of natural resources including palm oil and palm wine.

Differences between ‘safe’ and ‘recently accessible’ areas were less than might have been expected, given the differences in food economy zone and very different recent history of insecurity. One reason is that securing access to basic food energy was the priority activity in all areas and many pre-war differences between food economy areas were therefore reduced (e.g. there was less cash crop production in the cash-cropping zones, less rice production in Kambia, less livestock production in Bombali, and so on).

The differences between areas were also less because the situation was less favourable in the 'safe' areas than expected, and better in the 'recently accessible' areas than expected. Factors having a negative impact on the food security of 'safe' areas included:

- A lack of confidence in lasting peace, which has limited investment of time and money in anything other than basic food production,
- The diversion of the active labour force away from production and towards defence,
- Adverse market conditions, resulting in poor returns for rural producers. These conditions are linked to a number of factors including poor roads (resulting in high transport costs) and low international prices for coffee and cocoa.

Factors having a positive impact on the food security of 'recently accessible' areas were:

- Farm families have continued to cultivate (often living in bush camps, and often replacing rice with cassava)
- Informal trade has tended to replace formal trade (examples include the informal trade, much of it by bicycle, between Mile 91 and Makeni, and the cross-border trade between Kambia and Guinea)
- Relative peace during the last cultivation season has allowed a rapid recovery of both agricultural production and trade. Increased NGO access and the provision of seeds, tools and food-for-agriculture have also played a part in some areas.

Differences between residents and returnees were also less than expected. The reason for this seems to be the variety of food and income options that can be accessed in Sierra Leone, coupled with the fact that many of these can be exploited by returnees immediately upon returning home. Examples include wild foods, the collection and sale of natural resources, labour and petty trade. Returnees have also been able to restart agricultural activities relatively quickly upon their return (most have to date arrived in time to cultivate) and the existence of short duration crops (e.g. groundnuts, sweet potato, peppers and vegetables) means that quick returns are obtained once agricultural activities are restarted.

Farmers everywhere (including those in Kailahun) expressed their intention to invest more time, effort and money in increasing food and cash crop production during 2002. Two factors are expected to facilitate this. The first is an increase in labour availability as a result of demobilisation. The second is an increased confidence that the investment will yield a worthwhile return – it is clear that fear of insecurity has acted as a significant check on investment to date, even in areas that have been relatively safe for a number of years, such as Bo. Increasing food and cash crop production will, of course, be dependent upon farmers gaining access to the required seed and tool inputs, and there is clearly an expectation that humanitarian agencies will provide assistance in this respect.

It seems reasonable to conclude that with the currently better security in southern Kailahun, access to food and income will improve quite markedly and quite quickly, and the deficit observed in 2001 will be eliminated. Provided security remains at or above its current level, therefore, no deficit would be expected for 2002, and no immediate emergency intervention (such as VGF) should therefore be required. There seems to be more reason to be concerned about the security situation in northern Kailahun (an area not covered by the current assessment), and there is a need for continued careful monitoring of the security situation in this and some other areas.

Although there may not be an immediate deficit in food intake, the rural population of all areas visited remains relatively food insecure and vulnerable to a variety of hazards such as further insecurity, pest infestation, flood etc. The population is also far less food secure than it was before the war. There is therefore an urgent need for interventions that will assist the process of recovery. There are a number of ways in which food aid could support the recovery process at household level, including the provision of resettlement rations, food-for-work (FFW) to assist in the rehabilitation of roads, bridges, market infrastructure and individual housing, and food-for-work and food-for-agriculture (FFAg) to support the recovery of agricultural production. There is also a need to support 'very poor', typically

female-headed households through food-for-work and food-for-training (FFT) activities. Further details are provided in the table below. The finding that difference between ‘safe’ and ‘recently accessible’ areas and between residents and returnees are less than expected strongly suggests that interventions should not be targeted only to newly accessible areas or only to returnees. Further suggestions on targeting are provided in the main body of the report.

<i>Effect of the War</i>	<i>Appropriate food support to promote economic/agricultural recovery at household level</i>	<i>Justification</i>
▪ <i>Population displacement</i>	Resettlement rations	The large numbers of IDPs and former refugees that are expected to return home in 2002 will inevitably strain local resources within the resettlement areas. The provision of resettlement rations will reduce the risk that the capacity of these areas to absorb returnees will be exceeded.
▪ <i>Reduction in rice production/crop production generally</i>	FFAg / FFW to support the recovery of rice and crop production (mainly newly accessible areas)	Crop production should be supported in areas expecting large numbers of returnees, because of the risk of food shortages. There is also a need to promote rice production in newly accessible areas, where stocks of rice seed are low as a result of the conflict.
▪ <i>Deterioration in roads and bridges</i>	FFW to repair and maintain roads and bridges	In many areas, roads and bridges have been neglected for many years, and are now in a very poor state of repair. Improving road conditions will reduce transport costs, increasing farm gate prices and therefore rural incomes.
▪ <i>Neglect of tree crop plantations</i>	FFW to rehabilitate and maintain tree crop plantations	Tree crop plantations have been neglected during the war. Rehabilitation of plantations will help to increase yields and therefore rural incomes.
▪ <i>Destruction of market infrastructure</i>	FFW to rehabilitate markets	The repair of damaged market infrastructure will facilitate the marketing of rural produce, contributing to the recovery of rural incomes.
▪ <i>Destruction of housing</i>	FFW to support shelter construction	Many homes have been destroyed in the war. The provision of adequate shelter, supported by FFW, is clearly a pre-requisite for the resumption of agricultural and other economic activities.
▪ <i>Loss of productive family members</i>	FFW / FFT to assist ‘very poor’ households that have lost one or more productive members as a result of the war.	Labour is a critical determinant of food security, and households that have lost productive family members, many of which are female-headed households, can be amongst the poorest in the community. FFW/FFT should promote/create new food production/income generating opportunities for such households.

Note: FFW – food-for-work, FFAg – food-for-agriculture and FFT – food-for-training

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Acronyms:

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CDF	Civil Defence Force
CFSP	Community Food Security Profiling
CSO	Central Statistical Agency
ECOMOG	ECOWAS Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
FFAg	Food-for-Agriculture
FFT	Food-for-Training
FFW	Food-for-Work
FIVIMS	Food Insecurity and Vulnerability Information and Mapping Systems
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
MAF&MR	Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources
MODEP	Ministry of Development and Economic Planning
NCRRR	National Commission for Reconstruction, Resettlement and Rehabilitation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPRC	National Provincial Ruling Council
PEMSD	District Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring Services
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRRO	Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
RUFP	Revolutionary United Front Party
SAF	VAM Standard Analytical Framework
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party
TSF	Therapeutic and Supplementary Feeding
TSU	Technical Support Unit
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
VAM	WFP Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding
WFP	UN World Food Programme

Definition of terms:

Resident	A community member that has been resident within the village (or a bush camp close to the village) for at least two years prior to the assessment (i.e. throughout 2000 and 2001).
Returnee	A former IDP or refugee that has returned to their home community within the last 12 months (i.e. during 2001).
IDP	Someone residing in the community but displaced from elsewhere within the country as a result of conflict or insecurity.
Food Security	WFP defines food security as existing ‘when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.’ In the context of WFP operations it is perhaps useful to think in terms of three levels of food security: a) Food insecure – facing an immediate deficit (a situation that generally requires an immediate emergency intervention). b) Food insecure – not facing an immediate deficit, but vulnerable to a hazard. c) Relatively food secure – sufficient access to food to withstand a hazard.
Vulnerability	WFP defines vulnerability as ‘the presence of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure or malnourished, including those factors that affect their ability to cope.’ A household’s vulnerability defines its ability to cope with or withstand the effects of a hazard such as drought, pest infestation, insecurity, etc.

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2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Conflict and the Peace Process

The 10-year civil war in Sierra Leone seems to be drawing to a close. Between May and December 2001, UN peacekeepers were deployed and disarmament exercises completed in all 13 districts of the country. On 18th January 2002 ceremonies were held in Freetown, attended by leaders from all sides, to mark the end of the war. The main rebel force (the RUF) is in the process of transforming itself into a political party (the RUFPP) and democratic elections are scheduled for May of this year. Although not yet assured, the prospects for lasting peace seem better than at any time within the last ten years. Potential problems include the forthcoming elections, which must be judged free and fair by all sides, and the need to re-integrate approximately 40,000 ex-combatants into civilian life. It is widely believed that the potential for further conflict exists and that not all weapons were in fact surrendered during the disarmament process.

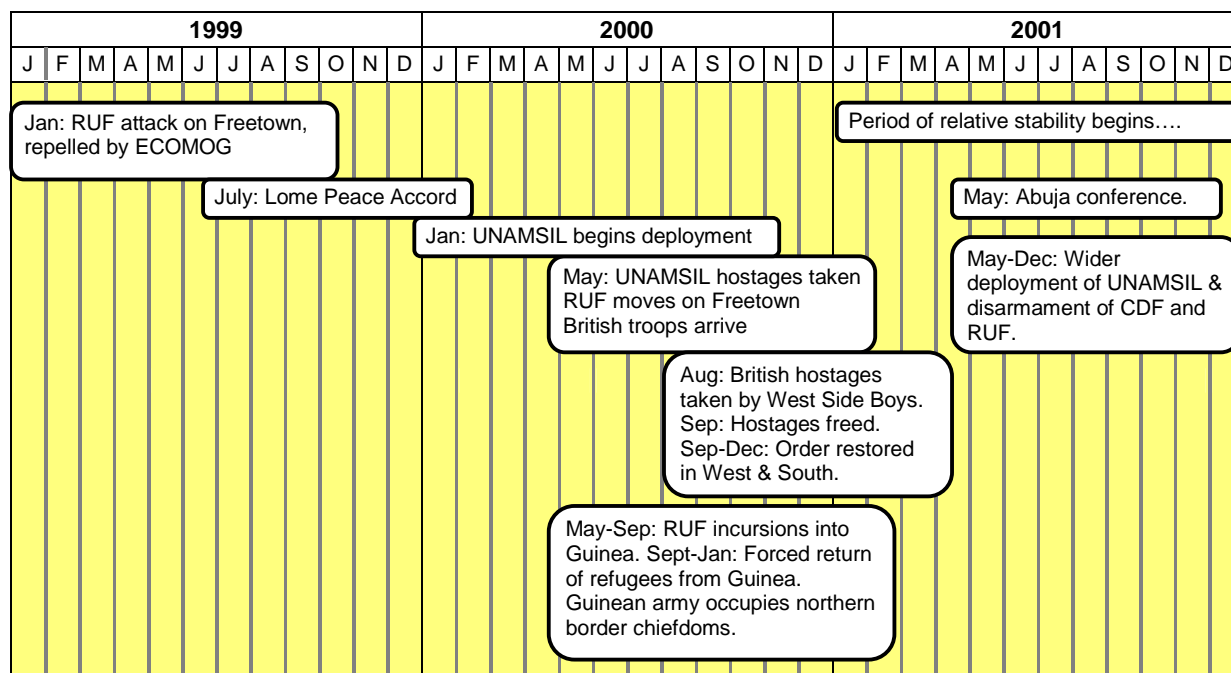
The conflict in Sierra Leone is part of a wider regional conflict that began in Liberia in 1989, and that has in the last two years also involved neighbouring Guinea. A further regional dimension has been the movement of very large numbers of Sierra Leonean and Liberian refugees between all three countries. The conflict in Sierra Leone has its roots in the mismanagement of the economy and the increasing corruption of the political classes in the 1980s. Sources of grievance for the rural poor included the government's failure to create an environment that favoured growth, particularly in the agricultural sector, and its failure to provide quality basic services such as education and health, especially in the north and east of the country. However, the war, once begun, soon deteriorated into a battle for control of Sierra Leone's rich natural resources, especially the diamond fields in the east of the country.

For the first half of the 1990s, the war was fought between the forces of the NPRC (the National Provincial Ruling Council, that took power in a military coup in 1992) and the RUF (the Revolutionary United Front), supported by Liberia. Elections in 1996 then brought President Kabbah's Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) to power. President Kabbah was overthrown a year later in a further military coup led by the AFRC (the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council), which then formed an alliance with the RUF. The SLPP was reinstated in March 1998, with the assistance of ECOMOG troops. The west and south of the country were also brought under government control at this time, and a measure of stability established in these areas that has endured since.

Events over the last 3 years are summarised in the timeline overleaf. The train of recent events can be seen as beginning in January 1999, when the RUF launched an attack on Freetown, holding the east of the city for several days until repulsed by ECOMOG forces. This was a period of massive destruction and displacement. In July the Lome Peace Accord was signed, to be followed by a ceasefire, limited disarmament and the deployment of the first UNAMSIL (United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone) peacekeepers to the north and east of the country. Peace was fragile, however, and broke down completely in May, when the RUF took many UN peacekeepers hostage, and once again moved on Freetown. Simultaneously, the RUF also began incursions into neighbouring Guinea, particularly into areas containing large numbers of Sierra Leonean refugees. Both moves were effectively countered, firstly by the intervention of British troops in the west (Freetown and its environs), and secondly by militarily successful counter-attacks on the part the Guinean army in the north and the east. These actions marked a significant turning point in the war. The destruction by the British of the 'West-Side Boys' (a remnant of the AFRC active around Freetown) - following their taking of British army hostages - coupled with the reverses at the hands of the Guineans, seems to have convinced the RUF that no early end to the war was in sight. Increasing pressure on their Liberian funding and supply base (with the imposition of UN sanctions and measures taken against the trade in 'war-diamonds') must also have helped convince the RUF that there was little alternative but to re-engage with the

peace process. The result was improved security and a relative peace that has endured throughout much of Sierra Leone during 2001.

Timeline of Recent Political and Security Events



2.2 The Humanitarian Situation

The conflict in Sierra Leone has been characterised by widespread insecurity, extreme violence (looting, murder, rape and mutilation) and massive displacement of the civilian population within the country and into neighbouring states (Liberia and Guinea). There has also been great deal of destruction of civil infrastructure (schools, hospitals, government buildings), in fact of anything that could be seen as a symbol of government.

The available national statistics paint a vivid picture of the effects of the war in terms of economic decline, reductions in living standards and the virtual collapse of public services. GDP has fallen from an estimated \$237 in 1990 to \$142 in 2001, and an estimated 80% of the population are now thought to live in absolute poverty (defined as an income of less than \$1 per person per day).

Sierra Leone has been ranked at the bottom of UNDP's Human Development Index for the last 5 years. The infant mortality rate (182 per 1000 live births) and the under-5 mortality rates (316 per 1000 live births) are the highest in the world according to UNDP, and maternal mortality (1,800 per 100,000 births) is also extremely high. Adult literacy has declined in the past decade from 36% in 1990 to 30% now, with a marked disparity between men and women (only 18% of women are literate).

UNHCR estimates that out of a population of 5.4 million, 258,000 are refugees, of whom 62,000 have been registered by UNHCR as having recently returned to Sierra Leone. Of these returnees, 40% have returned to Kambia district in the north and 34% to Kailahun and Kono districts in the east. A further 248,000 people are thought to be internally displaced within the country.

However, with the improvement in security, and supported by international aid and the expenditure associated with a large UN peacekeeping force, the economy is showing the first signs of recovery. GDP grew by 3.8% in 2000 and is expected to grow by a further 6% in 2001. The government's

Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, recently endorsed by the World Bank and IMF, proposes a two-phase approach to poverty reduction. In the transitional phase (2001-2002), the focus is on immediate post-war needs and disarmament, including security, vulnerable groups (IDPs, war victims and veterans), social and physical infrastructure, and institutional capacity. The focus of the medium-term phase (2003-2005) will be elaborated through a wide-ranging consultation process as security and access improve throughout the country.

Improving security during 2001 has increased access to most parts of the country, which can now be divided into three types of area:

- Safe: i.e. under government control, safe and accessible to humanitarian agencies for some time (i.e. a year or more)
- Recently safe: i.e. recently declared safe for resettlement by former IDPs and former refugees. An area is only declared safe once a series of conditions have been met, including the completion of a disarmament process and the deployment of the Sierra Leone police.
- Accessible: This means that the area is accessible to humanitarian agencies and others, but the conditions have not yet been met for the area to be declared safe for resettlement.

2.3 Food Aid Interventions

WFP's response to the civil war has been designed both to provide immediate assistance to war-affected populations and to promote rehabilitation and resettlement where this has been possible. WFP's main activities under the current PRRO (Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation) are Vulnerable Group Feeding (VGF) for IDPs and returnees in camps, villages and resettlement areas, Emergency School Feeding (ESF), Food-for-Work (FFW), Food-for-Agriculture (FFAg) and support to Therapeutic and Supplementary feeding programmes (TSF), with the bulk of resources allocated to VGF (table).

WFP PROJECTS IN SIERRA LEONE (PRRO 2002)			
	Caseload	MT Food Aid	% Total Food Resources
<i>Vulnerable Group Feeding</i>	190,500	34,608	65%
- IDPs in camps			
- IDPs in villages			
- Populations hosting IDPs			
- Resettled IDPS			
- Returned refugees in camps			
- Returned refugees in villages			
<i>Emergency School Feeding</i>	230,000	7,487	14%
<i>Food-for-work/Food-for-agriculture</i>	40,000	6,840	13%
<i>Food-for-training</i>	10,000	599	1%
<i>Institutional feeding</i>	3,500	639	1%
<i>Therapeutic and supplementary feeding (incl. Mother/child health)</i>	33,000	3,289	6%
<i>Total:</i>	507,000	53,461	

The WFP programme in Sierra Leone has three main objectives. These are a) to respond to emergency situations that require a food aid intervention, b) to support the resettlement process and c) to promote economic and agricultural recovery. The emergency interventions include VGF and TSF.

Resettlement is supported through the provision of resettlement rations (under VGF), while economic/agricultural recovery is promoted through FFW, FFAg and FFT. The ESF programme does not fall neatly into any one category, as it is a programme with multiple objectives:

- to support the re-establishment of schooling where this has been interrupted by the war, creating conditions that will encourage IDPs and former refugees to return home (resettlement objective)

- to encourage school attendance (educational objective)
- to promote attention and learning through the provision of a nutritious meal midway through the school day (nutritional and educational objectives)
- to improve the food intake of a nutritionally vulnerable group (i.e. school-aged children) in areas experiencing acute food insecurity (nutritional and emergency objectives)
- to generate longer term economic benefits through improvements in educational attainment for the disadvantaged, especially rural, poor (educational and economic objectives).

3 INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRENT ASSESSMENT

3.1 Aims and Objectives

Sierra Leone is hopefully undergoing a transition from a period of conflict to one of relative peace and stability. This will require a considerable adjustment in food aid programming to reflect the new situation. The need for emergency interventions can be expected to decline, to be matched by a corresponding increase in the opportunities and need for recovery interventions and interventions to facilitate the process of resettlement.

The *basic aim* of the current assessment was *to guide WFP planning for 2002, based upon an understanding of food security at community level*. The assessment covered both the ‘safe’ areas, where most of WFP’s interventions are currently concentrated, and the ‘recently safe’ and ‘accessible’ areas that will be an obvious focus for intervention in 2002. For ‘safe’ areas, there was an element of programme review, since these areas have already received food assistance for several years. The question now must be, is it appropriate to continue providing assistance to these areas, and if so, what type of assistance? For the newly accessible areas, for which relatively little information is available, the need was for an initial baseline assessment that could guide the initiation of new programme activities in 2002.

The assessment was designed to answer a number of basic questions, dealing with the most appropriate types of intervention, the amounts of food aid required and the targeting of assistance (which areas are most in need, who within those areas should be assisted, and when?).

<i>Basic questions addressed by the assessment</i>	<i>Objective</i>
<i>Where?</i>	To prioritise chiefdoms or groups of chiefdom according to their level of food security and therefore need for food assistance.
<i>Who?</i>	To define/characterise the types of households most in need (e.g. returnees vs. residents, poor vs. middle vs. rich, etc.)
<i>How many?</i>	To estimate the percentage of the population falling into the needy categories of household (when combined with population data, this type of information should provide an estimate of beneficiary numbers).
<i>Why?</i>	To understand the causes of food insecurity for different types of household in different areas, so as to identify the most appropriate type of intervention and to provide a strong rationale for assistance.
<i>What type?</i>	To define the most appropriate interventions, based upon an understanding of the severity and causes of food insecurity.
<i>How much?</i>	To define the level of need (especially in the case of an emergency food intervention).
<i>When?</i>	To identify the most appropriate time and season for intervention.

In addition to these basic questions, there were also a number of *context-specific questions*, of which the most important relate to resettlement and reintegration. These questions are particularly important

for the areas that have only recently become accessible, and that are likely to receive large numbers of returnees (e.g. Kambia and Kailahun). Specifically,

- *How quickly can returnees (whether previously refugees or IDPs) restart their lives once they return home? What constraints do they face, and what opportunities are open to them? How can food assistance most effectively assist the resettlement and reintegration processes?*
- *What impact will the arrival of returnees have on the locally resident population? How has the resident population survived to date? Will the arrival of returnees increase competition for local resources and opportunities, and what effect will this have on the residents?*

3.2 Additional Activities to Compliment the Current Assessment

The WFP-VAM unit has set out a process for assessment - the VAM Standard Analytical Framework or SAF. Key elements of the SAF include:

1. Thorough literature review and secondary data analysis (statistical and spatial analysis) to be integrated into a “Vulnerability Issues Paper”;
2. Detailed Vulnerability Mapping and Geographic Targeting analysis;
3. Community Food Security Profiling (CFSP) assessment in the most vulnerable areas of the country, based on well-established PRA methods, as a basic problem assessment, a means to identify potential household- and individual-level beneficiaries, and to identify the optimal role of food aid to address those problems;
4. Programme Resource Mapping activity to outline existing institutional and infrastructure resources and overall implementation capacity for WFP activities; and
5. National Vulnerability Workshops designed to capture expert opinion on key issues and to generate input and buy-in into the VAM work plan;
6. Programme Integration Workshops designed to present VAM analysis to WFP country programme staff for feedback and brainstorming on the implications for WFP’s current development and emergency activities in each country.

The current Community Food Security Profiling (CFSP) is step 3 in the SAF. Other activities of the SAF are currently ongoing in Sierra Leone (literature review and secondary data analysis), and will be incorporated into the analysis in the near future.

The current assessment was also designed to complement other field-based food security assessment activities recently undertaken by other agencies using similar methodologies. Goal recently completed a district wide assessment of Kenema, the results of which are summarised in Appendix 1. ACF has also undertaken two assessments of the IDP camps in Freetown and Bo, the results of which are expected shortly.

3.3 The Approach Adopted

The current assessment used the Household Food Economy analytical framework for analysing food security. The development of this approach has been guided by generally accepted definitions of food security and vulnerability.

3.3.1 Definitions of Food Security and Vulnerability

The WFP-endorsed definitions of food security and vulnerability are given in the text box. The definition of food security includes four key concepts: ensured access, to sufficient food, for all people, at all times. These key concepts, and

WFP Endorsed Definitions of Food Security and Vulnerability

‘**Food Security** exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life.’ (as defined by the 1996 World Food Summit)

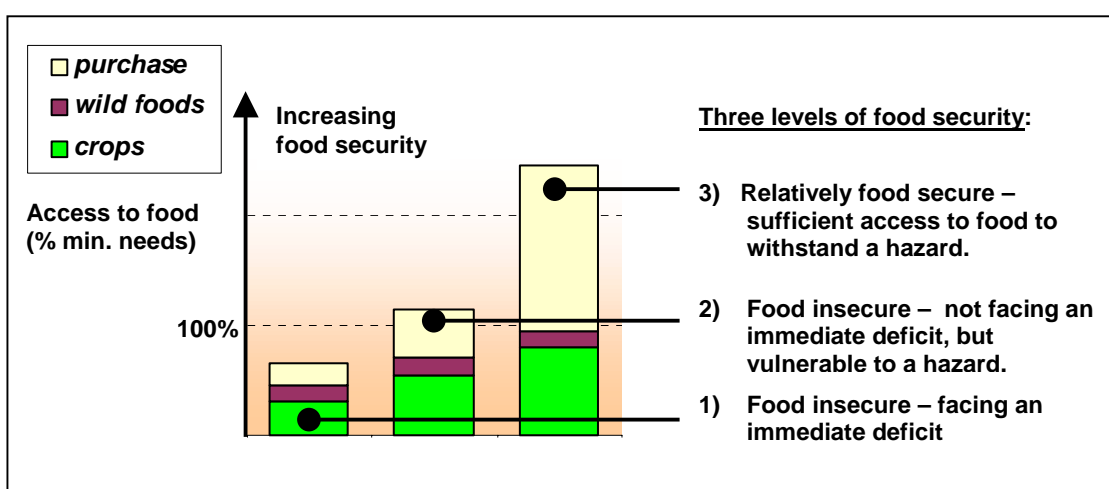
‘**Vulnerability** is defined as the presence of factors that place people at risk of becoming food insecure or malnourished, including those factors that affect their ability to cope.’ (as defined by FAO-FIVIMS)

their implications for the assessment of food security are discussed in the next section.

3.3.2 *Links between these Definitions and the Analytical Framework*

Four key concepts are included within the generally accepted definition of food security:

Ensured Access: Access is about more than just production. It is about all the different ways in which people obtain food, whether collecting it, buying it or exchanging it. Assessing access therefore involves understanding how people obtain food, and, in a market economy, how they obtain income to buy food¹. In food economy work, this analysis is undertaken at the level of the household. This is because the household is by far the chief unit through which populations anywhere operate for production, sharing of income, and consumption. The first step is to define groups of households that share relatively similar patterns of access. The second step is to analyse the access that these groups have to food and to income. The basic outputs from this part of the analysis are *pie charts or bar charts illustrating sources of food and income* for different types of household.



To Sufficient Food: The implication here is that the assessment approach must encompass not just how people get food, but how much food they can obtain from different sources. Total access can then be compared against a standard (i.e. a minimum requirement figure) to determine just how food secure a given population is. This is why food economy attaches considerable importance to the quantification of access to food. The focus is usually access to food energy (measured in kilocalories), mainly because a deficit in energy intake is the most common nutritional cause of acute malnutrition. In this case, the standard of comparison is a minimum energy requirement figure, usually taken by WFP as 2,100 kcals per person per day².

Three levels of food security/insecurity can be defined. These are shown in the graphic, which illustrates access to food (expressed as a percentage of minimum requirements) for three types of household. All three examples have access to the same three sources of food; own crop production, wild foods and purchase. In the first case, access is limited and the household is unable to cover its minimum consumption requirement. This type of household is food insecure and facing an immediate consumption deficit, a situation that generally requires an immediate emergency intervention such as VGF.

The second household has greater access to crop production than the first, and greater access to food from the market (i.e. it has more income and therefore more food purchasing power). This household

¹These days almost all economies are to some extent market-based. Purchase is an important source of food for most poor households, even in economies that might in the past have been labelled ‘subsistence’ economies.

² This is an average across a developing country population, taking account of factors such as the age and sex breakdown and physical activity of the population.

is able to cover its minimum consumption requirement, but only just. It has few reserves to fall back upon. This type of household is still food insecure. Although not facing an immediate deficit, it remains vulnerable to any hazard that will reduce access to food or income, such as a reduction in crop production or a loss of income due to the death or disability of a productive household member. In this case, an immediate emergency intervention would not normally be required, but other types of intervention (e.g. food-for-work or food-for-agriculture) are justified to improve food security.

The third household is better-off than either of the other two. This household has sufficient crop production and sufficient income to withstand most hazards (i.e. this household can maintain food consumption at or above the minimum even in the face of a substantial reduction in one or other source of food or income). This type of household is relatively food secure.

For All People: Not all households have the same access to food and income. It is important when assessing food security, therefore, that an effort is made to understand which groups are most food insecure and why. In food economy work this is done by defining different groups of households according to their ability to access food and income. Access to food and income is determined by two factors; geography and socio-economic status. Geography (where a household lives) determines its *options* for obtaining food and income. Its socio-economic status determines its *ability to exploit those options*.

It is obvious that someone living in an area that is suitable for cultivating tree crops such as cocoa or coffee is going to have very different options from someone living in an area where these crops cannot be grown, or in an area with good access to the sea and fishing resources. Defining geographical zones that share similar options is one aspect of the analysis, therefore, the output from which is a *Food Economy Zone*³ or *Livelihood Zone Map*.

Households are very rarely homogenous in terms of their assets or skills, or a range of other factors that influence their ability to exploit the options within a given food economy zone. The next step in the analysis therefore involves defining groups of households according to their ability those options. Efforts are also made to try and understand why different households have different levels of access (i.e. to understand the causes of food insecurity at household level), and to estimate the percentage of the population that falls into the different groups. Usually, access is linked to the wealth of the household (land or livestock holdings, for example) or to its socio-economic status (e.g. whether the household is a resident or an IDP household). The output from this stage of the analysis is a *Socio-Economic* or *Wealth Breakdown*.

At All Times: It is also obvious that access to food and income will vary over time, and the analysis of this aspect of food security represents the final step in the food security assessment process. Two types of variation must be considered:

- variations within a year (seasonal variations)
- variations from one year to the next (resulting from variations in the weather or in security, for example).

³ A Food Economy Zone is a geographical area, the inhabitants of which share similar options for obtaining food and income. Within a single Food Economy Zone, the inhabitants:

- Can grow roughly the same types of crops
- Can raise roughly the same types of livestock
- Can gather the same types of wild foods and other natural products
- Have similar options for hunting and fishing
- Share the same market network for selling their labour, livestock and other products
- Share similar patterns of livestock and labour migration
- Share the same market network for staple foods

The first type of variation is generally investigated through the preparation of *Seasonal Calendars*. This involves analysing the seasonality of access to various sources of food and income, as well as identifying any seasons of regular surplus or deficit (e.g. an annual 'hungry' season).

To assess the second type of variation, it is necessary to look at the different hazards that can arise from one year to the next (insecurity, pest infestation, flood etc.) and at their impact on access to food and income. This is termed a *hazard analysis*. It is also important to assess people's capacity to cope with any reduction in access. This is a *coping strategies analysis*.

The usual approach is to analyse access to food and income for a baseline period, and then to prepare a projection for the future. In the current assessment, for example, the baseline period was taken as the last 12 months (effectively calendar year 2001), with projections being prepared for 2002. The rationale is that a good understanding of how people have survived to date provides a sound basis for projecting access to food in the future. Three types of information are combined here; information on baseline access, information on possible hazards (i.e. factors that may affect access in the next 12 months) and information on coping strategies (i.e. the likely response of the population to the hazard). The resulting projection takes all three factors into account.

3.3.3 *The Three Basic Steps to Food Economy Analysis and their Application to Sierra Leone*

In summary, there are three basic steps to a household food economy analysis:

1. Food Economy Zoning. This involves mapping areas that share similar options for obtaining food and income. The approach is to identify those factors (such as climate, soil, proximity to rivers, access to markets etc.) that determine the basic food and income options (the crops that will grow, the livestock that can be raised, the wild plants that can be collected, the fish that can be caught, and so on) and then to group similar areas together. To a great extent this analysis is independent of the war (factors such as climate or soil type have clearly not been affected by the war). Where a factor has been affected by the war, however, such as market access, the pre-war situation has been taken as the basis of comparison.

The initial step in the mapping process in Sierra Leone was to prepare a preliminary national food economy zone map, down to chiefdom level⁴. This was done using a combination of secondary source material (agro-ecological maps, vegetation maps, etc., prepared by FAO) and key informant interviews with relevant technical personnel at national and regional levels. These preliminary zonings were cross-checked during the current field exercise, through interviews with chiefdom-level key informants.

2. Socio-Economic Breakdown. The objective here is to break the population within a particular food economy zone down into a number of relatively homogenous groups of households according to their ability to exploit the local food and income options. Critical factors (which are identified during discussions at community level) might include landholding, livestock holding, capital, skills and/or household labour. Typically, these are the factors that determine wealth within a community, and the exercise is essentially a wealth breakdown. In Sierra Leone a two-way stratification was used, firstly by wealth (i.e. dividing the population into four groups – 'very poor', 'poor', 'middle' and 'better-off'), and secondly by status (i.e. resident versus IDP versus returnee). An additional element in the analysis was to estimate the percentage of the population falling into the different socio-economic groups. This was done using proportional piling techniques at community level.

⁴ For the Sierra Leone exercise, each chiefdom was assigned to one or other food economy zone. In principle, the boundaries of a food economy zone are determined by agro-ecological or climatic factors which often cut across administrative boundaries. In Sierra Leone, however, most chiefdoms are relatively small and the differences between food economies are not so great, and so adhering to administrative boundaries has caused fewer problems than it might in other circumstances.

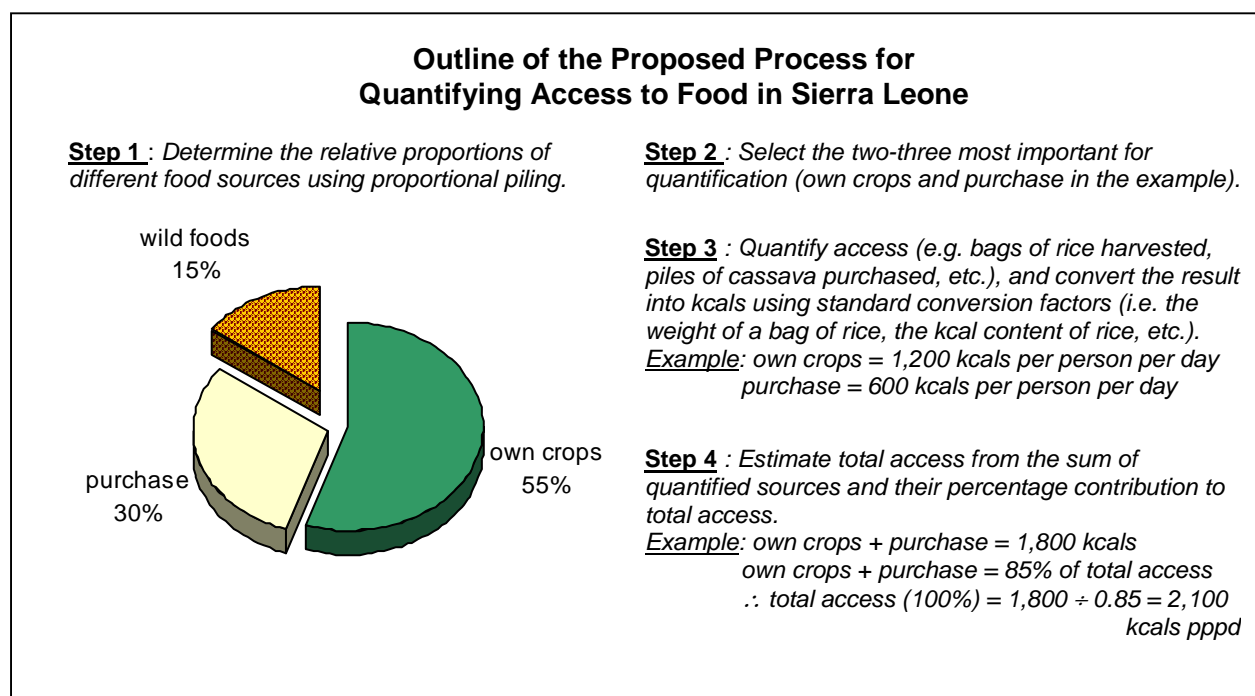
3. Analysis of Access to Food and Income. The objective of this exercise is to develop an in-depth understanding of access to food and income for selected wealth groups within the community. In the case of Sierra Leone, the selected groups were poor residents, poor IDPs and poor returnees. The process is one of:

- Identifying sources of food and income and their relative importance.
- Quantifying access to food and income over a 12 month baseline period (2001 in the current assessment).
- Projecting access to food and income for a future period (2002 in the current assessment). In most assessments the task is to investigate the effects of a hazard such as insecurity or crop failure, assessing the likely impact of the hazard on access to food and income (using the baseline analysis as a point of reference) and then judging the potential of the population to cope (i.e. to adopt strategies to replace the food and/or income lost as a result of the hazard). In the case of Sierra Leone, however, the scenario was one of improving security, and the task was therefore to assess the likely response to a better rather than a worse situation.

The bulk of the information required for this stage of the analysis is obtained from focus group discussions with members of the socio-economic groups being investigated (i.e. poor residents, poor IDPs or poor returnees).

3.3.4 *A Note on Quantification*

The importance of quantifying access to food and income relates to the requirement in a food security assessment to judge whether or not a particular group has access to sufficient food. The difficulty is that quantification often requires the collection of quite large amounts of detailed information in the field, and also adds considerably to the complexity of the analysis. In order to simplify the process in Sierra Leone, the approach proposed was to use proportional piling to determine the relative importance of different food and income options, and then to quantify only the two or three most important sources rather than attempting to quantify all sources. The principle underlying this approach is illustrated in the figure.



However, a number of problems were encountered with quantification in Sierra Leone. One was the poor memory of respondents, since the approach was to ask small groups of poor farmers when,

where and how much food a typical poor household might have obtained from different sources during the baseline year. This is a problem in any setting, but was accentuated in Sierra Leone by two factors; the pattern of agricultural production and the very wide range of food and income sources exploited by poor rural households throughout the country.

1. The pattern of agricultural production. Mixed upland farming is practised everywhere. Rice, sorghum, millet, cassava, yams, beans and a number of other crops are planted in mixed stands and harvested sequentially from September until January. Mixed or single stands of sweet potatoes and groundnuts are also planted on the uplands, and rice is planted in the valley swamps. During the main harvest period from September to January much of the consumption comes directly from the field, and as such is not quantified by the farmer at all. Later in the year, other crops, such as cassava and sweet potatoes are also harvested directly from the fields, and are, once again, not quantified in any detail. This makes the quantification of anything other than rice, and then only the rice that is actually threshed and stored for consumption, extremely difficult.
2. The wide range of food and income options exploited. The own crops 'slice' of the pie can be subdivided into several sub-components (rice, cassava, sweet potatoes, sorghum, etc.). The same is true for most other major categories of food or income. The purchase 'slice' consists, for example, of a mix of rice, cassava and palm oil at a minimum, while the 'wild foods' category may include palm oil, bush yams, bush meat and 'wild' cassava⁵. Effectively, therefore, food and income is obtained in small amounts from many different sources, making it difficult to identify and quantify just one or two major sources.

Since there are particular problems associated with quantification in Sierra Leone, it follows that statements about access to food and income cannot be made here with the same degree of certainty as in some other settings. As a result it was decided not to report figures for total income, since we are not confident that we have been able to estimate this with an acceptable degree of accuracy. Despite these problems, however, the assessment teams have been able to reach conclusions about the overall level of access to food with reasonable certainty. Other than in the case of Kailahun, the conclusion is that poor households were in general able to access their minimum kilocalorie requirements during the baseline year, 2001. This conclusion is based upon the quantification that was possible, together with observations that were made of the general condition of the population, which appears reasonably well-fed. The many options that are available also gives confidence that most households would have been able to cover their minimum food needs during the baseline year.

3.4 Preliminary Food Economy Zoning of Sierra Leone

The food economy zoning exercise is about defining relatively homogenous areas according to the options that exist for obtaining food and income. To a great extent these are determined by questions of geography and climate, introduced below.

3.4.1 A Brief Introduction to the Geography and Climate of Sierra Leone

Physically, Sierra Leone can be divided into four regions⁶. The first of these is the Freetown peninsula, with its distinctive mountains rising to a height of approximately 1000 m. The remaining three zones run roughly parallel to the coast beginning with the narrow and low-lying *Coastal Plain* (extending 40 km inland and generally less than 30 m above sea level). From there the altitude increases as one moves inland, through the *Interior Lowlands* (lying 40-120 km inland, and at an average altitude of approximately 120 m) and up to the *Interior Hills and Plateaux* (the interior half of the country, at an average altitude of 450 m and a maximum 2000 m in places). Five major river systems drain these physical zones, flowing from the north-east to the south-west and the sea. These are (from north to south) the Little Scarcies, the Rokel (which enters the sea at Freetown), the Jong,

⁵ 'Wild' cassava is cassava dug from fields cultivated in previous years, within which re-growth of cassava has occurred.

⁶ The information in this section was taken from Chapter 2 of the analytical report of the 1985 population and housing census for Sierra Leone, 'The Land and the People', by G. T. Tengbeh.

the Sewa (Sierra Leone's major diamond-bearing river) and the Moa (the main tree crop production area).

The *Coastal Plains* are characterised by salt water mangrove swamps to the north, and inland riverine grassland swamps (known as 'battii-lands') to the south. These swamps have generally good soils, are relatively fertile, and are important areas of rice production. This applies particularly to the coastal plains of Kambia district before the war.

The *Interior Lowlands* consist of gently undulating hills dissected by many rivers and swamps. The 'boliland' swamps, which are a particular feature of the north of this zone, are generally suitable for mechanical rice production, as they contain few trees and dry out during the dry season, and can therefore be accessed by tractor. Boliland soils are relatively infertile however, and fertiliser is required to obtain a good yield. During the war, most cultivation has been by hand and without the application of fertiliser.

The *Interior Hills and Plateaux* are separated from the *Interior Lowlands* by a clearly defined escarpment. The main gold-bearing deposits are found in the centre of this area (in the Sula mountains and the Kangari hills). To the south of the zone lies the Moa river basin, which is notable for its fertile soils suitable for the cultivation of coffee and cocoa. The climate also favours the production of tree crops in the south.

Rainfall is relatively high throughout Sierra Leone, creating conditions that are generally favourable to vegetative growth and crop production. There are two main seasons (which are each further subdivided into 3 subsidiary seasons); a 7-month rainy season from May to November followed by a dry season from December to April. The rainy season is shorter and conditions are dryer in the north than the south. The dry season in the north is characterised by hot dry harmattan winds that blow from the Sahel (i.e. from the north-east). The south tends to be protected from these by the hills and mountains of the *Interior Hills and Plateaux*, and this is an important factor favouring the production of tree crops in the south of the country.

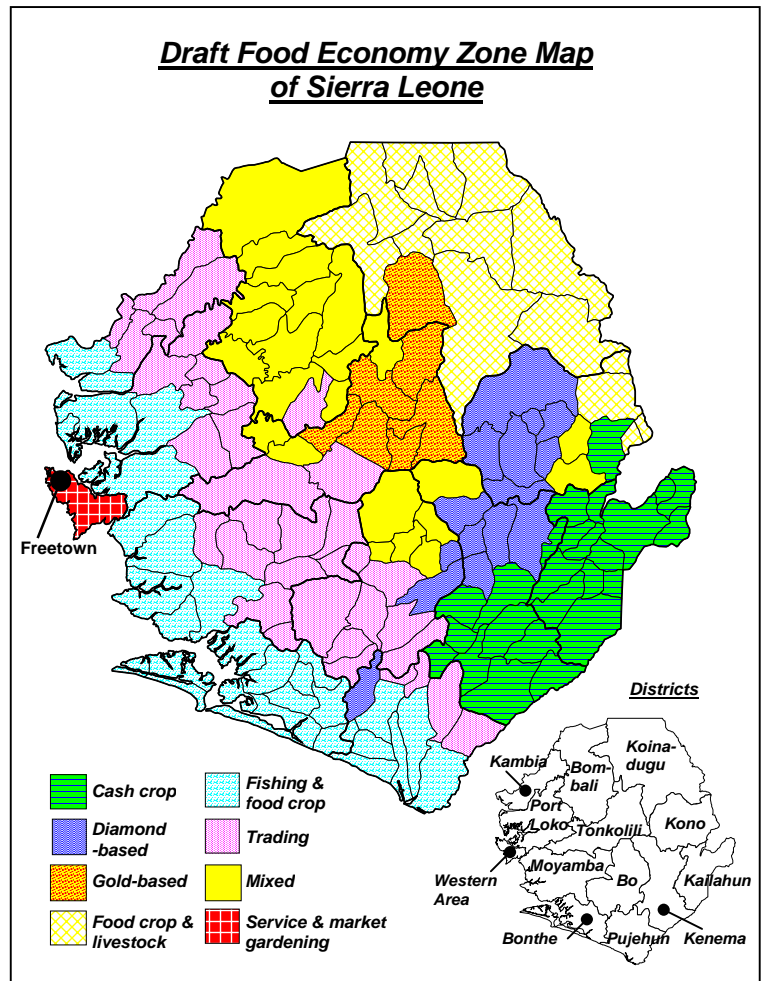
In line with differences in rainfall, forest in the south first gives way to woodland savanna and then to savanna grassland in the north. The pattern of shifting cultivation means that there is relatively little primary forest left, and most of the country is now covered with either secondary forest or farm bush (areas that have been cultivated in the past and that have experienced different degrees of forest re-growth).

3.4.2 *The Preliminary Food Economy Zones*

A total of eight food economy zones were defined during the preliminary zoning exercise. All zones share the same basic pattern of food crop production (mixed upland farming plus rice cultivation in valley swamps). Wild plants and game are also sources of food throughout much of the country, although the exact make-up of the wild food basket varies from one area to another (e.g. there is greater access to bush meat and bush yams in the more forested south, and more access to palm oil and palm wine in the north).

Differences in income source are therefore the main factor differentiating between zones. There is a large *cash-cropping zone* in the south of the country (Kailahun and southern Kenema districts), the main cocoa and coffee producing region of the country. Further north are the *diamond-based zone* (Kono and northern Kenema) and the *gold-based zone* (eastern Tonkolili), within which are located the country's most significant mineral deposits (although lesser deposits are also found in other areas). Before the war, cattle-raising was a major activity on the savanna grasslands of the northern *food crop and livestock zone*. However, if information from other areas is anything to go by, the level of livestock holdings is likely to have been much reduced as a result of the conflict.

Moving across to the coast, there are two other zones with relatively self-explanatory names, the *fishing and food crop zone* along the coast, and the *service and market gardening zone* bordering Freetown. This leaves two other less clearly defined zones, the *mixed zone* and the *trading zone*. The inhabitants of the *mixed zone* exploit, as the name suggests, a variety of food and income sources, with none particularly dominant. In these areas income is derived from a combination of food and cash crop sales. Of the tree crops, coffee and cocoa are grown in the south of the zone (although plantations are significantly smaller than in the *cash-cropping zone*), while oil palm is the main plantation crop in the north. The *trading zone* has a similar pattern of food and cash crop production to the *mixed zone*. This zone, however, has somewhat better access to trade than the *mixed zone*. This is explained by three factors; a generally better road network, proximity to a number of urban population centres (such as Port Loko, Bo and Kenema), and, in the north and the south, relatively good access to cross-border trade (with Guinea and Liberia).



3.5 Scope of the Assessment and Selection of ‘Case-Study’ Areas

It would obviously have been desirable to have covered all the current and potential beneficiaries of food aid (returnees, IDPs, refugees and residents) in all areas of the country (both rural and urban). In practice however, resources for the current exercise were limited, and the assessment had to focus on specific areas and specific groups of beneficiaries. Fortunately, two other complementary assessments were undertaken at about the time of the current study, both of which used a similar methodology to that described here. These were the district wide assessment of Kenema (focussing mainly on rural areas) undertaken by GOAL in September/October and ACF’s assessment of IDP camps in Freetown and Bo. ACF’s assessments covered the bulk of IDPs residing in camps, and the bulk of the current beneficiary caseload in urban areas (although not, of course, the general urban population). The most pressing need was therefore to obtain information on conditions in the rural areas (besides Kenema), and on the populations living within these areas (residents, IDPs, refugees and returnees). Given the expectation that large numbers of refugees and IDPs would be returning home during 2002 (becoming returnees in the process), it seemed most important to gather information on the areas to which these groups were likely to return, on the resident population, and on the condition of returnees that had already arrived in these areas. This was the rationale for focussing on residents and returnees within certain areas, the selection of which is described below.

One further decision, taken for practical reasons, was to restrict the assessment to areas within which WFP is the lead food agency. A two-phase approach to covering these areas was adopted:

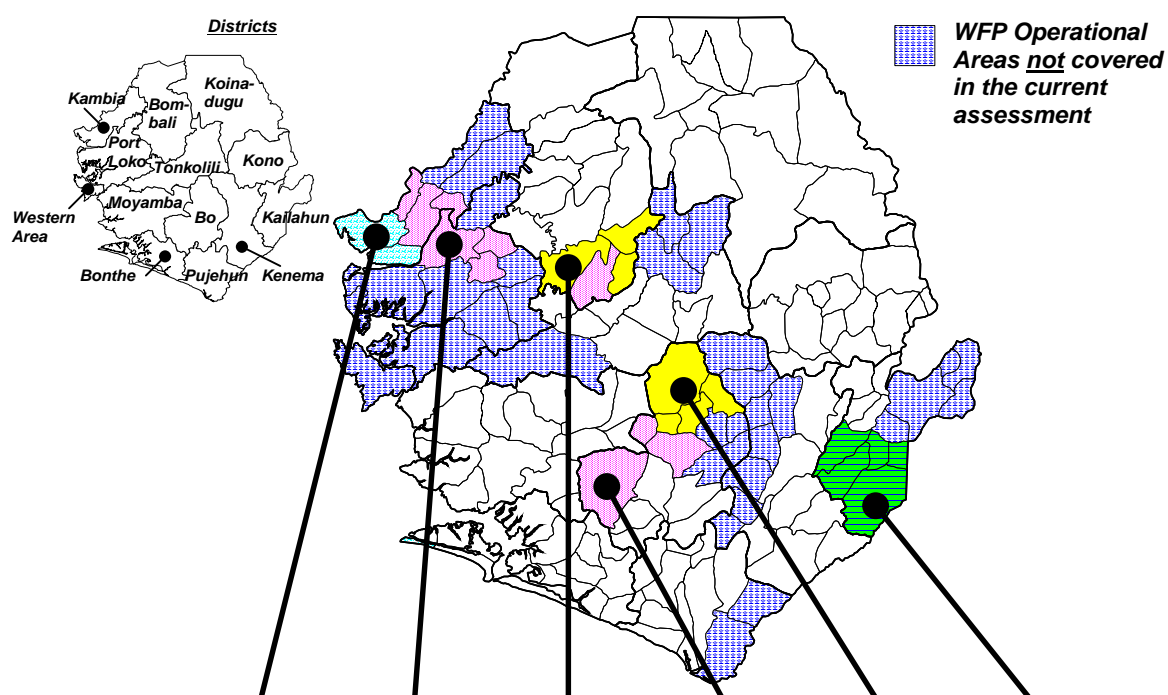
1. Detailed field assessment of selected ‘case-study’ areas. The idea behind the case study approach is to select areas not so much because they can be considered typical of the country, but because they are characterised by a particular combination of circumstances that are of interest (i.e. a

combination of food economy zone, recent history of access and security, number of returnees, and so on). Once an understanding has been developed of the food security situation in a number of case study areas, it should then be a relatively simple process to extrapolate the findings and conclusions to other areas according to the conditions prevailing in those areas.

2. Extrapolation of findings to other areas. As outlined above, this should be based upon the case study findings, a knowledge of the circumstances in different areas plus the results of the literature review and the secondary data analysis.

Resources, staff and time were available to cover six case-study areas. Only limited data was available for selecting case-study areas, and the primary factors guiding the choice of area were therefore a combination of food economy zone and recent history of security and access. The map indicates the location of the 6 areas selected for assessment. It was decided to include two areas from each category of access ('safe', 'recently safe' and 'accessible').

WFP Operational Areas & Areas Covered by the Current Assessment



District	Kambia	Kambia & Port Loko	Bombali	Bo	Bo	Kailahun
FEZ	Fishing	Trading	Mixed	Trading	Mixed	Cash crop
Access	Recently safe	Recently safe	Accessible	Safe	Safe	Accessible
Chiefdoms covered ¹	58:Mambolo 59:Samu	60:Gbinleh-Dixon 61:Magbema 62:Masungbala 79:Bureh (BKM) 80:Dibia 82:TMS	45:Bombali Shebora 46:Makari Gbanti 47:Paki Masabong 56:Safroko Limba	102:Bumpeh 103:Gbo 105:Kakua	99:Bagbe 106:Komboya 108:Niawa Lenga 109:Sielenga	1:Jalahun 2:Jawie 3:Mandu 5:Malema 6:Dia

¹Chiefdom geocode and name.

It was also decided to cover 4 of the 8 preliminary food economy zones. These were the cash-cropping, fishing, mixed and trading zones. The other 4 zones were excluded for a variety of reasons. One of the zones (livestock and food crop) lies entirely outside WFP's operational area. The other 3 (the gold- and diamond-based zones and the service and market gardening zone) were judged likely to be somewhat better off than the other four (due to their better access to mineral resources or proximity to Freetown) and were therefore considered a lower priority for assessment. Of the 6 case studies, 2 were undertaken in the trading zone and 2 in the mixed zone. In each case, areas in the north and south of these two zones were selected for comparison.

Other factors taken into account when selecting case study areas were as follows:

- The need to cover districts likely to receive large numbers of returnees over the next few months (i.e. Kambia and Kailahun)
- The desirability of covering as large an area and as large a population as possible (i.e. an effort was made to select groups of contiguous densely populated chiefdoms rather than single sparsely populated chiefdoms)
- the need to restrict the assessment to areas within which WFP is the principal food pipeline agency (the map shows the full extent of WFP's operational areas).
- The fact that the whole of Kenema district had already been surveyed using a comparable methodology by Goal.

It was originally intended to cover the whole of the cash-cropping food economy area of Kailahun, but the timing of the disarmament process restricted access to the north.

4 THE FIELD METHODOLOGY

4.1 Activities and Outputs from the Fieldwork

The basic method is that of a Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA). Two features of this approach are that the field enquiry is semi-structured (i.e. it is sufficiently flexible to allow the enquiry to take an unexpected direction, should this be necessary), and that at least the preliminary analysis is carried out on the spot (allowing information to be cross-checked or important leads to be followed up before the team leaves the field). For the work in Sierra Leone, two types of guide tool were developed to support the field assessment process⁷. The interview guides⁸ were designed to be less structured than questionnaires but still to provide detailed guidance on the structure and direction of the interview. The second set of guides were designed to give structure to the analysis process through the preparation of a series of standard analytical outputs.

<i>Output from the Analysis</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Local food economy map</i>	A map showing local variations/particular features of the food economy at chiefdom level (e.g. local diamond deposits).
<i>Hazard timeline</i>	A timeline indicating the timing of recent insecurity and/or natural hazards within the last 2 years ⁹ . This helps set information on access to food and income into context vis-à-vis recent events.
<i>Hazard map</i>	A map showing which parts of the chiefdom were most or least affected by the different hazards identified in the timeline exercise.

⁷ Finalised versions of these guides should be available shortly from the TSU, WFP Freetown.

⁸ Modelled on those developed by Nicholas Haan, a consultant to WFP-VAM, for assessments recently carried out in Uganda and Kenya.

⁹ The timeframe for this exercise was January 2000 to November 2001. Information on 2000 was collected in addition to that for 2001 (the baseline year for the food and income analysis) because some of the crop production consumed during 2001 would have been grown during the 2000 production season, and it was therefore important to know whether 2000 production was disrupted for any reason (e.g. insecurity).

<i>Output from the Analysis</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Socio-economic breakdown</i>	A breakdown of the population into groups of households according to their ability to exploit local food and income options, together with an estimate of the percentage of the population falling into each group.
<i>Baseline access to food and income</i>	A pie-chart analysis of access to food and income during the baseline year (2001) for selected socio-economic groups within the population.
<i>Projected access to food and income</i>	A projection of access to food and income during 2002, once again for selected socio-economic groups.
<i>Shocks and coping strategies analysis</i>	An analysis of the effects of recent hazards on different socio-economic groups' ability to access food and income.
<i>Seasonal calendar</i>	An analysis of seasonal access to food and income, designed to assist in understanding how the timing of different hazards might affect access to food and income.
<i>Market analysis</i>	An analysis of recent patterns of trade, trade routes and market prices, designed to complement the information on baseline access to food and income.

In the field, information was gathered primarily through interviews undertaken at various levels. The process is summarised below:

<i>Level at which interview undertaken</i>	<i>Participants in the interview</i>	<i>Outputs from the interview</i>
<i>Chiefdom</i>	Chiefdom level key informants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chiefdom level food economy map - Hazard map - Hazard timeline (including details of population movements) - Shocks & coping strategies analysis - Market analysis
<i>Community/Village</i>	<u>Interview 1:</u> Community level key informants	- Socio-economic breakdown
	<u>Interview 2:</u> Community level key informants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hazard timeline - Shocks & coping strategies analysis - Market analysis
	<u>Interview 3:</u> Community level key informants	- Seasonal calendar
<i>Socio-economic group</i>	Focus groups consisting of socio-economic group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analysis of baseline access to food and income - Projection of future access to food and income - Shocks & coping strategies analysis

The enquiry was structured so that the results of a single interview could contribute to the construction of more than one output. Equally, information for the preparation of a single output was frequently drawn from more than one type of interview. This type of triangulation between different sources of information is a key element of rapid rural appraisal work.

A variety of rapid rural appraisal techniques and tools were used in the field, including the seasonal calendar, timeline and mapping exercises referred to above. Extensive use was also made of proportional piling, where informants are asked to divide 100 beans or pebbles into several piles to show the relative magnitude of, for example, different sources of income. Counting the number of

beans or pebbles in each pile then gives an estimate of the percentage contribution of that pile to the total.

In addition to the interviews outlined above, additional interviews were also undertaken with traders and market stall-holders (in order to prepare the market analysis) and with a range of 'official' key informants, including MAFMR and NCRRR officials and representatives from UN organisations and NGOs present in the area.

4.2 Sampling

4.2.1 Selection of Chiefdoms & Chiefdom Key Informants

The process of selecting chiefdoms for inclusion in the assessment is described in section 3.5. Each chiefdom headquarters town was visited and a group interview organised with representatives from among the following key informants (according to who was available and/or who was recommended as a useful source of information by the local authorities); local chief or chiefdom speaker, local authority member, teacher, health worker, religious leader, agricultural extension worker, women's group leader, youth group leader. An effort was made to keep the group size to between 6 and 8 (a manageable number) and to include as many women as possible.

4.2.2 Selection of Villages

Villages were selected during the chiefdom interviews, according to information provided by the chiefdom-level key informants. The aim was to obtain good spatial coverage of the chiefdom, to include both roadside and isolated villages and to visit villages considered reasonably typical of the chiefdom as a whole.

4.2.3 Selection of Community Representatives

In most cases, selected villages were visited the evening before the assessment, when the village chief was requested to assemble 8-10 community level key informants for interview the next morning. These were selected from among the following; men's group leaders, women's group leaders, youth group leaders, IDP or returnee representatives, teacher, health worker and/or religious leaders. Where the difficulty of reaching a particular village precluded prior warning, the assessment team arrived early enough in the morning for interviews to be arranged on-the-spot. The 8-10 informants were split into two groups for interview. A socio-economic breakdown was completed in all villages. A second interview was also completed. This was either a hazard timeline analysis or a seasonal calendar.

4.2.4 Selection of Socio-Economic Group Representatives

One of the objectives of the socio-economic breakdown interview was to develop a village-based definition of the different socio-economic groups within the village ('very poor', 'poor' etc.). At the end of this interview, therefore, participants were asked to identify villagers from selected socio-economic groups to take part in the next level of interview; the socio-economic group interview. Frequently, members of the assessment team accompanied the community key informants on a transect walk through the village so that the selection of participants could be made together. This gave the assessment team the opportunity to observe potential participants in their home surroundings (allowing a judgement to be made of their socio-economic status) and to pose one or two preliminary questions to screen out participants that might not be suitable. An effort was made to obtain both male and female group members for interview.

In each village a total of between 2 and 4 socio-economic group interviews was undertaken, depending upon the number of team members visiting the village and the time constraints. One or more interviews were undertaken with poor residents, and one or more with either poor returnees or poor IDPs. IDPs either form their own discrete households, or may be integrated into resident host families. In the current assessment, interviews were only undertaken with members of discrete IDP households, accessing food and income independently of the residents.

Table : No. of Villages visited and No. of Interviews Undertaken

Case Study	Kambia Fishing FEZ	Kambia & Port Loko Trading FEZ	Bombali Mixed FEZ	Bo Trading FEZ	Bo Mixed FEZ	Kailahun Cash crop FEZ
No. villages visited	8	22	9	15	15	19
No. socio-economic breakdown interviews	8	22	9	15	14	19
No. of socio-economic group interviews						
Residents:	10	13	18	26	26	25
Returnees:	10	15	6	4	0	15
IDPs:	0	0	5	0	11	0

4.3 Implementation

The assessment was a joint exercise led by the WFP Technical Support Unit (TSU), with the assistance of two consultants from The Food Economy Group, and the participation of government staff from MAF&MR - PEMSD (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Marine Resources - District Planning, Evaluation and Monitoring Services), MODEP – CSO (Ministry of Development and Economic Planning – Central Statistical Office), and field assistants from the international NGO Africare. Preliminary training was undertaken in two phases; a first phase for WFP staff from 3-8 November, and a second phase for all participants from 11-13 November. The field work was completed between 11 November and 3 December 2001, with approximately 10 days spent in each case study area.

4.4 Constraints

The problems of quantifying food and income in Sierra Leone have been referred to earlier (section 3.3.4). The general constraints to wider geographical coverage have also been discussed (section 3.5). Two other factors also restricted geographical coverage. These were the very poor state of the roads, particularly in Bo and Kailahun, which made accessing more remote areas a very difficult and time-consuming process, and the inability to access the northern half of Kailahun due to the timing of the disarmament process.

Finally, it was not possible to complete all the various activities planned as part of the wider WFP-VAM standard analytical framework in the most logical sequence or within the proposed timeframe. Specifically, the literature review and secondary data analyses were not completed in advance of the fieldwork, and it was not therefore possible to incorporate the results into the process of selecting case-study areas for field assessment, or the planning of the field work. These activities were also not completed in time for the results to be incorporated into the current report.

Of the two parallel assessment exercises by other agencies (the Goal assessment of Kenema district and the ACF assessments on the Freetown and Bo IDP camps), only the Kenema assessment was available and could be incorporated into the current report (see appendix 1).

5 RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the current report is to synthesis the overall findings and conclusions from all 6 areas, particularly as they relate to WFP food aid decision-making. It is not intended to provide a detailed account of each case study area; individual reports are being prepared for each of these. In the interests of clarity and conciseness, results are presented for only 4 out of the 6 areas, and only for residents and returnees (and not for IDPs). This is because the findings from the two case study areas

in Bo (mixed and trading food economies) and Kambia and Port Loko (fishing and trading food economies) were relatively similar.

The results section of the report begins with a description of recent insecurity in the four districts surveyed, since this provides the essential context for understanding the food economy results. This is followed by an account of the wealth breakdown results and the findings on baseline access to food and income. The section concludes with an analysis of projected access to food for 2002.

5.2 A Brief Account of Insecurity in the Areas Assessed

Security is clearly a critical factor affecting food security in Sierra Leone. It has a major impact on the movement of populations, upon crop production and upon trade. The timeline overleaf provides details of the various episodes of insecurity affecting the four areas covered by the assessment during the past two years. The areas are arranged in order from most secure (Bo, at the top) to least secure (Kailahun, at the bottom). The main months of land preparation and planting are also shown, to indicate whether returnees did or did not arrive in time to initiate agricultural activities.

The breakdown of the Lome peace accords and the May 2000 seizure by the RUF of UN peacekeepers in towns such as Makeni (in Bombali) and Kailahun caused widespread insecurity. In Bo district, relatively peaceful since late 1998, the effects were indirect, in that insecurity along the main Bo-Freetown road (due to the activities of the 'West Side Boys') had a significant effect on trade and on the availability of imported goods, including rice, in the town. The effects on rural areas were limited, however, and planting and cultivation continued uninterrupted throughout 2000 and 2001.

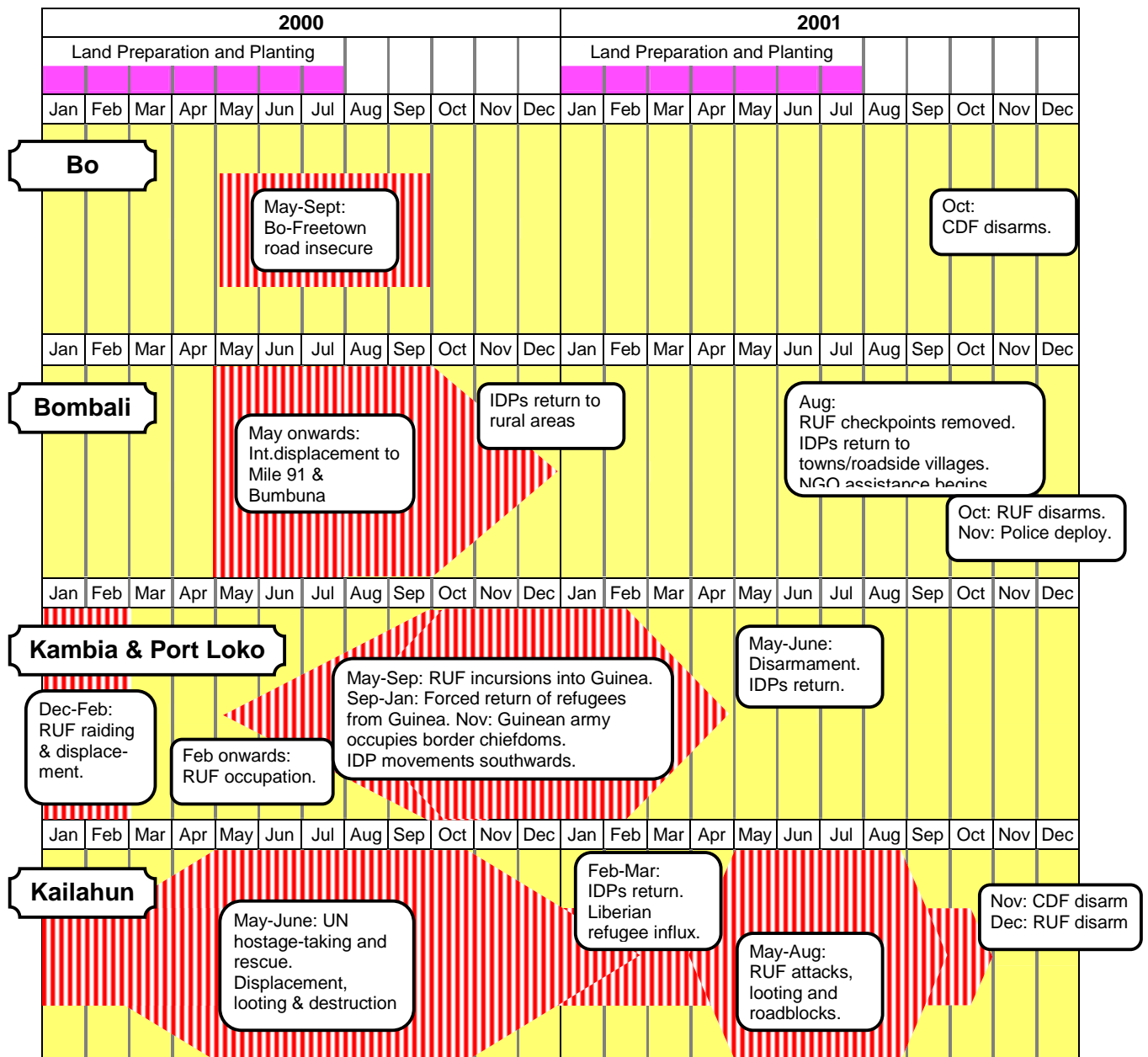
Bombali, under the control of the RUF since late 1998, also experienced significant insecurity from May-late 2000. This was a period of significant internal displacement of both the urban and the rural populations from southern Bombali to government held areas around the towns of Mile 91 and Bumbuna (the site of a major hydroelectric power project). As the situation calmed towards the end of the year, so most of the IDPs returned to their villages, in time to plant at the beginning of 2001. The situation then improved very significantly from August onwards, with the removal of RUF checkpoints from along the roads, the restarting of formal trade and the return of most of the remaining IDPs to roadside villages and to the towns. That the improvement in trading conditions coincided with the beginning of the harvest season was fortuitous. As crops became available for sale, so traders arrived to purchase and move these crops to Freetown and elsewhere.

In Kambia and northern Port Loko districts, the beginning of 2000 saw high levels of insecurity, as the RUF raided into these districts from neighbouring base areas to the east. The result was the displacement of large numbers of people across the border into Guinea, southwards towards Freetown, or simply into the local bush. From February onwards the RUF occupied the area completely, and security improved, only to deteriorate again in those chiefdoms bordering Guinea as the RUF launched cross-border raids from May onwards and the Guinean army responded with shelling, incursions and, eventually, full scale occupation of the border chiefdoms. This was also a period of major population movement, as refugees in Guinea were forced back into Sierra Leone (many to make their way to UNHCR's reception centres close to Freetown), and people still resident in these border areas were displaced southwards. Kambia and northern Port Loko remained relatively insecure until just a few weeks before disarmament in May-June 2001, at which point many IDPs and former refugees began to return spontaneously to the rural areas. Although too late to plant upland farms, they did arrive in time to plant in the lowland swamps. Many were also able to harvest the cassava they had planted roughly 12 months earlier, before their displacement.

Kailahun has experienced continuous insecurity for much of the last two years, and the situation has only recently improved with the disarmament of the government-backed Civil Defence Force (CDF) in November and of the RUF in December. The south was accessible at the time of the assessment (late November), but the north was not, and there continue to be doubts about security in this area. The taking of the UN hostages in May 2000, and their subsequent rescue by heavily armed UN forces

were accompanied by considerable displacement, looting and destruction. The situation calmed towards the end of the year, which permitted the return of many of those displaced in May-June, in time to cultivate during 2001. However, 2001 also saw significant insecurity, with a resurgence of looting and the setting up of many roadblocks between May and August, before the situation again calmed towards the end on October.

Timeline of Insecurity in Areas Assessed



Key:



- 1: Period of deteriorating security
- 2: Period of Insecurity
- 3: Period of improving security

In summary, 2001 was a year of relative peace in Bo and of improving security in Bombali, Kambia and Port Loko. In the latter areas, many IDPs and refugees returned to their home villages in time to cultivate (even if in parts of Kambia they arrived late in the season), and there was also a recovery of formal trade throughout these areas. On the other hand, Kailahun experienced significant insecurity throughout almost the whole year and only relatively small numbers of IDPs have so far returned – these were mainly people who were displaced for a relatively short time, and, in most cases, they returned in time to cultivate in 2001.

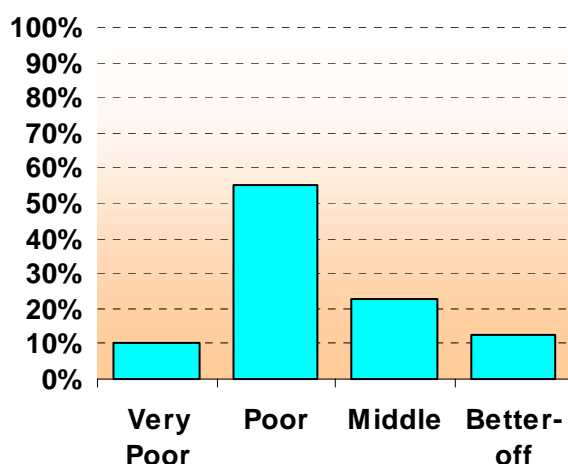
5.3 A Summary of the Socio-Economic Breakdown Results

The socio-economic breakdown provides information on the different socio-economic or wealth groups in the community, and on the ability of these groups to obtain food and income. Similar results were obtained from all six case study areas, presumably reflecting a basic similarity in the options for obtaining food and income in all areas (a finding discussed further in subsequent sections). An overall summary of the results is presented in the figure and the table.

Respondents everywhere were able to divide the population into four groups; the ‘very poor’, ‘poor’, ‘middle’ and ‘better-off’. The underlying causes of differences between the groups are a combination of two critical factors; labour and capital, with skills and education as secondary factors. The importance of labour comes from the fact that obtaining food and income in rural Sierra Leone is highly labour intensive. This is perhaps more so in Sierra Leone than in many other African countries, and is most obviously linked to the density of the bush and the hard work required to clear and penetrate it. Clearing secondary forest for cultivation is a particularly intensive activity and one that falls almost exclusively on the physically stronger male population (whereas the less demanding activity of clearing fields for planting the second year is an activity that is frequently undertaken by women). Climbing palm trees to gather palm fruit or tap palm wine is another example among many that require both strength and agility. For those without sufficient household labour of their own, or desiring to increase the area under cultivation, the solution is to hire outside labour. For which, of course, capital is required, explaining why capital is the second most important determinant of wealth among rural households. But capital not only gives access to hired labour, it is also the basis for initiating trading activities, which are a significant source of income among middle and better-off households.

Put very simply, the very poor have neither labour nor capital, the poor have labour but no capital, while the middle and the rich have both labour and capital (with the rich having more than the middle).

**Generalised Socio-Economic Breakdown for
Case Study Areas Assessed**



	<i>Very Poor</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Middle</i>	<i>Better-off</i>
<i>% of Population (all areas)</i>	5%-15%	45%-65%	15%-30%	5%-20%
<i>Household size (all areas)</i>	1-3	4-8	8-10	10-15
<i>Bu rice planted (2001/2002)¹</i>				
Bo:	0-1	2-3	4-6	6-10
Bombali:	0-1	0.5-3	1-5	2-8
Kambia & Port Loko:	0-1	1-2	3-5	5-10
Kailahun:	0.5-1	2-3	4-6	7-10
<i>Acres of tree crops</i>				
Bo:	0-1	1-4	4-6	6-15
Bombali:	0	0-2	0-3	0-5
Kambia & Port Loko:	0-1	0-3	2-5	5-10
Kailahun:	2-5	6-8	10-15	>15

¹i.e. planted in mid-2001 for harvesting in late 2001, with consumption continuing into 2002.

The very poor are typically small households with elderly, handicapped or chronically sick members. In addition to lacking household labour they also receive little support from their children or other close family members (whereas elderly households from other wealth groups do receive support). Female-headed households with little family labour (i.e. with many young children), including women widowed by the war, may also fall into the 'very poor' group. Not all female-headed households are 'very poor', however. Some have sufficient household labour (typically an elder son) to lift them into the poor group, while others receive support from relatives. The 'very poor' tend to rely heavily upon less labour intensive activities such as the collection of wild plants and the trapping of wild animals and fish. They also have to rely upon gifts from within the community. Only a relatively small percentage of the population falls into the 'very poor' group, however.

Community representatives considered that the bulk of the population falls into the 'poor' group. These are households that have sufficient labour to support themselves from day-to-day, but are unable to accumulate significant reserves to tide them over a period of temporary food or cash shortage. They are often obliged, therefore, to turn to strategies such as casual labour to earn money or food or to take loans from the middle and better-off groups. Both strategies have negative effects,

however, making it difficult for the poor to improve their situation in the longer run. Working for others obviously limits the time that can be spent working on one's own fields, while loans often have to be repaid at a relatively high rate of interest.

The main characteristic of the middle and rich groups is that they have some capital, which enables them to increase the area under cultivation and to invest in trade. They often buy cereals after the harvest and resell them later in the year when rice is in short supply and prices high. Household size also tends to be greater among these groups - which means they can pursue a diverse range of activities and not be too dependent upon any one of these. One other point about the better-off – they were, for obvious reasons, often the first to suffer from looting and destruction. But they also had the means to flee from insecure areas, often to Freetown. They were therefore disproportionately represented among the IDPs, and they have also apparently been relatively slow to return. The team received numerous reports from village level that many of the better-off will only return after the elections scheduled for May, and then only if the prospects for lasting peace are good.

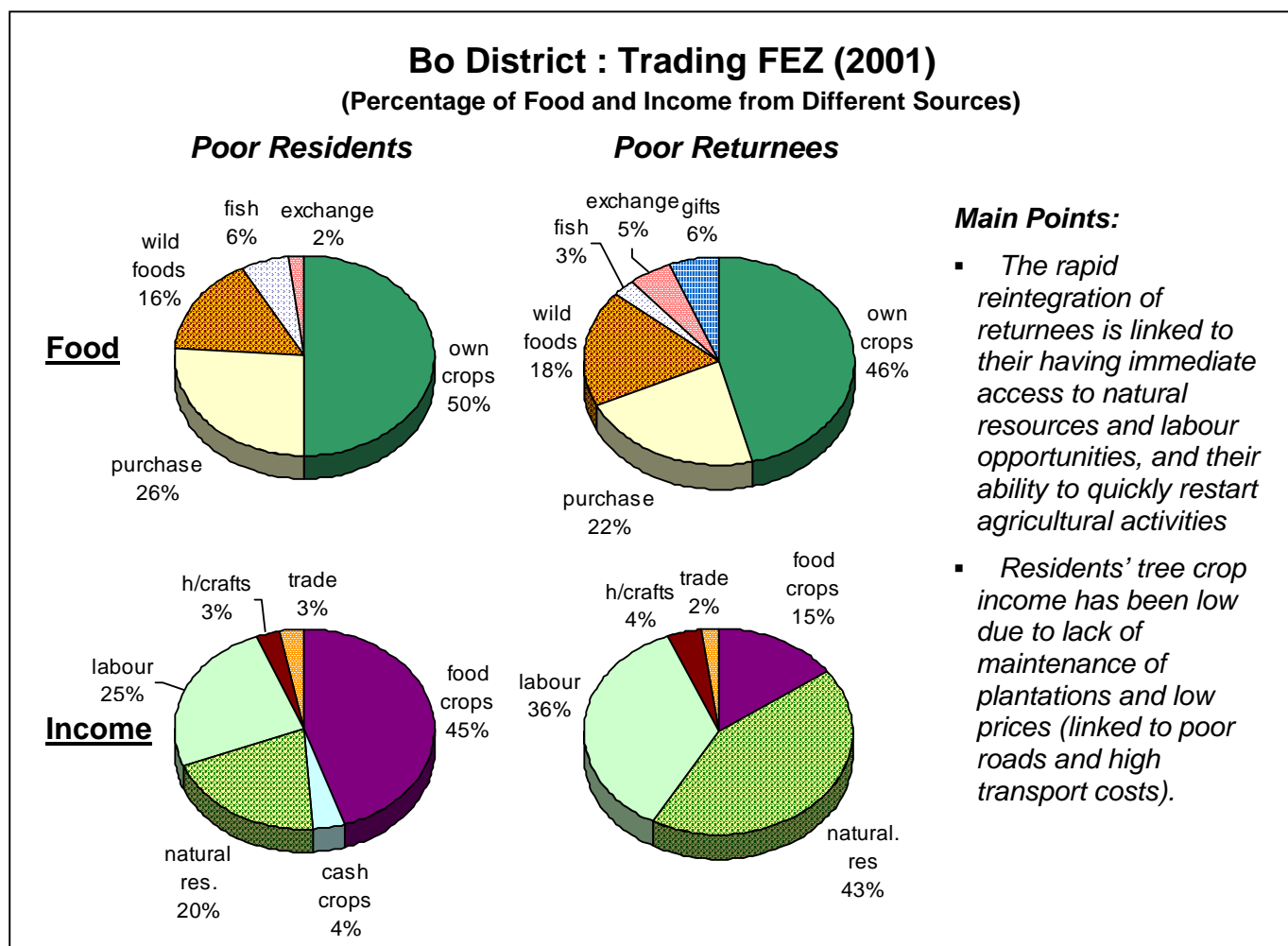
Comparing the various zones (see table), the main differences are in the area planted to rice this year, and the area under tree crops. Not surprisingly, given the loss of seed rice to looting in recent years, less rice has generally been planted in Bombali and Kambia & Port Loko than in Bo. Bo has been safe for some time and farmers in the district have received seed distributions in recent years. Not all farm families in Bombali have planted a reduced quantity of rice however, which is explained by the seed rice distributed this year by Africare and Caritas (an estimated 1/3 of farm households in southern Bombali may have benefited from seed distributions this year). The findings from Kailahun are at first sight a little surprising (i.e. relatively high areas planted), which is perhaps a result that merits further investigation in the field. Turning to tree crop plantations, not surprisingly, the area under tree crops tends to be larger in Kailahun than elsewhere, followed by Bo (where a mix of coffee, cocoa, oil palm and citrus fruits are cultivated) and then the more northern regions (where only oil palms and citrus are found, and then only among a minority of households).

Livestock holdings hardly figure at all as a factor in the socio-economic breakdown. This is because relatively few livestock seem to have been kept even before the war, and the vast majority of these were either consumed or looted during the conflict. Livestock numbers (poultry, ducks and small ruminants, but not yet cattle in any numbers) are only now beginning to recover.

5.4 Access to Food and Income in a 'Safe' Area (the Bo Trading Zone)

Very similar results were obtained for the Bo mixed and Bo trading zones, and the findings for the Bo trading zone are presented here as an example of access to food and income in an area that has been 'safe' for some time.

Beginning with food, perhaps the first thing to note is that both residents and returnees¹⁰ were judged able to access 2,100 kcals per person per day as an average for the year as a whole. The sources of food for both groups are remarkably similar – both groups obtained roughly half of their food from their own crop production, about a quarter from purchase and between 15%-20% from wild foods.



Note: the percentages presented in the figures are estimates rather than the very precise figures that the numbers given might suggest. Each number is best interpreted as the mid-point of a range $\pm 5\%$ on either side of the figures given.

For the residents, about half of the crop production is in the form of rice (lowland and upland production taken together), with the balance made up from cassava and a wide range of other crops grown mainly in the uplands (e.g. sorghum, g/nuts, sweet potatoes etc.). Rice and other grain crops are consumed during the harvest season (October-January) and for the next 2-3 months, at which

¹⁰ Returnees were in this case former IDPs or former refugees from Guinea who returned spontaneously towards the beginning of 2001. They were found mostly in Bumpenh chiefdom, and they arrived in time to cultivate this year.

point own cassava, purchases and wild foods become increasingly important sources of food. Both imported and local rice are purchased from about March onwards. Cassava and palm oil are also important sources of purchased kcals, alongside dry fish and salt, which contribute few kcals but are rather more important items in terms of household expenditure.

A wide variety of wild foods is available in Bo (which is quite well forested), including palm oil (for which the peak season of collection is April), bush yams (August and September – the annual ‘hungry’ season), bush meat and wild cassava. Both residents and returnees have similar access to wild foods and bush products.

Food aid does not figure in the food sources ‘pie’ for residents since there was no FFAG programme in 2001 (FFAG is the main type of food aid for farm families). Food aid also does not appear in the food sources ‘pie’ for the returnees, because the majority of the returnees interviewed were refugees that returned spontaneously on foot from Guinea. This group received food along the way, but did not receive the two-month resettlement ration. A smaller number of returnees in Bo are former IDPs that have been resettled by NCRRR, and this group did receive the 2-month resettlement ration.

The only significant difference between the two groups is that gifts are reported as a source for food for returnees but not residents. These gifts were provided by relatives and friends in the initial period following the arrival of the returnees in their home villages.

Turning to sources of income, apart from the fact that the residents derive a higher proportion of their income from crop sales (both food and cash crops), the pattern of access to income sources is similar for both residents and returnees. For poor residents, about half of all income comes from the sale of crops. Significantly, this is mostly from the sale of food crops rather than tree crops, which must represent a major difference compared to the situation before the war. Income from tree crops has been very low in the last 12 months, for two main reasons:

- Lack of maintenance of tree crop plantations (resulting in a reduction in yields).
- Low prices for tree crop products.

Both these factors are in turn linked to a number of other factors, including:

- a lack of confidence in lasting peace and an unwillingness to invest in tree crop production
- a shortage of labour, linked to the diversion of labour away from production and into local defence activities
- a prioritisation of basic food production above tree crop production (with the available labour focussing on food rather than cash crops)
- low international prices for coffee and cocoa, which have offered little incentive to producers
- the very poor roads in many areas, with high transport costs driving producer prices even lower.

Of the other sources of income, the most important are the sale of natural resources and casual, mainly agricultural, labour. Both these sources are accessed by both residents and returnees. Natural resources that are sold include palm oil, palm wine, bush meat, firewood (mainly from areas within reasonable reach of Bo town) and, in Bumpah chiefdom, locally mined diamonds.

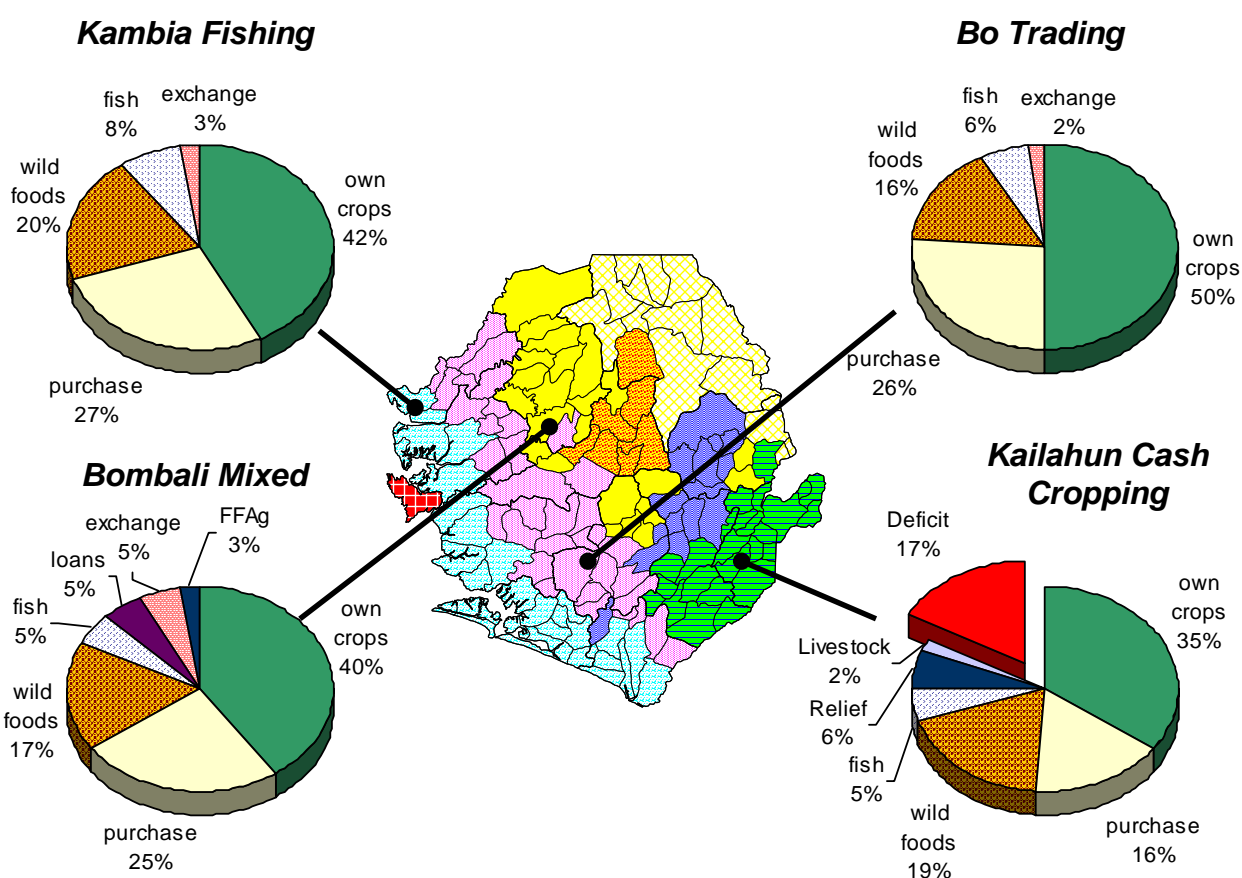
A number of findings are striking. The first is the diversity of sources of food and income that are available to both poor residents and poor returnees. The second is the similarity in sources of food and income for the two groups. The explanation seems to be that a number of food and income options can be accessed by returnees immediately upon their return home (i.e. wild foods, natural resources, labour, petty trade). At the same time returnees have also been able to restart agricultural activities relatively quickly. The arrival of returnees in time to plant is clearly a critical factor here, as is the availability of a number of short cycle crops (e.g. sweet potatoes, groundnuts, peppers) that bring rapid returns once farming is begun. One final factor that has helped returnees secure access to basic food energy is the availability of a relatively cheap source of kilocalories - cassava - in the market.

Another striking finding relates to the relatively low level of income obtained from tree crop products in the baseline year. Clearly, the economy of Bo is still suffering the after-effects of the war (most obviously manifested in a lack of confidence to invest in production), despite having been at relative peace for almost three years.

5.5 Sources of Food for Poor Residents – a Comparison of Areas

Residents' sources of food are compared for four of the six case study areas in the figure¹¹. The most important finding relates to overall access to food during the baseline year (2001). The conclusion is that poor households from three of the areas (Bo, Bombali and Kambia) were able to access their

Sources of Food : Poor Residents (2001)



Main Points:

- The following factors explain the similarity of Bombali and Kambia to Bo: a switch from cultivating rice to cultivating cassava, the replacement of formal by informal trade and widespread access to wild foods.
- The failure of Kailahun residents to meet their minimum food needs was due to insecurity, lack of access to markets and low purchasing power.

minimum requirements during 2001, whereas this was not the case in Kailahun, the most consistently insecure of the four areas. This is reflected in the deficit 'slice' of the pie, which indicates a 15%-20% shortfall in food intake compared to the minimum requirement during the baseline year.

The similar pattern of access to food in the Bo, Bombali and Kambia case study areas is striking, given the very different security situation prevailing in these areas. In each case between 40% and 50% of total consumption during 2001 was derived from own crop production, roughly a quarter came from purchase and 15%-20% from wild foods. There would seem to be several reasons for this. The first is that all three areas share the same basic options for obtaining food¹² - the same basic system of mixed upland and lowland farming is practised throughout, and there is relatively good access to wild food sources in all four areas. The second reason is that one of the effects of the conflict has probably been to eliminate any differences between food economies that existed before the war, simply because everybody has been reduced to the same level of basic subsistence farming. So, while rice production may have been higher in Kambia than elsewhere before the war, this is no longer the case, due to a variety of factors including a shortage of seed material and an unwillingness to invest in production. Likewise, livestock holdings may have been larger in Bombali before the war than elsewhere, but the loss of livestock during war has eliminated this difference.

But in other ways it seems that the war had less effect than might have been expected. It is for example clear that farmers who remained behind in areas occupied by the RUF continued to cultivate. Rice production declined in these areas, but this was to a great extent compensated by an increase in the cultivation of cassava and other roots and tubers, often by a population that was hiding in bush camps rather than living in their home villages. Trade and exchange was also less affected by the war than might have been expected, as reflected in the importance of purchase as a source of food. Although formal trade broke down in areas occupied by the RUF, it was quickly replaced by informal trade. There was, for example, an active trade in rice and other commodities between Mile 91 and Makeni (Bombali), much of it moved by bicycle along the disused railway line, and there was also cross-border trading between Kambia and Guinea.

Finally, it should be borne in mind that 2001 was a year of improving security in both Bombali and Kambia, and as such, the food 'pies' reflect access to food not just during the war, but also during the early stages of post-war recovery - a time of increasing crop production and rapidly increasing market activity.

The Kailahun cash-cropping zone was the one area where an acute deficit was found, which is explained by the persistent insecurity prevailing in the area. This had the effect of reducing access to farms and reducing crop production (reflected in the smaller own crops 'slice' of the food 'pie'). It also limited access to tree crop plantations and access to markets to sell tree crop products and other items. The result was a relatively low purchasing power (reflected in the smaller purchase 'slice' of the food 'pie'), even though food prices were relatively low in the rural areas.

Food aid appears as a source of food for poor residents in both Bombali and Kailahun (labelled FFAG or relief). In both cases this reflects the distribution of food-for-agriculture during the 2001 cultivation season. But even for a household receiving a full ration, the contribution of FFAG towards total food needs of the household is relatively small. A full FFAG ration provides food for two (out of six or seven) family members for 3 months. Effectively, therefore, the full FFAG ration provides one month's food for the whole family, or about 8% of annual food needs. Although this is a relatively small amount, the significance of FFAG is perhaps in the timing of its provision, since it is intended as

¹¹ Similar findings were obtained for the two areas assessed in Bo and the two areas assessed in Kambia/Port Loko, and so only one case study from each area is presented here.

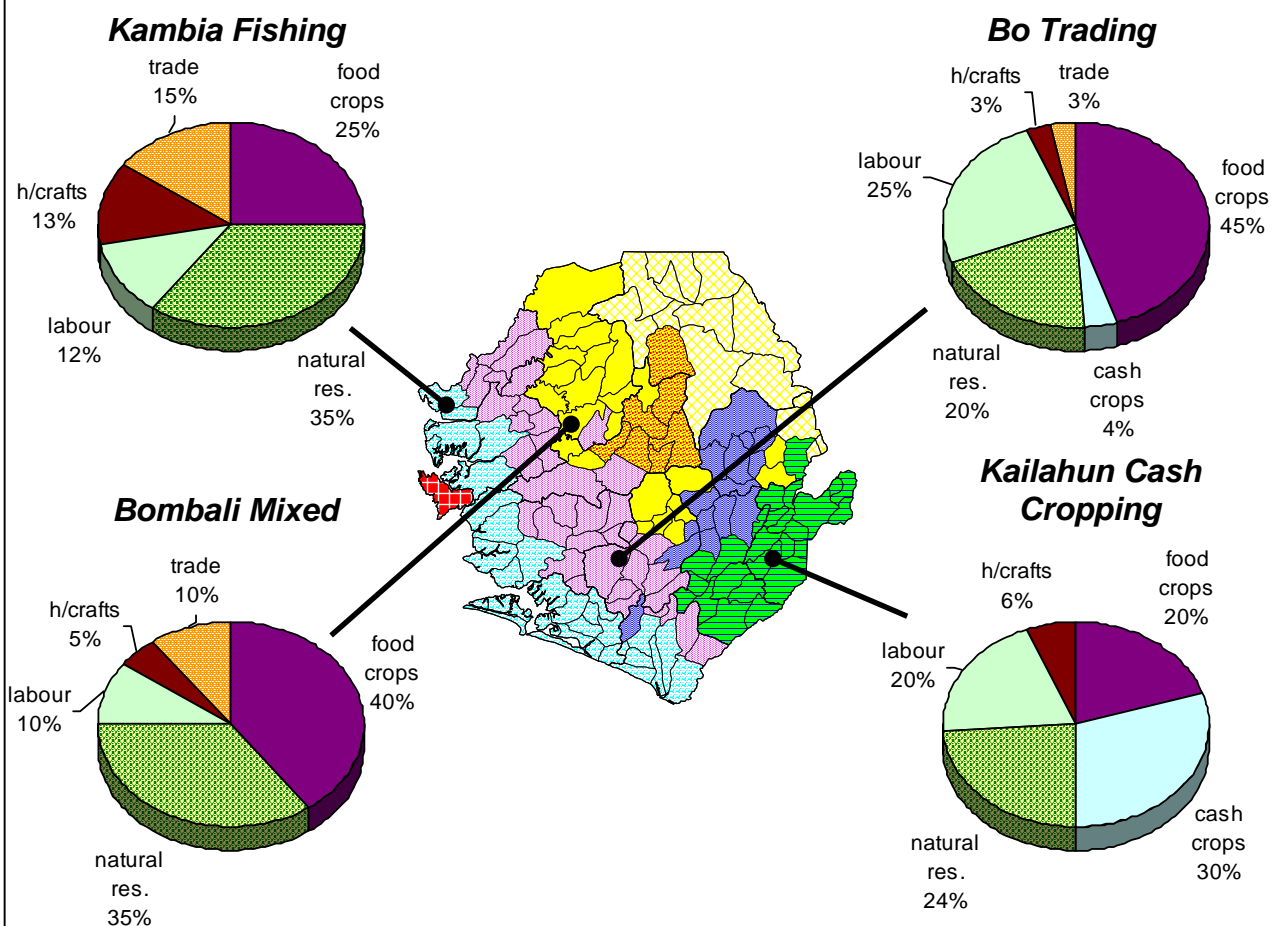
¹² It should be noted that the 'true' fishing areas of Kambia were not visited due to problems of access, and the interior areas of the fishing zone that were visited are therefore relatively similar to the neighbouring trading zone.

a seed protection measure (i.e. it is distributed alongside seed rice, to reduce the likelihood of the seed being consumed), and to feed farm labour at critical periods later in the farming season.

5.6 Sources of Income for Poor Residents – a Comparison of Areas

Poor residents in all four areas exploited a variety of income options. Comparing the northern areas (Kambia fishing & Bombali mixed) with the southern (Bo trading and Kailahun cash-cropping zones) indicates a difference in the relative importance of different income sources, however. Sale of natural resources and trade seem to have been relatively more important sources of income in the north than the south, while crop sales (both food and cash crops) and labour take on greater significance in the south. The explanation seems to be a greater exploitation of wild palm oil and palm wine in the north, and access to a somewhat better road and trade network in the north, particularly in recent months.

Sources of Income : Poor Residents (2001)



Main Points:

- Income is obtained in a variety of ways – which means there is generally more than one way to cope with a problem.
- Natural resources (palm oil and palm wine) and trade (linked to better road networks) are relatively more important sources of income in the north than the south.

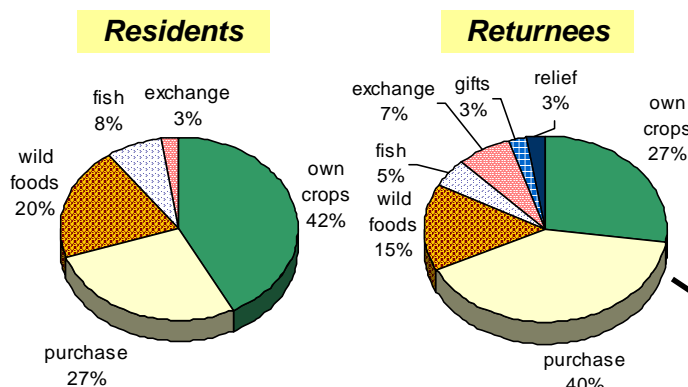
Total income in the Kailahun cash-cropping zone was almost certainly lower than in other areas. Cash crop sales are a relatively important source of income for this area, but income from this source was low during 2001 for much the same reasons as in Bo (i.e. low yields due to lack of maintenance coupled with low prices, in part due to the poor roads and high transport costs). In the case of Kailahun, however, the prevailing insecurity was also a significant factor, making it difficult to access tree crop plantations, and difficult to market the produce. The absence of trade as a source of income for poor households in Kailahun is noteworthy, and presumably reflects the difficulty of accessing markets (due to poor roads and insecurity) and the absence of a strong demand either in the rural areas or from any local urban population centre.

5.7 Sources of Food – a Comparison of Poor Residents and Poor Returnees

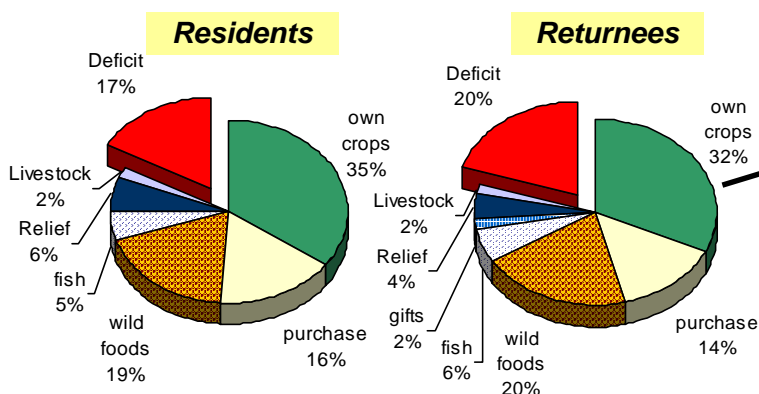
Information on residents and returnees was collected for all six areas, and details are provided in the separate area reports. In this section, findings are presented for the two case-study areas expecting the

Sources of Food : Poor Residents & Returnees (2001)

Kambia Fishing



Kailahun Cash Cropping



Main Points:

- The timing of return in relation to the cropping season is a critical factor for restarting agriculture.
- Otherwise, returnees and residents share similar access to a variety of food sources.

largest influx of returnees in 2002 (the Kambia fishing and Kailahun cash-cropping zones). These areas are not only the most important in practical terms, they are also reasonably indicative of the situation in other areas.

For both Kambia and Kailahun, the main finding is that returnees exploited much the same sources of food as the residents. In Kambia, access to crop production was somewhat lower than for the residents, because they arrived relatively late in the agricultural season and had only limited access to upland farms. The own crop production 'slice' of the returnees' 'pie' actually comes from three sources (since the 'pie' covers the whole year, including that part of the year when they were displaced). These three sources are a) production in the area of displacement (Guinea or Loko Massama, a chiefdom to the north of Freetown), b) cassava that had been abandoned in the fields when they fled, and c) new season production at home (mainly from lowland farms). The lower access to crops among the returnees in Kambia is compensated by an increase in purchase and exchange (i.e. exchange of fish, palm oil or labour for staple food), together with small amounts of gifts and relief. The conclusion is that the returnees in Kambia were able to access their minimum food requirements during 2001. The relatively low figure for relief is explained by the fact that the current assessment was undertaken before the official resettlement exercise undertaken in December. Few of the returnees interviewed were officially registered in camps, either in Loko Massama or Guinea, and few had therefore received either a regular ration in their place of displacement or a resettlement ration on their return.

In Kailahun, the returnees (of whom there were only a relatively small number, mostly temporarily displaced by the events of May 2000) were in much the same situation as the residents. Like the residents they were unable to cover their minimum food requirements in 2001 (reflected in the deficit 'slice' of their food 'pie'). They had similar access to own crop production as the residents, however, unlike the returnees in Kambia. This is because they returned relatively early in the season (February/March), in time to cultivate some upland as well as the lowland swamps. Both groups benefited from seed rice distributions and FFAg in 2001 (the relief 'slice' of the food 'pie'). The returnees tended to concentrate on the cultivation of roots and tubers rather than rice, however, since these crops are more productive than rice in terms of the number of kilocalories obtained per acre planted.

5.8 Sources of Income– a Comparison of Poor Residents and Poor Returnees

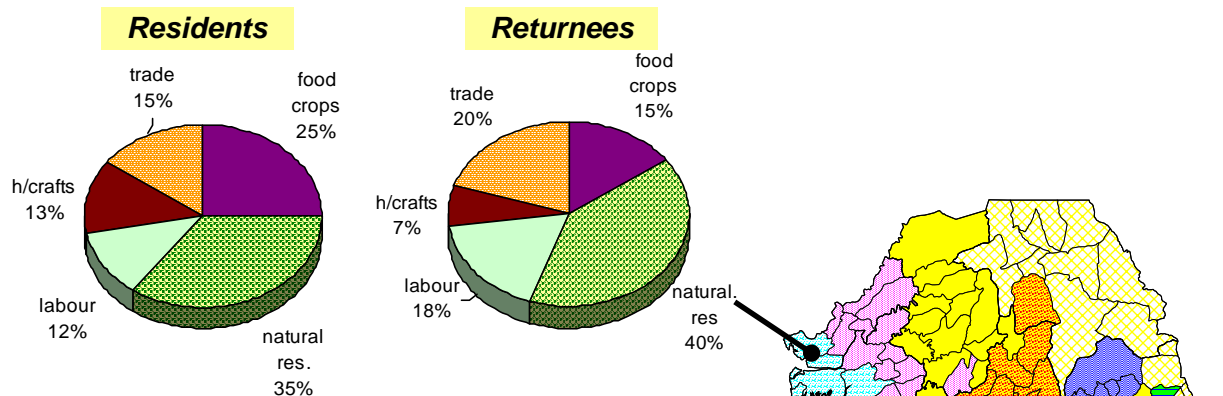
In both areas, returnees exploited the same sources of income as the residents. For Kambia, there is a small difference in the relative importance of crop sales (corresponding to a difference in the level of crop production), but that is all.

In Kailahun, the returnees derived income from the sale of cash crops, alongside the residents, even though in many cases the plantations had not been maintained in their absence. This is because it is possible to harvest something, even from plantations that are very overgrown. In other cases, the plantations had to some extent been cared for by relatives who stayed behind.

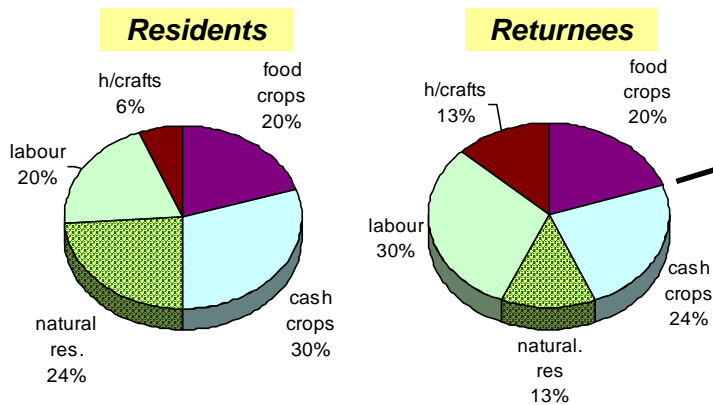
The main finding from both the food and income analyses is that returnees were able to exploit very much the same options as the residents. This is because a variety of food and income sources can be accessed by returnees immediately upon their return home (i.e. wild foods, natural resources, labour, petty trade). The timing of the arrival of the returnees is a critical factor in terms of their restarting agricultural production, from which rapid returns can be obtained due to the availability of a number of short cycle crops such as sweet potatoes, groundnuts, peppers and vegetables.

Sources of Income : Poor Residents & Returnees (2001)

Kambia Fishing



Kailahun Cash Cropping



Main Point:

- As in the case of food, returnees and residents share similar access to a variety of income sources.

5.9 Projections for 2002

One objective of the baseline analysis was to use the insights gained as a basis for projecting access to food and income during 2002. Information was also gathered at field level from key informants, who were asked about their intentions for 2002, *provided security continued to improve* (as it had done in recent months).

All Areas: On the assumption that security continues to improve, farmers everywhere expressed their intention to invest more time, effort and money in increasing food and cash crop production. Two factors are expected to facilitate this. The first is an increase in labour availability as a result of demobilisation. The second is an increased confidence that the investment will yield a worthwhile return – it is clear that fear of insecurity has acted as a significant check on investment to date, even in areas that have been relatively safe for a number of years, such as Bo. The tendency has been to concentrate on securing basic food energy at the expense of other activities that might yield better returns in the longer term. Increasing food and cash crop production will, of course, be dependent upon farmers gaining access to the required seed and tool inputs, and there is clearly an expectation that humanitarian agencies will provide assistance in this respect.

Southern Kailahun: Southern Kailahun is the only case study area that experienced a significant food deficit in 2001. Whether this deficit will persist into 2002 depends to a great extent on the security situation. The problem in Kailahun in 2001 was the effect that insecurity had on access to farms and access to markets, and it is reasonable to conclude that once security improves, access to food and income will also improve quite markedly and quite quickly. Provided security remains at or above its current level, therefore, no deficit would be expected for 2002.

There seems to be more reason to be concerned about the situation in northern Kailahun, an area that could not be accessed during the current assessment due to problems associated with the disarmament process. Although Kailahun has since disarmed (in December), there are nonetheless continuing concerns about security in the area, and about the potential impact that inward movements of refugees from Liberia might have on the area. This is a situation that requires continued monitoring.

Areas Expecting Large Numbers of Returnees: Although the results of the current assessment indicate that returnees have to date been able to reintegrate into their home areas with relative ease, it would be unwise to assume that this will always be the case, especially where a relatively large influx of returnees is expected. It is obvious that large influxes will increase competition for natural resources and for the existing employment and trading opportunities, and there is a risk that, in certain cases, the capacity of the local economy to absorb returnees may be exceeded. The timing of return is a critical factor, and in the interests of rapid reintegration it is essential that former refugees and IDPs be assisted to return to their home areas in time to cultivate (i.e. preferably in the first quarter of the year).

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 General Deficits & Emergency Interventions

Despite the often difficult conditions prevailing in the areas under RUF control, the finding is that poor households, whether resident or returnee, were able to access their minimum food needs during the baseline year. The single exception appears to have been Kailahun, the area with the highest level of insecurity of any visited, where poor security had a significant impact on access to farms and to markets. However, assuming current levels of security are maintained, access to food and income is expected to improve in all areas in 2002, including Kailahun, and no general deficit in food intake is therefore expected. The conclusion – at least for the areas assessed – is that measures to make up a deficit (such as VGF, TSF or ESF) should not be required in 2002. (Note, however, that helping to fill a deficit is not the only objective of ESF. There are also nutritional, educational and longer term developmental and economic objectives, described in section 2.3. The conclusion reached here relates only to the role of ESF in filling a current deficit in food intake.)

The extent to which this conclusion can be extrapolated to other areas is, of course, open to question. Not all the various food economies of Sierra Leone were covered by the current assessment, and only those areas that were reasonably secure were visited by the assessment teams. The current results do suggest however that differences between food economies may not be all that great in Sierra Leone. They also suggest that the critical factor determining access to food and income is, not surprisingly, security, and that deficits are only likely to occur as a result of high levels of insecurity. Two situations should give cause for concern. The first is that of a population that remains behind in a highly insecure area. The second is that of a large and rapid influx of IDPs into a particular area, that exceeds the capacity of the local economy to support them.

6.2 The Need for Interventions to Promote Economic Recovery

While there may be no need for immediate emergency interventions (such as VGF) in the case study areas in 2002 (always assuming that security is maintained), there is an urgent need for interventions that will assist the process of recovery.

In section 3.3.2 three levels of food security were defined:

1. Food insecure – facing an immediate deficit
2. Food insecure – not facing an immediate deficit, but vulnerable to a hazard
3. Relatively food secure – sufficient access to food to withstand a hazard.

The current findings suggest that most poor rural households in Sierra Leone fall into the second category of food insecurity, i.e. they are not facing an immediate deficit, but they are vulnerable to any hazard they may face (such as flood, pest infestation, further insecurity, etc.). Clearly, they are also less food secure than they were before the war, which is obviously linked to the residual effects of the conflict. As the text box indicates, recovery is a two-stage process. The first stage (securing access to basic kilocalories) has already largely been achieved. The task now is to move on to stage 2, and to promote economic recovery and food security.

Recovery is a two stage process...

***Stage 1: Securing access to basic kilocalories.** This has largely been achieved.*

***Stage 2: Promoting economic recovery and food security.** This is the challenge for 2002 and beyond.*

6.2.1 What Type of Intervention, and Why?

Having reached the conclusion that the main need in the rural areas is for interventions that will promote economic and agricultural recovery at household level, the next question is what type of intervention, and why? The task is twofold, to review WFP's existing interventions and judge whether they continue to be appropriate and to identify new types of intervention that could be implemented. The main conclusion is that WFP's current short- to medium-term recovery interventions (i.e. resettlement rations, FFW, FFAg and FFT) are appropriate given current conditions, and that there are no significant opportunities for intervening with food aid that have been missed to date.

Resettlement Rations:

As outlined in the previous section, returnees have so far been able to reintegrate into their home areas with relative ease, and in many cases without the benefit of external food resources. There is a significant risk, however, that very large influxes of returnees will place excessive pressure on local resources, and that the capacity of the local food economy to absorb returnees may at times be exceeded. It makes a great deal of sense, therefore, to provide the scheduled two month resettlement ration to returning refugees and IDPs. Provided they arrive in time to cultivate (a crucial factor) this will tide them over until they are able to harvest their first crops. Resettlement rations will also allow returnees to spend less time covering their immediate food needs, and more time on activities, including cultivation, that will yield a better return in the medium to longer term.

Food-for-Agriculture/Food-for-Work (Women's Groups):

There are two reasons for proposing support to agricultural production through food-for-agriculture and food-for-work for women's groups. It is first of all important to support agricultural production generally, but especially in areas that are likely to receive large numbers of returnees, and where there is therefore some risk of food shortage (as outlined in the previous section). Secondly, there is a need to support the recovery of rice production in areas that have until recently been under the control of the RUF and where rice seed stocks are low.

The war has had a very significant effect on stocks of seed rice at village level, especially in previously RUF-controlled areas, due in the first instance to looting, but also because low levels of production have inhibited the rebuilding of household stocks. Rice is the preferred food of Sierra Leone, and while a shortage of rice is not a cause of food insecurity per-se (rice has generally been replaced by cassava in the RUF-controlled areas), rice production is an integral part of the rural food economy. As well as being an important source of calories, it is also a source of income in the post-

harvest period and a significant source of expenditure in the pre-harvest period, when household stocks are low. It follows that increasing rice production will increase self-sufficiency, have a positive effect on incomes, and reduce the need for poor households to spend precious cash on the purchase of rice in the pre-harvest season. The most obvious way in which rice production can be promoted is through a programme of seed and tool distribution supported by food-for-agriculture. The objective of food-for-agriculture here is twofold; to reduce the likelihood that distributed seed will be consumed by the recipient, and to provide food at critical periods during the cultivation season (e.g. enabling the recipients to work on their own farms rather than having to seek employment on the farms of others, or enabling the recipients to provide 'lunch' to those assisting them with farm work, such as members of their village work group).

Consideration should, however, be given to increasing the FFAg ration. At the moment a full FFAg ration covers only a relatively small percentage of household food needs, since food is provided for a maximum 2 out of 6 family members (the average size of a poor household). Given that a minority of family members are assisted, it follows that the seed 'protection' effect can only be partial – food still has to be found for the other 4 household members, and the temptation to consume some of the seed remains. As food is provided for a maximum 3 months of the year, it also follows that a full FFAg ration covers only about 8% of the annual household consumption requirements, again a relatively small proportion of total needs.

Food-for-Work:

Sales of food and cash crops are an important source of income for poor households in all the areas assessed. Returns from crop sales are relatively low, however, and there is considerable potential for income from these sources to be increased in the future. The key constraints are linked to the effects of the war on production, transport and marketing. Income from tree crops has been especially affected. Tree plantations have been badly neglected during the war years for a number of reasons, including a lack of confidence in the future, a shortage of money and labour to maintain or 'brush' plantations, and the poor returns that result from the high costs of transporting produce to market and the current low prices for coffee and cocoa internationally. Clearly, there is little that can be done to improve international prices, but steps can be taken to facilitate the clearing and maintenance of tree crop plantations, through food-for-work activities.

Roads and bridges have also been badly neglected during the war, and in certain parts of the country are now in a dreadful state. This has the obvious effect of increasing transport costs, not just for cash crops, but for rural produce generally and for everything of urban origin that is purchased by the rural population. An appropriate food intervention would be food-for-work to support road and bridge rehabilitation.

There are also instances where rural market infrastructure has been damaged or destroyed during the war, and this could also be rehabilitated with the assistance of food-for-work activities. All three activities (tree crop plantation rehabilitation, repair of roads and bridges and reconstruction of market infrastructure) would have the effect of promoting rural production and incomes from the sale of rural produce.

Food-for-work could also be used to support house reconstruction, since the provision of food should free-up time from food acquisition activities that can then be devoted to house reconstruction instead. It goes without saying that access to adequate shelter is a pre-requisite for the resumption of normal agricultural and other income-generating activities.

Food-for-Training/Food-for-Work (Women's Group's)

The results of the wealth breakdown indicate that the very poorest households are those that are unable to exploit local food and income options due to both a shortage of labour within the household and a lack of capital to employ others to assist them. This is because many of the numerous ways in which food and income can be accessed in rural Sierra Leone are relatively labour intensive. A majority of very poor households consist of 2-3 mainly elderly members who, for obvious reasons, are

relatively economically inactive. These households rely to a greater or lesser extent dependent upon charity from within the community. But the 'labour-poor'/very poor category also includes households that have lost one or more active members due to disablement, death or desertion, often as a result of the war. The majority of these are female-headed households consisting of 1-2 adult women and their dependants.

There are perhaps two ways in which this type of household can be assisted. The first is to promote their participation in women's groups and to support the activities of these groups through food-for-work. Typical women's group activities include the cultivation of lowland swamps and of upland groundnut, vegetable and pepper farms. The second is through the provision of training to develop new skills and income generating activities such as soap making and tie-dyeing. These can be supported with food-for-training.

The above discussion is summarised in the table, which outlines the major effects of the war and the appropriate type of food support to promote economic and/or agricultural recovery at household level.

<i>Effect of the War</i>	<i>Appropriate food support to promote economic/agricultural recovery at household level</i>	<i>Justification</i>
▪ <i>Population displacement</i>	Resettlement rations	The large numbers of IDPs and former refugees that are expected to return home in 2002 will inevitably strain local resources within the resettlement areas. The provision of resettlement rations will reduce the risk that the capacity of these areas to absorb returnees will be exceeded.
▪ <i>Reduction in rice production/crop production generally</i>	FFAg / FFW to support the recovery of rice and crop production (mainly newly accessible areas)	Crop production should be supported in areas expecting large numbers of returnees, because of the risk of food shortages. There is also a need to promote rice production in newly accessible areas, where stocks of rice seed are low as a result of the conflict.
▪ <i>Deterioration in roads and bridges</i>	FFW to repair and maintain roads and bridges	In many areas, roads and bridges have been neglected for many years, and are now in a very poor state of repair. Improving road conditions will reduce transport costs, increasing farm gate prices and therefore rural incomes.
▪ <i>Neglect of tree crop plantations</i>	FFW to rehabilitate and maintain tree crop plantations	Tree crop plantations have been neglected during the war. Rehabilitation of plantations will help to increase yields and therefore rural incomes.
▪ <i>Destruction of market infrastructure</i>	FFW to rehabilitate markets	The repair of damaged market infrastructure will facilitate the marketing of rural produce, contributing to the recovery of rural incomes.
▪ <i>Destruction of housing</i>	FFW to support shelter construction	Many homes have been destroyed in the war. The provision of adequate shelter, supported by FFW, is clearly a pre-requisite for the resumption of agricultural and other economic activities.

<i>Effect of the War</i>	<i>Appropriate food support to promote economic/agricultural recovery at household level</i>	<i>Justification</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Loss of productive family members</i> 	<p>FFW / FFT to assist 'very poor' households that have lost one or more productive members as a result of the war.</p>	<p>Labour is a critical determinant of food security, and households that have lost productive family members, many of which are female-headed households, can be amongst the poorest in the community. FFW/FFT should promote/create new food production/income generating opportunities for such households.</p>

Note: FFW – food-for-work, FFAg – food-for-agriculture and FFT – food-for-training

Emergency School Feeding has been excluded from the above list, as the focus here is on those activities that will support economic and agricultural recovery in the short- to medium-term, i.e. in the next one to two years. Although ESF is likely to yield significant economic benefits in the longer term (by improving the educational attainments of children from poor disadvantaged households), these will not be felt within this short timeframe. This does not undermine the value of the programme in other respects (i.e. in relation to its educational objectives, or the objective of creating conditions that will encourage the return of IDPs and former refugees to their home areas, see section 2.3).

6.2.2 Where should the Proposed Interventions be Implemented?

6.2.2.1 *Introduction*

One of the objectives of the assessment was to compare the relative needs of the 'safe' areas (i.e. those that have been accessible to humanitarian agencies for at least a year) with those of the 'previously insecure' areas that have only recently become accessible. The perhaps surprising finding is that differences between 'safe' and 'previously insecure' areas was not as great as expected. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the situation in the 'safe' areas was worse than expected. Secondly, the situation in the 'previously insecure' areas was better than expected.

Factors having a negative impact on the food security of 'Safe' areas:

- A lack of confidence in lasting peace, which has limited investment of time and money in anything other than basic food production,
- The diversion of the active labour force away from production and towards defence,
- Adverse market conditions, resulting in poor returns for rural producers. These conditions are linked to a number of factors including poor roads (resulting in high transport costs) and low international prices for coffee and cocoa.

Factors having a positive impact on the food security of 'Previously insecure' areas:

- Farm families have continued to cultivate (often living in bush camps, and often replacing rice with cassava)
- Informal trade has tended to replace formal trade (examples include the informal trade, much of it by bicycle, between Mile 91 and Makeni, and the cross-border trade between Kambia and Guinea)
- Relative peace during the last cultivation season has allowed a rapid recovery of both agricultural production and trade. Increased NGO access and the provision of seeds, tools and FFAg have also played a part in some areas.

The implication is that it is appropriate to provide assistance to both 'safe' and 'previously insecure' areas. This does not mean however that exactly the same programmes should be implemented in the two types of area. Nor does it mean that both areas have equal priority. The results of a geographical

targeting exercise completed by the TSU, and based upon the areas assessed so far, are described below.

6.2.2.2 Geographical Targeting

The geographical targeting exercise had two objectives. The first was to identify which types of economic/agricultural recovery intervention would be appropriate in which areas. The second was to prioritise these, in the expectation that this would assist those responsible for food aid programming in the allocation of resources between different activities and different areas¹³. The prioritisation was done in two stages. The first stage was to prioritise interventions within each area. The second was to prioritise the different areas. However, since there is a need to promote recovery in all areas, an absolute prioritisation of one area above another was not appropriate. Instead, each of the district/intervention combinations was prioritised individually.

The exercise was limited to the economic/agricultural recovery interventions listed in the previous section. The timeframe for the exercise was 2002.

Not all types of intervention are appropriate for all areas. Tree crop rehabilitation is not an appropriate intervention in either southern Bombali or Kambia/Port Loko, as there are few tree crop plantations in these areas. Similarly, there has been little destruction of market infrastructure in either Bo or southern Bombali, and little destruction of private housing in southern Bombali, and so reconstruction activities are not appropriate in these areas. Likewise there is little need for road and bridge rehabilitation in southern Bombali, as the roads are in reasonable condition in this area. The appropriate interventions are prioritised for each area in the table.

Table : List of Appropriate Activities and their Priority within each Area

Priority	Bo	Southern Bombali	Southern Kailahun	Kambia/Port Loko
1	FFW (R&B)	FFAg (Res & Rets)	FFW (WG)	FFAg (Res & Rets)
2	FFW (PI)	FFT	FFAg (Res & Rets)	FFT
3	FFT	FFW (WG)	FFT	FFW (WG)
4	FFW (WG)		FFW (R&B)	FFW (R&B)
5	FFAg (Rets)		FFW (PI)	FFW (Mkt)
6	FFW (Sh)		FFW (Mkt)	FFW (Sh)
7			FFW (Sh)	

Key:

FFW (Mkt)	Rehabilitation of markets	FFAg (Res)	Food-for-agriculture for residents
FFW (PI)	Rehabilitation of plantations	FFAg (Rets)	Food-for-agriculture for returnees
FFW (R&B)	Rehabilitation of roads and bridges	FFW (Sh)	Shelter Construction
FFT	Food-for-training	FFW (WG)	Food-for-work (women's groups)

In general, activities have been prioritised as follows:

Priority 1. Activities that promote food production or income generation generally. In areas likely to receive a large influx of returnees (i.e. southern Kailahun and Kambia) the priority, given the risk of food shortage, is to support food production in general through FFW for women's groups and FFAg. In Kambia, FFW for women's groups is given a slightly lower priority, as women are already producing food crops for consumption and sale. Where there is a shortage of rice seed (i.e.

¹³ In practice, a number of other factors are likely to affect the priority attached to different projects. Perhaps the most important is the desirability of meeting WFP's commitments to women, which will result in priority being given to activities that bring the greatest benefits to women, such as FFW (women's groups) or rehabilitation of roads and bridges (which promote women's access to markets). Other operational factors will also impinge, such as the availability of complementary inputs for certain programmes (seeds and tools, in the case of FFAg, for example). Other projects will have priority because they are likely to form part of a longer term development programme (e.g. school feeding) and need to be maintained at some level during the current transitional or recovery phase.

Kambia/Port Loko and southern Bombali), the priority is to support the rehabilitation of rice production.

In Bo, on the other hand, given that levels of rice and food production generally are acceptable, the priority is to promote income through road and bridge rehabilitation and the brushing of plantations. These activities were prioritised above FFW(WG) on the basis that women are already producing food crops for sale, and it is cash crops that require rehabilitation. FFAg is not required for residents, but could reasonably be provided to returnees. This is not a very high priority, however.

The three activities FFW (R&B), FFW (PI) and FFW (Mkt) are prioritised in that order on the basis that there is little point promoting production or marketing if nothing is done to address the problem of high transport costs (since these are a significant disincentive). Rehabilitating markets is given third priority as marketing is the third step in the chain of production, transport and marketing (i.e. without production, there is nothing to market).

Priority 2. Activities that assist very poor female-headed households specifically, including women widowed or abandoned during the war, or families with a labour shortage due to the death or disablement of a family member during the war (i.e. FFT and FFW for women’s groups). These activities, although important, are seen as a second priority because the overriding need is for general economic recovery rather than for assistance to specific households.

Priority 3. Food-for-Work to Support Shelter Construction. This has a relatively low priority in terms of food aid programming, since a shortage of food is unlikely to be a major constraint to shelter construction. If people have access to construction materials, they will almost certainly reconstruct their homes, whether or not they receive food aid to assist them.

Having prioritised activities within each area, the next step was to prioritise between areas. Although no one area was felt to have absolute priority, a general priority was established as follows:

General Geographical Priority:
Southern Kailahun > Kambia/Port Loko > Southern Bombali & Bo

In general terms southern Kailahun is the priority area for intervention, given the low level of crop production observed in 2001 and the expectation of many returnees to this area in 2002. Kambia/Port Loko has second priority due to the expectation of many returnees in 2002. Southern Bombali and Bo have roughly equal and third priority. The output from the overall prioritisation exercise is presented in the table.

Table : Overall Prioritisation of Activities

Priority	Area	Intervention
1	Southern Kailahun	FFW (WG)
2	Southern Kailahun	FFAg (Res & Rets)
3	Kambia/Port Loko	FFAg (Res & Rets)
4	Southern Bombali	FFAg (Res & Rets)
5	Southern Kailahun	FFT
6	Kambia/Port Loko	FFT
7	Southern Bombali	FFT
8	Bo	FFW (R&B)
9	Southern Kailahun	FFW (R&B)
10	Kambia/Port Loko	FFW (WG)
11	Southern Kailahun	FFW (PI)
12	Bo	FFW (PI)
13	Bo	FFT
14	Kambia/Port Loko	FFW (R&B)
15	Southern Bombali	FFW (WG)
16	Bo	FFW (WG)
17	Bo	FFAg (Rets)
18	Southern Kailahun	FFW (Mkt)
19	Kambia/Port Loko	FFW (Mkt)
20	Southern Kailahun	FFW (Sh)
21	Kambia/Port Loko	FFW (Sh)
22	Bo	FFW (Sh)

6.2.2.3 Extrapolation to Other Areas

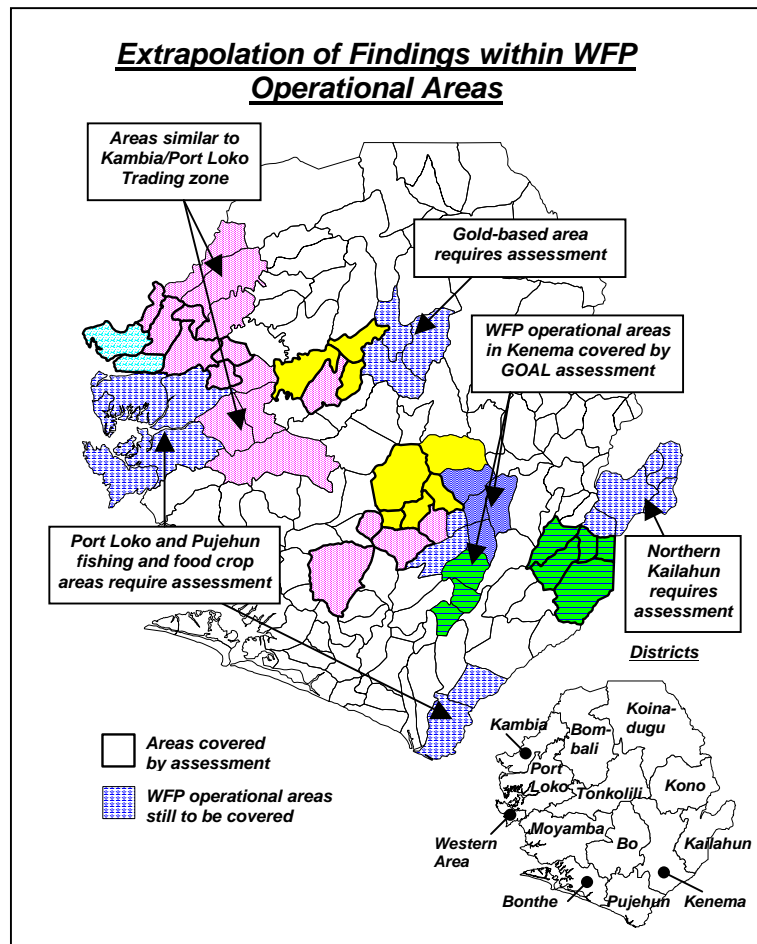
A further exercise was completed to determine the extent to which the conclusions from the previous section could be extrapolated to WFP's other operational areas.

The six case study areas were selected based upon a combination of food economy zone and recent history of security and the current results can reasonably be extrapolated to surrounding areas within the same zone and with a similar recent history of security (see map).

In addition to this, WFP's operational areas in Kenema were covered by a comparable assessment undertaken by GOAL in September/October 2001. The findings for these areas were very similar to the current findings for Bo (see section 8.1), and it seems reasonable to group Bo and Kenema together in terms of the geographical targeting exercise.

This still leaves a number of areas requiring further assessment. The three critical areas are:

- Northern Kailahun (cash-cropping zone), which was not accessible at the time of the current assessment (due to the timing of the disarmament exercise) and which has a significantly different security situation from southern Kailahun.
- Northern Tonkolil (gold-based zone)
- Port Loko and Pujehun (Fishing and food crop zone).



6.2.3 Who and How Many should be Assisted?

One of the objectives of the assessment was to define/characterise the types of household most in need of food assistance, comparing on the one hand returnees, IDPs and residents, and on the other hand, the poor, middle and 'better-off' groups within the community.

One of the principal findings from the assessment was that the differences between returnees, IDPs and residents were not in general as great as expected before the assessment. The reason seems to be the variety of food and income options that can be accessed in Sierra Leone, coupled with the fact that many of these can be exploited by IDPs and by returnees immediately upon returning home. Examples include wild foods, the collection and sale of natural resources, labour and petty trade. These are the same strategies exploited by the resident population. Returnees have also been able to restart agricultural activities relatively quickly upon their return (most have to date arrived in time to cultivate) and the existence of short duration crops (e.g. groundnuts, sweet potato, peppers and vegetables) means that relatively rapid returns are obtained once agricultural activities are restarted.

The implication is that assistance should not be targeted specifically towards one or other type of household (with the possible exception of FFAg in Bo, that should be targeted to returnees only).

It seems more reasonable to consider targeting assistance by socio-economic group, i.e. either towards the very poor or the poor. The main target groups for the interventions identified in section 6.2.1 are listed in the table below.

Intervention	Main Target Group
FFT	Very Poor
FFW (WG)	Very Poor/Poor
FFW (Sh)	Very Poor/Poor
FFW (R&B)	Poor
FFW (Pl)	Poor
FFW (Mkt)	Poor
FFAg (Res & Rets)	POOR

The ‘very poor’ can be subdivided into two groups, the elderly and those households (generally female-headed) that have lost labour due to the death, disability or desertion of an active family member. Sadly, there is limited scope for the elderly to benefit directly from the recovery interventions proposed here, as they have a little capacity for sustained physical work or for other economic activity¹⁴. There is more scope for providing assistance to labour-poor female-headed households, and these should be a primary target group for food-for-training and food-for-work in support of women’s groups. However, careful planning will be required to ensure that the labour-poor can participate in such projects (e.g. arrangements for child-care to enable women from female-headed households to participate). The main characteristics of the ‘very poor’ are that they lack household labour and they lack capital, and these should form the basis for designing criteria that will target this group. One criterion could be the labour status of the household (e.g. the ratio of economically active to economically inactive household members). Other indicators might include the number of bushels of rice planted last season (≤ 1 bushel for the ‘very poor’), whether they were able to employ anybody to assist them on the farm (an indicator of access to capital), and so on.

It is difficult to estimate the potential number of beneficiaries for these interventions with any certainty. The results of the wealth breakdown suggest that from 5% to 15% of the population fall into the ‘very poor’ category, of which the majority are the ‘very poor’ elderly. It seems reasonable to conclude that 5% or less of the rural population would fall into households within the target group, therefore. Although these figures are rather imprecise, there is probably little to be gained from trying to refine them further. This is because it will probably be impossible, for practical reasons, to reach all of those who could benefit from this type of intervention. It follows that practical considerations should be uppermost when determining the actual planning figures. These include the availability of experienced partners capable of implementing this type of project, and the likely availability of complementary non-food inputs to go alongside the food.

The ‘very poor’, whether elderly or female-headed households, should benefit alongside the ‘poor’ from food-for-work in support of shelter construction. In this case, the expectation should not be that the ‘very poor’ will undertake the construction work themselves. Instead they could use the food to pay others to assist them in reconstructing their homes.

The ‘poor’ are the main target group for FFW and FFAg activities. They should be the direct beneficiaries of the assistance (i.e. they should undertake the work) and they should also benefit from

¹⁴ One option for directly assisting the elderly ‘very poor’ would be to set up some kind of social safety net, but this is beyond the scope of the recovery interventions being considered here, and there are serious questions about the appropriateness and sustainability of this type of intervention in this context. Hopefully, the elderly ‘very poor’ will benefit indirectly from the recovery interventions proposed here, since these should increase the capacity of the community to provide them with the support upon which they depend.

the assets created (i.e. their tree crop plantations should be brushed, they should benefit from the lower transport costs associated with road rehabilitation, and so on). According to the wealth breakdown, 'poor' households have sufficient labour to support themselves from day-to-day, but are unable to accumulate significant reserves or capital. They often earn money from casual labour, and are often in debt to the middle and better-off groups. The simplest criteria for targeting purposes would probably be the number of bushels of rice cultivated last season (generally less than 3) coupled with – for Bo and southern Kailahun – the number of acres of tree crops owned (<10 acres in Kailahun and <4 acres in Bo).

If it proves impractical to target at household level (and the difficulty and time required for collecting reliable information at household level, and the difficulty of obtaining agreement at village level for this type of targeting should not be underestimated), then it is important to continue the current policy of providing FFAg per farm family (rather than per area cultivated), as this helps ensure that the benefits, if not targeted exclusively to the poor, are at least directed towards them rather than to 'middle' or 'better-off' households. The same approach of a standard ration per farm family should also be applied in the case of the food-for-work activities to rehabilitate tree crop plantations. Once again, this will help direct the benefits of assistance towards poor households with smaller plantations.

What then is the potential size of the beneficiary caseload in the case of those activities to be targeted towards the 'poor', i.e. FFW (R&B), FFW (Mkt), FFW (PI) and FFAg? In the case of the first two (FFW to rehabilitate roads, bridges and markets), the primary objective is one of rehabilitating an asset rather than effecting a transfer of food. It follows that the number of beneficiaries will be determined by the scale of works to be undertaken, the determination of which is beyond the scope of the current assessment. In the case of the last two interventions (FFW to rehabilitate plantations and FFAg), it is important to have an idea of the potential beneficiary caseload. If the 'poor' are to be targeted for this type of assistance, then the results of the wealth breakdown indicate that roughly half the rural population falls into the 'poor' category (i.e. between 45%-65%). This is, of course, a very large number, and as in the case of the 'very poor', it is probably unrealistic to think in terms of assisting so many. Instead, practical considerations should be allowed to determine the potential caseload, including the availability of experienced implementing partners, the availability of complementary non-food inputs, and so on.

6.2.4 When Should Assistance be Provided?

There are two factors to consider when deciding upon the timing of the different recovery interventions. On the one hand it is desirable to intervene during the season of greatest need (generally the 'hungry' season months of August and September). On the other hand it may only be appropriate or possible to intervene at certain times, and this is the factor that generally has to take precedence. For non-agricultural activities, the season of implementation is not particularly critical, although it is generally easier to rehabilitate roads and other structures in the dry season (from December to April). For agricultural activities, the season of implementation is obviously critical, and the appropriate season for different activities is given in the table.

Intervention	Season for implementation
FFT	Any
FFW (Sh)	Any
FFW (R&B)	Any
FFW (Mkt)	Any
FFW (WG)	May-August
FFAg (Res & Rets)	MAY-AUGUST
FFW (PI)	Nov-January

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Within the areas assessed, there is no general requirement for VGF**, provided security is maintained at its current levels. Conflict and displacement pose the main threats to food security in Sierra Leone, and security should therefore be carefully monitored in the coming months.
2. **A two-month resettlement ration should be provided to returnees, as planned.** This will facilitate the process of resettlement, allowing returnees to concentrate on restarting agricultural activities, rather than having to spend time on securing access to food on a day-to-day basis upon their return. Resettlement rations will also reduce the risk that the capacity of resettlement areas to absorb returnees will be exceeded.
3. **Food aid should be used to promote food security through targeted interventions directed towards economic and agricultural recovery (FFW, FFAg and FFT).** In the absence of an immediate deficit, the priority is to use food aid to promote food security through recovery interventions. WFP will have to work closely with partner agencies to ensure the provision of complimentary inputs and to ensure the appropriate selection and implementation of projects.

Consideration should be given to increasing the FFAg ration. At the moment a full FFAg ration (a maximum 3 months food for 2 household members) provides only about 8% of the annual household consumption requirements.

The current policy of providing FFAg per farm family (rather than per area cultivated) should be continued as this ensures that the benefits are directed towards 'poor' rather than 'middle' or 'better-off' households. The same approach of a standard ration per farm family should also be applied in the case of the food-for-work activities to rehabilitate tree crop plantations. Once again, this will help direct the benefits of assistance towards poor households with smaller plantations.

4. **Interventions should not be targeted only to newly accessible areas or only to returnees.** There is perhaps an assumption that since assistance has in the past been directed towards safe areas, it should in future be targeted only towards newly accessible areas. The findings of the current assessment suggest there is a need to support recovery activities in both types of area. The findings also suggest that the differences between residents and returnees are not as great as expected, and that both types of household need recovery assistance.
5. **Emergency school feeding (ESF) should be used to promote the recovery of primary school education, and to bring significant benefits to children.** Given that poor households do not face an immediate deficit, it follows that school feeding does not have a role in filling a current food consumption deficit at household level.

8 APPENDIX

8.1 GOAL's Assessment of Kenema District

8.1.1 *Introduction and Methodology*

Goal, an international NGO operational in Kenema district, completed a district-wide food security assessment in September/October 2001. The context for Goal was twofold; a) two consecutive nutritional surveys indicating stable and reasonably satisfactory nutritional status and b) a declining caseload for Goal's supplementary feeding programmes in the district. The two nutritional surveys were carried out in February and August 2001 respectively, with the latter indicating a global acute malnutrition rate of 6.2%. Goal's food security assessment covered 11 out of Kenema's 16 chiefdoms, and utilised an approach very similar to that of WFP. The survey instruments were based upon those developed by WFP. A national staff member from Goal was trained in food security assessment by WFP in May/June 2001.

8.1.2 *Food Economy Findings*

Goal's findings for rural Kenema were very similar to those of WFP for the neighbouring district of Bo. Like Bo, most of Kenema has been safe and accessible for the last 2-3 years (the assessment focussed on these safer areas), with disarmament scheduled to take place in November 2001. There have been no major population movements within the last 4 years, with most of those displaced from Kenema due to previous insecurity returning to the district in 1997. The district is host to quite a large number of IDPs from other areas (principally Kono, Kailahun and the less secure parts of Kenema), and these are resident either in one of six IDP camps or in rural villages (an estimated 8% of the rural population are IDPs). Smaller scale population movements include the continuing return of small numbers of IDPs to Kenema, and some new IDP movements from Kailahun and Kono. A very few refugees have also arrived recently from Liberia and Guinea.

Apart from the relatively limited area within which diamonds are mined intensively, Kenema is, like Bo, a highly agricultural economy, with a very substantial proportion of both food and income derived from agriculture and its associated activities (e.g. agricultural labour). The pattern of food crop production is similar to that of Bo, with cultivation of rice, cassava and other crops in both upland and lowland ecologies. The main cash crops are coffee and cocoa. Residents of Kenema district also have good access to natural resources, including wild palm trees, bush yams and wild game. Sale of firewood and of timber are significant sources of income.

The results from Kenema suggest a similar wealth breakdown and similar food and income sources to those found for Bo. Local informants characterised roughly 60% of the population as poor, where poor was defined as cultivating less than 3 acres of food crops and less than 2 acres of cash crops. Within the last 12 months the poor derived over 80% of their food from own crops and purchase, and over 90% of income came from sale of crops, labour and natural resources.

Over the last 12 months, income from cash crops has been relatively low, and, as in Bo, the failure to brush plantations (resulting in low productivity) and the very poor transport infrastructure (which tends to depress producer prices) seem to have been significant factors. Among the reasons given for not brushing were a shortage of family labour and/or a lack of money to pay for labour. Despite relative security for 2-3 years, it seems that the economy of Kenema, like that of Bo, has yet to recover to pre-war levels. All households questioned reported lower household incomes now than before the war.

There are currently two large permanent markets in the district - Kenema and Blama - which mediate trade between Freetown, Bo and Zimmi (Pujehun district) and the rural areas. A number of other permanent markets were destroyed in the war and have not been rehabilitated. Commodities brought

into the district include rice, salt, sugar, 'maggi' and non-food items, while food crops, cash crops and palm oil are exported. Markets are relatively active, but poor roads and high transportation costs depress producer prices and increase the price of imported items bought by the rural population.

Local crop production is said by traders and villagers to have increased this year compared to last, while at the same time more food (mainly rice) has also been imported into the district . This has tended to push rice and cassava prices down.

Only very limited information on the food security status of the IDPs was provided.

8.1.3 Food Security Related Recommendations

The principal food security related recommendations from the Goal assessment are:

- Seeds and tools should continue to be targeted to the very poor for another season as many of them still reported being unable to plant sufficient land due to a lack of seeds and tools.
- Livestock restocking programmes should be initiated in order to start re-building herds and increase access to livestock and livestock products.
- The road network must be improved in order for goods and services to be made more readily available and accessible.
- Market facilities in remote chiefdoms need to be re-habilitated.
- Forestry projects need to be set up to ensure that the continuing logging and wood collection does not do long-term environmental damage.
- Micro-credit programmes should be set up, targeting the poor in order to allow them to build some capital base to enable them to cope with any further shocks.
- Kenema district needs continued monitoring until the elections are well and truly over and capacity needs to be maintained to provide a quick response to any population influx resulting from civil unrest.
- Monitoring of the nutritional situation in Kenema district should be maintained and screening of populations in the most vulnerable areas should be continued throughout 2002.