

# Central Darfur, Sudan

## Food Security Monitoring, May 2014



**World Food Programme**

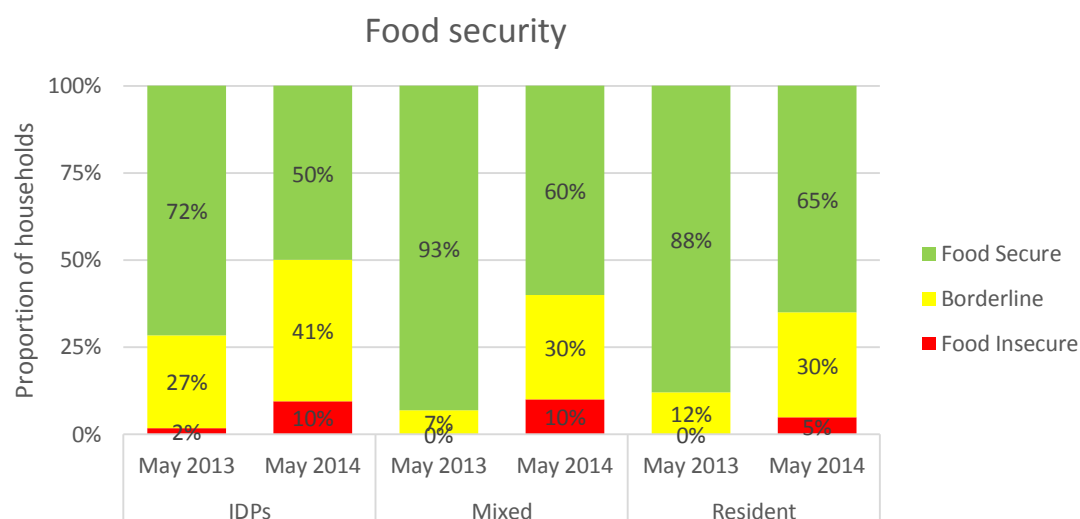
## Executive Summary

- **Data collection:** WFP carried out data collection jointly with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) in April and May, which marked the beginning of the lean season.
- **Food security:** Reflecting the poor harvest in the 2013/14 agricultural season, food security had deteriorated substantially compared to May 2013 for households in all types of communities: IDP, Mixed and Resident. All three were found to have been seriously affected and the proportion of **food secure** households has decreased by 30 percent for IDPs, 35 percent for Mixed communities and 26 percent for Resident communities.
- **Market conditions:** The sorghum prices remained very high this year. The average price of sorghum in May 2014 was 29 percent higher than the previous year and 70 percent higher than the five-year average. This was partly due to poor harvest followed by poor rainfall, and high inflation. However, May sorghum prices had dropped a bit after the peaks in March and April 2014.
- **Livelihood activities:** Wage labour continued to be the most important livelihood activity for IDPs, accounting for 38 percent of the total. This was followed by small business or petty trade (30 percent), and sale of crops (17 percent of households).
- **Expenditure:** Food accounted for 51 percent of the total monthly expenditures. This share (used as an indicator of economic stress) had increased compared to the same time last year. The proportion of households who allocate more than half of the monthly share of expenditure for food, making them more vulnerable to price increases and income shocks, had increased considerably from the same time last year. Medical expenses and milling continued account for a large share of monthly expenditure, accounting for 13 percent and 7 percent respectively.
- **Purchasing power:** The cost of the local food basket (LFB) was SDG 6.34 (per person per day), an increase by 60 percent compared to May 2013 (SDG 3.97). Purchasing power in May 2014 was found to be weak and below last year's level for all community types. Households in Mixed and Resident communities displayed similar results as May 2013, with 29 percent and 28 percent, respectively, not being able to afford at least one LFB. The situation for IDPs was considerably worse, with nearly half of households not being able to afford even one LFB.
- **Food consumption:** Household food consumption had improved for IDPs and Residents compared to the previous year with an increase in the share of households with acceptable food consumption to 66 and 74 percent, respectively. The situation for Mixed communities had remained unchanged from the previous year despite the poor harvest. Households across the three community types had similar food consumption and overall food intake was not found to be alarming.
- **Food assistance:** The findings show that 86 percent of IDP households reported to have received food assistance in the last six months prior to data collection. As a result of WFP's targeting of its limited resources, 55 percent of households in Mixed communities and 26 percent of Residents reported to have received food assistance.
- **Coping strategies:** The proportion of households that reported experiencing food challenges in getting enough food for their needs had decreased from May 2013 and was 66 percent for IDPs, 76 for Mixed and 67 percent for communities, respectively. The improvement was unexpected, given increased food prices and lower production this year.

- **Acute malnutrition:** The Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) was measured on 530 children (aged 6-59 months) within the 20 visited locations in Central Darfur. MUAC measurements improved from the same time last year, to a relatively acceptable level. Only 4 percent of children measured from IDP communities had low MUAC (a proxy indicator for acute malnutrition, compared to 2 percent of children from Mixed communities and 6 percent from Resident communities..

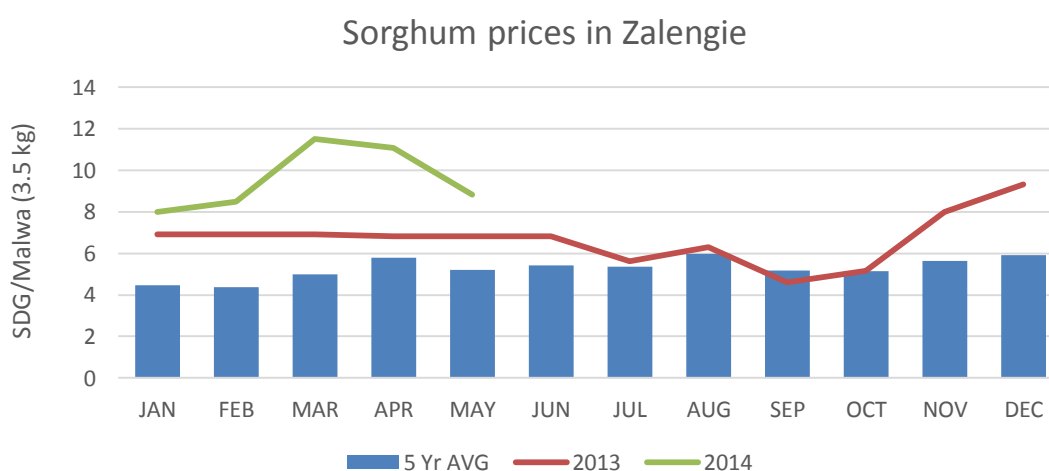
## I. FOOD SECURITY

Reflecting the poor harvest in the 2013/14 agricultural season, household food security had deteriorated compared to May 2013 for all types of communities. The proportion of food secure households was lower than previous years: 50 percent of households in IDP communities (down from 72 percent), 60 percent in Mixed communities (down from 93 percent), and 65 percent in Resident communities (down from 88 percent). The drivers of food insecurity are detailed below; in summary, it appears that weakening purchasing power, stemming from increased food prices, was one of the most important causes of the deteriorating situation.



### A. Market conditions

The price of sorghum in Zalgie in May of this year was 29 percent higher than that of May last year and 70 percent higher than the five-year average. This increase in the price of sorghum was partly attributed to low production in the 2013/14 season. According to the findings of the Ministry of Agriculture's Annual Crop and Food Supply Assessment Mission, low rainfall and subsequent delays in planting in 2013 led to significant production shortfalls throughout the country.



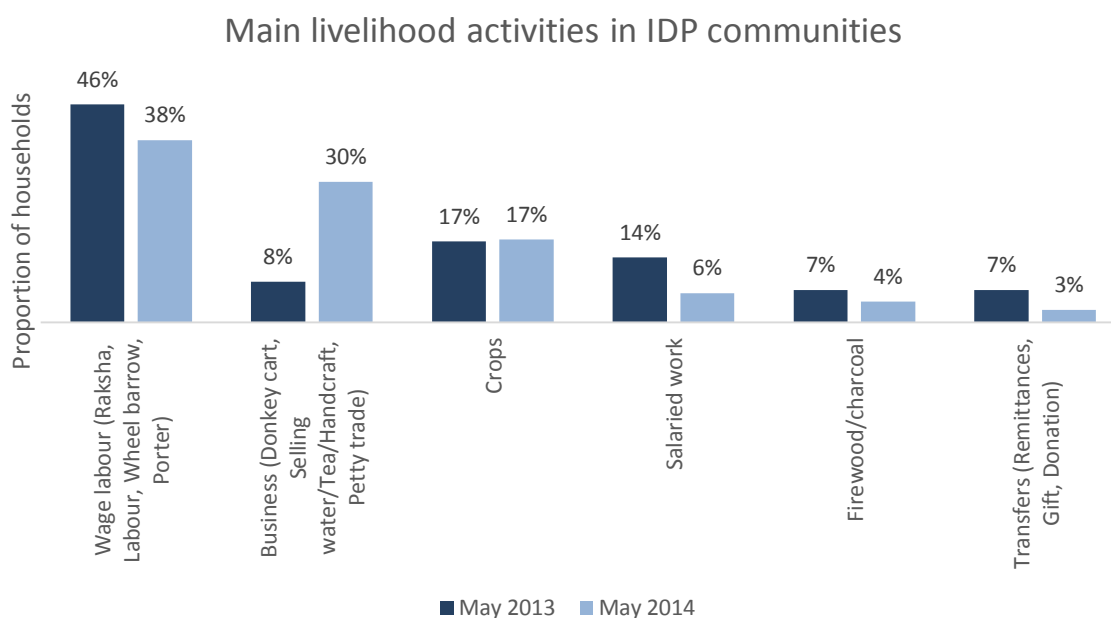
The total production of sorghum, the main staple cereal, decreased by 50 percent compared to the previous year and 30 percent against the five-year average. In addition to low production in Central Darfur, sorghum price increases were also due to lingering effects of the July 2012 devaluation of the

Sudanese Pound and subsequent depreciation, and high inflation. While the price of sorghum remained very high, it had come down from the peak levels in March and April 2014.

## B. Livelihood activities

Wage labour continued to be the most significant livelihood activity for 38 percent of IDP households, a decrease from 46 percent in May 2013. This may be explained by fewer opportunities due to a late start to the rainy season which has resulted in a considerable increase in the percentage of households relying on small business (30 percent). An increase in the percentage of households relying on small businesses such as donkey cart, selling water, handicrafts, or other types of petty trade may also be explained by the stability of the security situation in the area.

Agricultural activities continued to be an important livelihood activity for 17 percent of IDPs in Central Darfur likely due to continued access to land. Fewer households reported reliance on salaried work (6 percent), collection of firewood or charcoal making (4 percent) or remittances (3 percent) compared to the previous year..

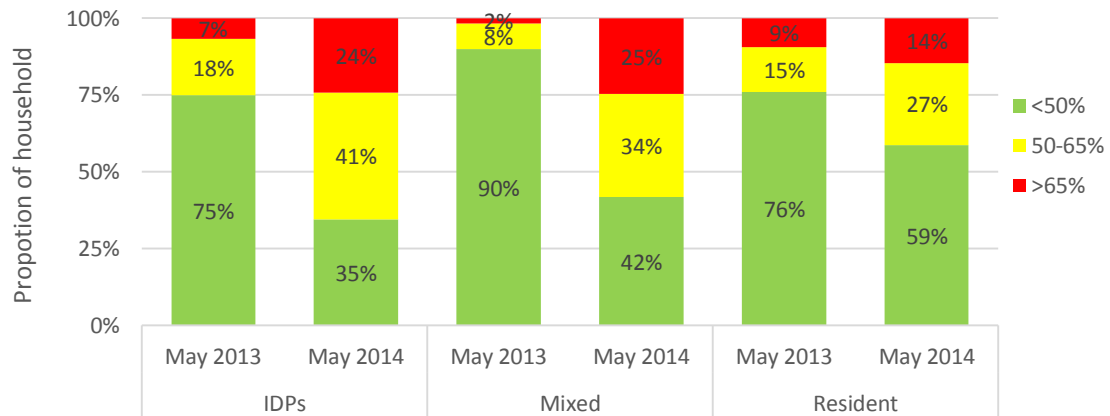


## C. Expenditure and Purchasing Power

### Expenditure

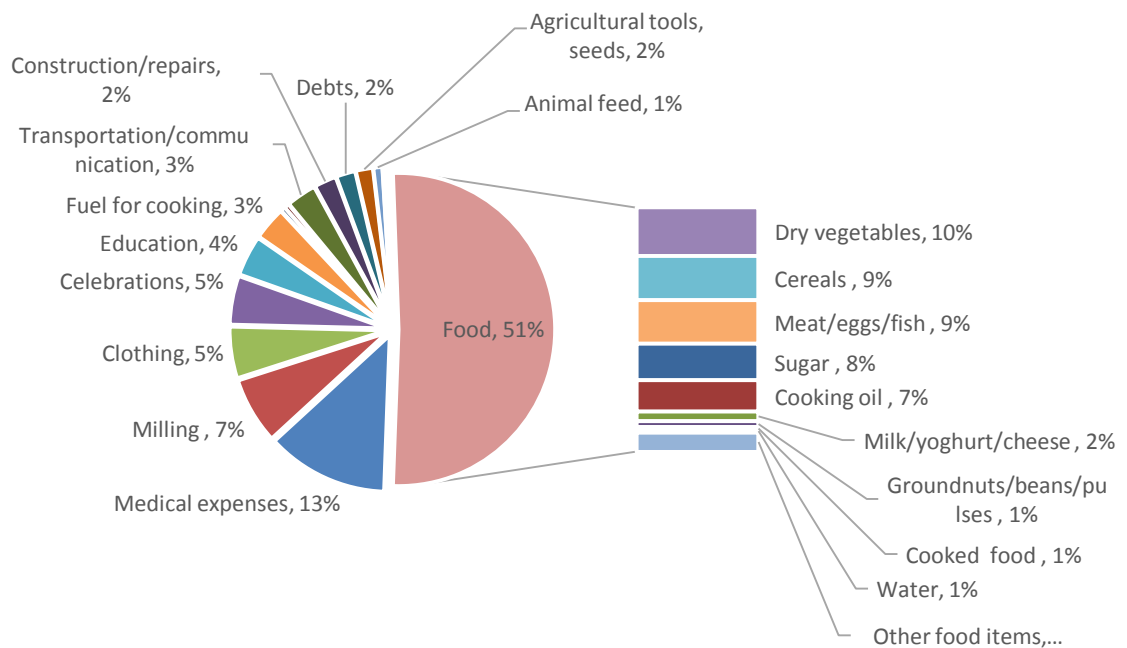
The share of monthly household expenditure allocated for food is used as an indicator of economic stress, as households that allocate a large share of expenditure on food are less likely to be able to satisfy essential non-food needs (such as health care and education) and to cope with price increases or income shocks. The proportion of households who allocated more than half of their monthly expenditure on food had increased considerably from the same time last year. The increase was consistent with simultaneous food inflation. Residents saw the smallest deterioration and had, compared to the other two community types, the largest proportion of households where food accounted for half or less of total monthly expenditure. The large share of food in the budgets of households indicated diminished economic food access.

## Proportion of household monthly expenditure for food



On average, households allocated just over half of their monthly expenditure for food. Medical expenses and milling continued to be the largest share of household non-food expenditure, accounting for 13 percent and 7 percent, respectively.

## Breakdown of household expenditure

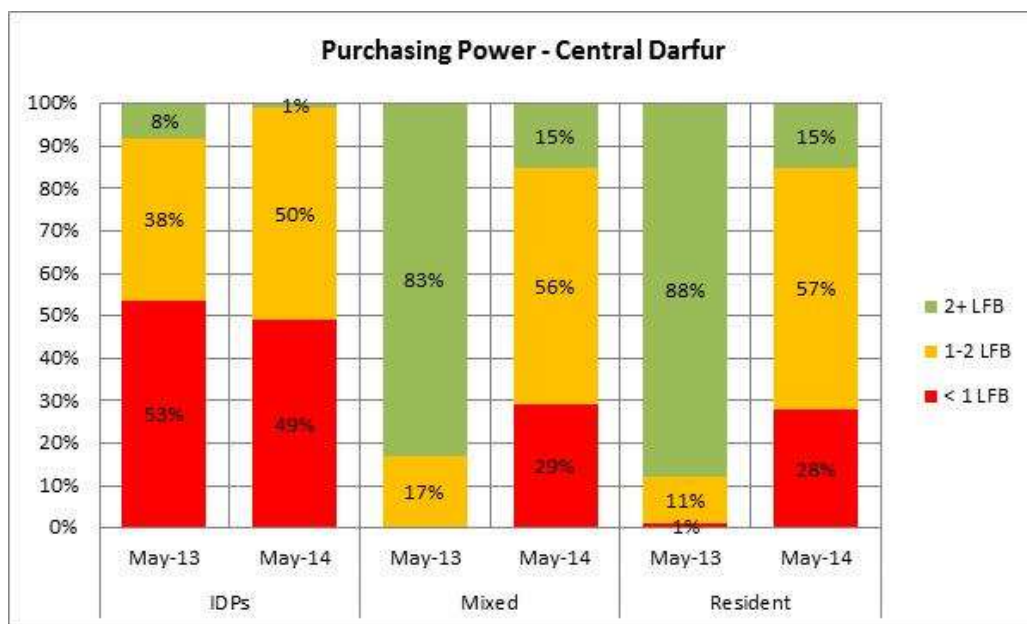


### Purchasing Power

In May 2014, the cost of the local food basket (LFB) was SDG 6.34 per person per day, increasing by 60 percent compared to May 2013 (SDG 3.97). For the purposes of this analysis, purchasing power was defined as the number of local food baskets a household can afford, using current expenditure information.

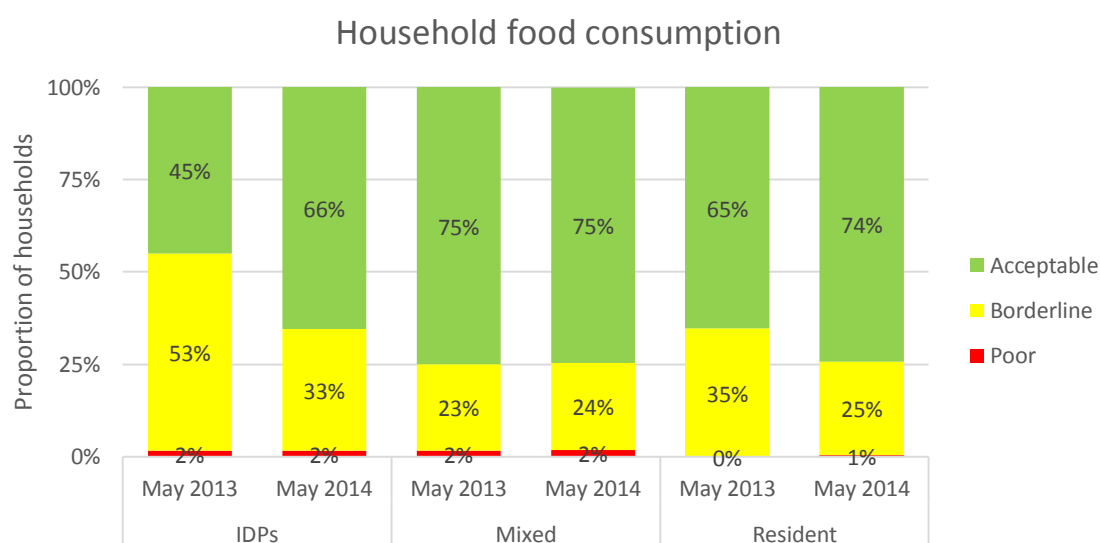
Purchasing power was found to be very weak and completely insufficient for many households to attain acceptable food access through markets. Compared to May of last year, purchasing power in May 2014 had declined drastically for households in all types of communities. Households in mixed and Resident communities displayed similar patterns, with 29 percent and 28 percent of households,

respectively, being unable to afford at least one LFB. Only 15 percent of households in each of the two groups could afford two or more LFBs. Purchasing power was the weakest among IDPs, where 49 percent of households were unable to afford even one LFB and only 1 percent could afford two or more.



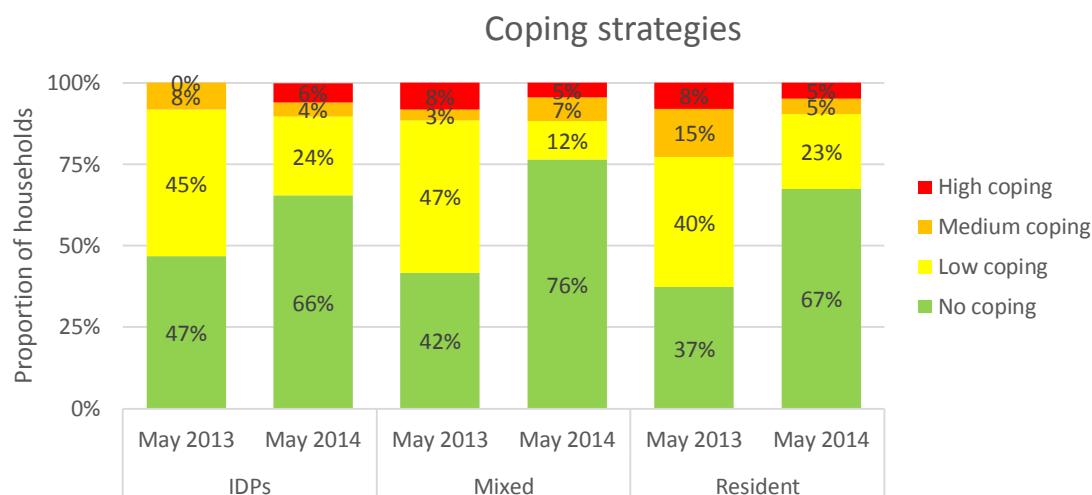
#### D. Household Food Consumption

Household food consumption was categorized as poor, borderline, and acceptable based on the variety and frequency of foods consumed by the interviewed households, within the seven days before data collection. Dietary diversity and food frequency had improved for IDP households and Residents compared to the previous year with an increase in the proportion of households with acceptable consumption to 66 and 74 percent, respectively. The situation for households in Mixed communities had remained unchanged from the previous year despite the poor harvest. Overall household food consumption was not alarming.



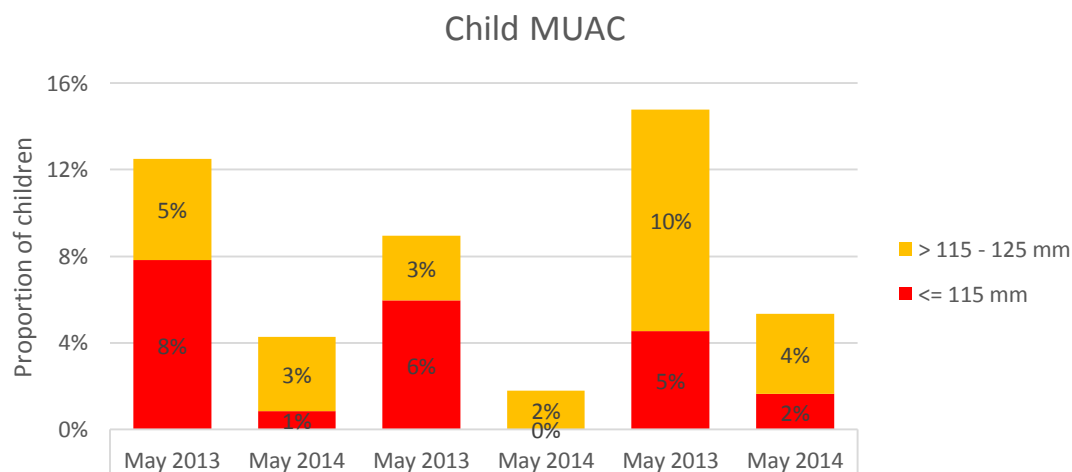
## 2. Food access perceptions

Households were asked if there were times in the one week prior to data collection when they did not have enough food (or money to buy food). If they experienced such situations, they were asked what strategies they employed to cope with the shortage. In May 2014, 34 percent of IDP households, 33 percent of Residents, and 24 percent in Mixed communities reported having experienced recent food shortages. The improvement compared to the same time last year was not expected, given the concurrent decline in purchasing power. Households in Mixed communities appeared to have the least difficulty accessing food, although differences among community types were small.



## 3. Child nutrition

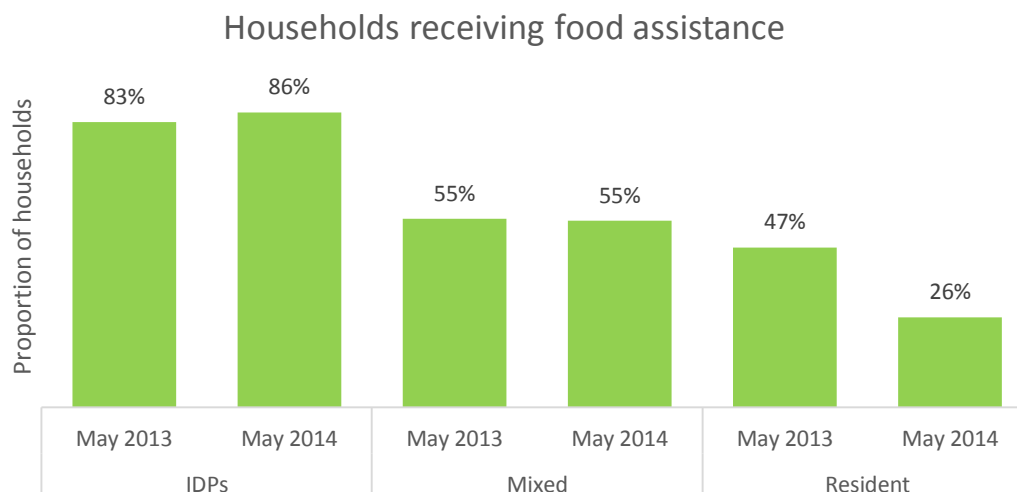
The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of 530 children aged 6-59 months was measured and they were classified as having very low (below 115 mm, a proxy for severe acute malnutrition), moderately low (between 115 and 125 mm, a proxy indicator for moderate acute malnutrition), and normal MUAC. The proportion of children with low MUAC (a proxy for acute malnutrition) was estimated to 4 percent for children in IDP communities, 2 percent for those in Mixed communities and 6 percent of children from Resident communities. The MUAC measurements had improved from the same time last year and were found to be at an acceptable level.





#### 4. Food Assistance

Eighty-six percent of households in the IDP sample reported to have received food assistance in the six months prior to data collection. As a result of WFP's targeting of its limited resources, 55 percent of households in Mixed, and 26 percent in Resident communities reported to have received food assistance.



Among IDP households, it was reported that 64 percent of them took less than half an hour to reach the distribution point, while only 16 percent reported taking one hour or more. Sixteen percent of IDP households had sold or bartered cereals received from WFP, and 15 percent reported to have sold or bartered pulses. Most respondents said they sold less than half of the food ration. When it comes to IDP food item satisfaction, 74, 71, 70, and 66 percent of the IDP households reported that they were satisfied with the taste, physical condition, cooking time, and color, respectively, of WFP food assistance. The decision about how food was used in the households were done by women in 47 percent of households, by women and men jointly in 46 percent of households, and by men in 7 percent of households.