

North Darfur, Sudan

Food Security Monitoring, November 2014



World Food Programme

Executive summary

- The 2014 rainy season started late, but effective rains were received toward the end of July and rains continued through August and September which led to an exceptionally good harvest in almost all parts of the state.
- Despite the good rainy season, a large group of farmers missed the agricultural season due to insecurity and displacement following escalation of violence in the first quarter of 2014. The most affected part of the state are the areas of Korma, rural El Fasher and east Kutum.
- The State Ministry of Agriculture's initial post harvest assessment indicated a cereal deficit of approximately 60,000 MT, a minor production shortfall compared to what is normal in North Darfur. However, escalation of violence in late December 2014 and in January of this year, interfered with harvest activities, resulting in destruction of crops in fields and increased crop loss.
- In November 2014, the proportion of food insecure households among the IDPs and resident communities had remained similar compared to the same time last year, however it had significantly increased for the mixed communities.
- The proportions of households having acceptable food consumption decreased slightly for all community groups compared to the same period last year.
- The cost of Local Food Basket (LFB) in November 2014 was 4.05 SDG per person per day, a decrease compared to May 2014 (when the cost was 4.3). The decrease was a result of reduced prices of important food items (particularly cereals, vegetable oil, and dry tomato) following the good harvest. The cost of the LFB in November 2014 has increased by 6 percent compared to November 2013.
- The year-on-year price increase contributed to a deterioration in purchasing power in November 2014, for all community groups, compared with the same time last year. Two-thirds of resident households could not afford the cost of one LFB.
- Unlike previous rounds, the contribution of wage labour to household income has significantly dropped in this round for all community groups. It dropped by 78, 61, and 38 percent for the IDPs, resident and mixed communities, respectively, compared to November 2013.
- Sorghum prices in Al Fasher market increased significantly compared to the same period last year and remained extremely high compared to the five years average, this is mainly due to poor harvest last season 2013/2014 and increase inflation rate at the macro level.
- The middle upper-arm circumference (MUAC) measurement was acceptable, however there is a minor increase in the proportion of children who recorded low (≤ 115 mm) and moderately (115-125 mm) MUAC within all community group comparing to the same time last year.
- Data was collected in November and December 2014; all the 25 selected sites for Food Security Monitoring System were visited.

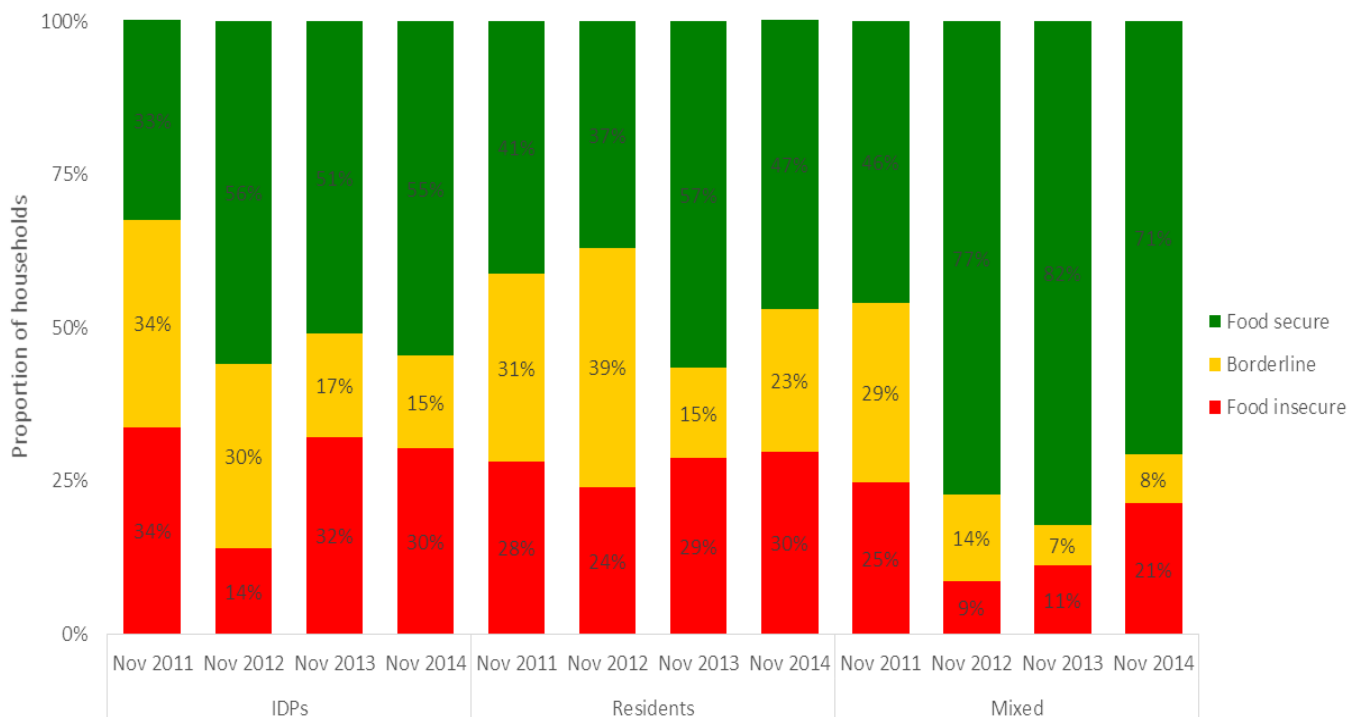
Food security

The initial post harvest assessment of the State Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Planning Administration (APA) indicated a cereal deficit of approximately 60,000 MT, a minor production shortfall compared to what is normal for North Darfur. However escalation of violence in late December and January this year disturbed harvest activities, resulting in loss of crops. Rainfall this season was characterized by late onset, however, effective rains were received towards the end of July in most areas. An exception was the eastern localities of Al La'ait, El Tewaisha and western localities of Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra, where effective rains sufficient for crop planting occurred by early July. The amount and distribution of rainfall improved in the whole state through mid- August to end of September, and led to good harvest in almost all parts of the state.

Despite the good rainy season this year, a large proportion of farmers missed the planting season due to insecurity and displacement following the escalation of violence in the first quarter of 2014, mainly in the areas of Korma, rural Elfasher, east Kutum and El Serief. The interruption of agricultural activities negatively affected state-level production.

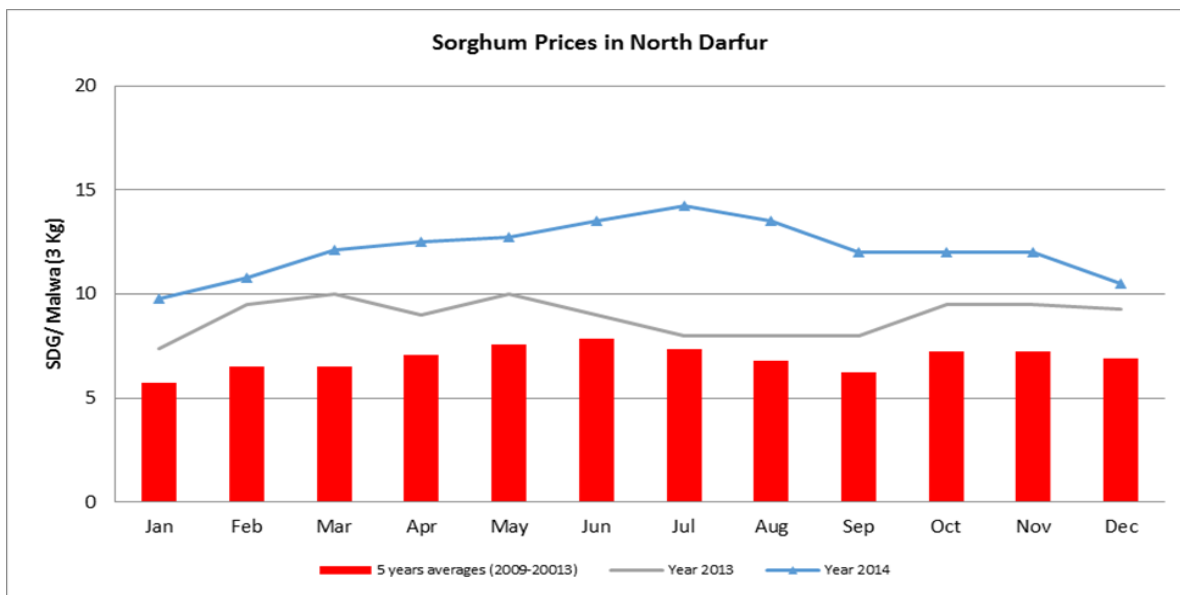
In November 2014, the food security situation of the camp IDPs remained stable compared to November 2013. More than half of the camp IDPs are food secure, while almost one third are food insecure. The food security situation of the resident communities deteriorated slightly, with the proportion of food secure households shrinking from 57 to 47 percent from November 2013 to November 2014. Mixed communities (Saraf Omra and Kebkabiya) displayed a larger proportion of food secure household compared to the IDPs and resident communities: more than 70 percent of the households were food secure. Even though the food security situation of the mixed communities remained better than the others groups, the proportion of food insecure households in this round had increased by 50 percent compare to the same time last year. This could be attributed to the tribal conflict erupted in the Saraf Omra area in February 2014 which negatively affected access to irrigated farm lands located at a distance from the main towns.

Food Security by community type



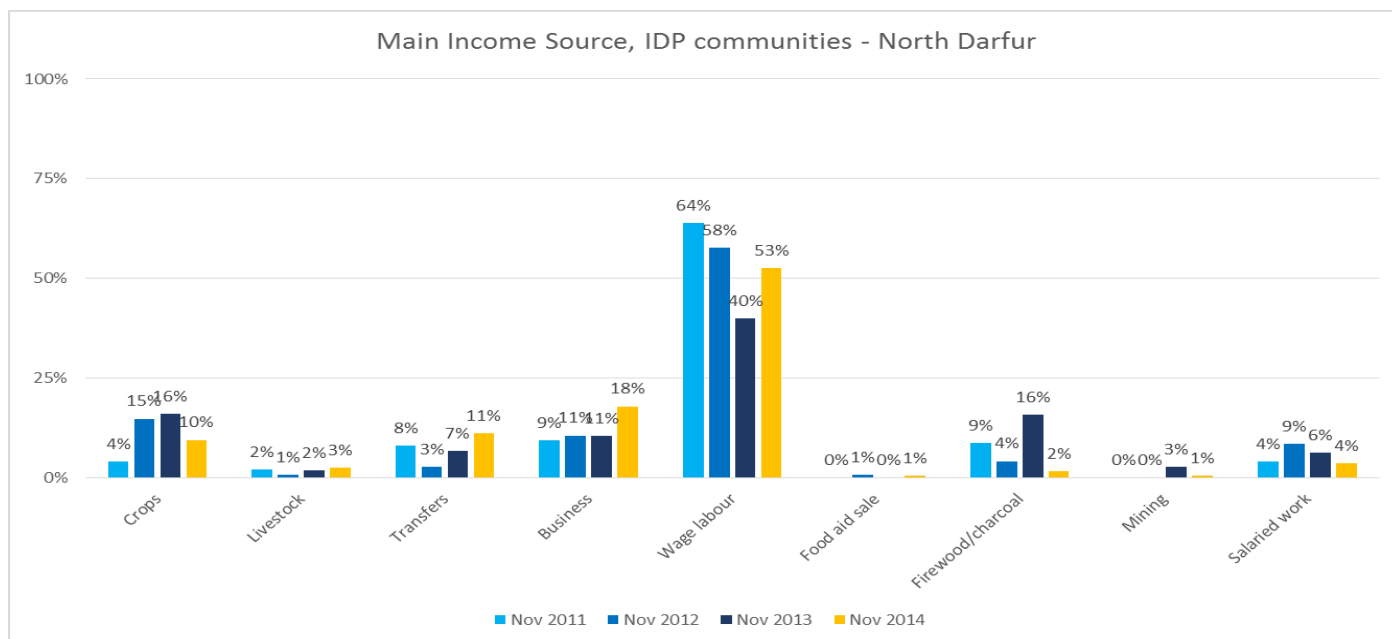
Markets and prices

Sorghum prices in Fasher market had increased significantly compared to the same period last year and remained extremely high compared to the five year average. An upward trend in cereal prices was reported during the lean season (May to August), however prices started to decrease in September in response to the unusually good rainfall and the anticipation of a good harvest. The increase in cereal prices in 2014 could be attributed to the high rate of general inflation and the mass displacement in the first quarter of 2014, following the escalation of violence in large parts of North Darfur state which led to destruction of markets, trade and food stocks, and interruption of agricultural activities.



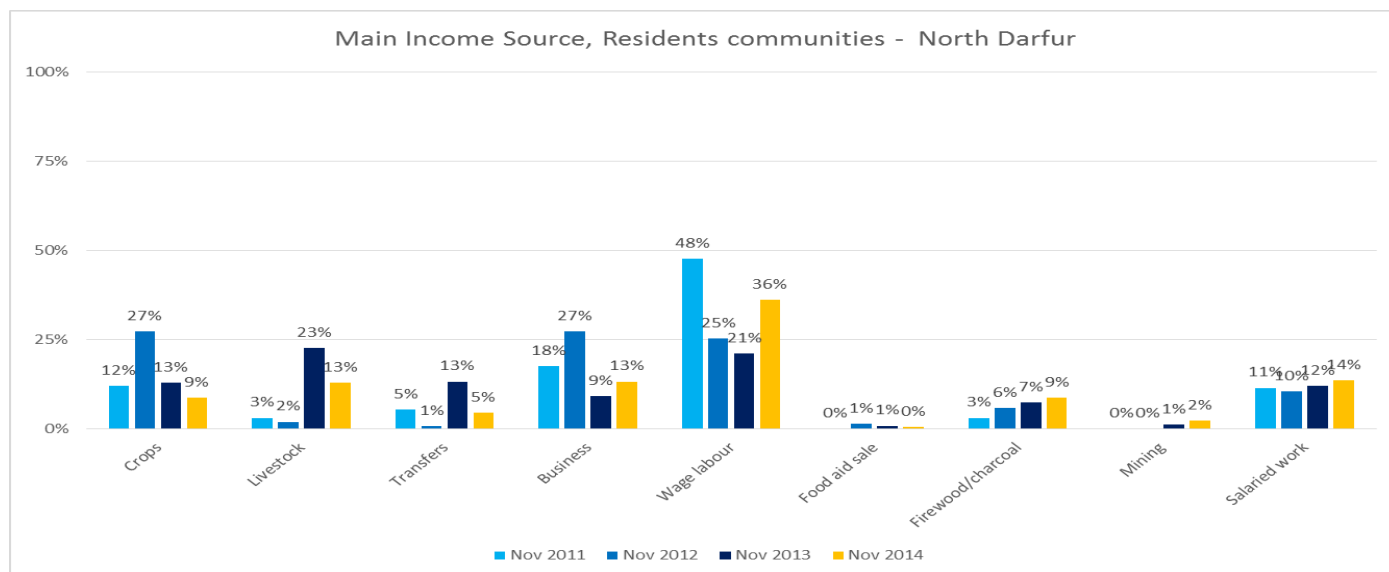
Income sources in IDP camps

In this round, wage labour remains the most important income source for IDPs with more than half of all households in this group indicating daily wage labour activities as their primary income source. Eleven percent of IDP households reported sale of crops as their main income source, indicating that some IDPs, especially in rural areas, had access to cultivation, whether through shared cropping arrangement or in their own farms. The good agricultural season provided opportunities of agriculture related activities such as agricultural wage labour and crops sale to IDP communities, reducing the proportion of households primarily engaged in firewood and grass collection. Other important income sources for the IDPs were small business and transfers, contributing 20 and 12 percent of households, respectively.



Income sources in resident communities

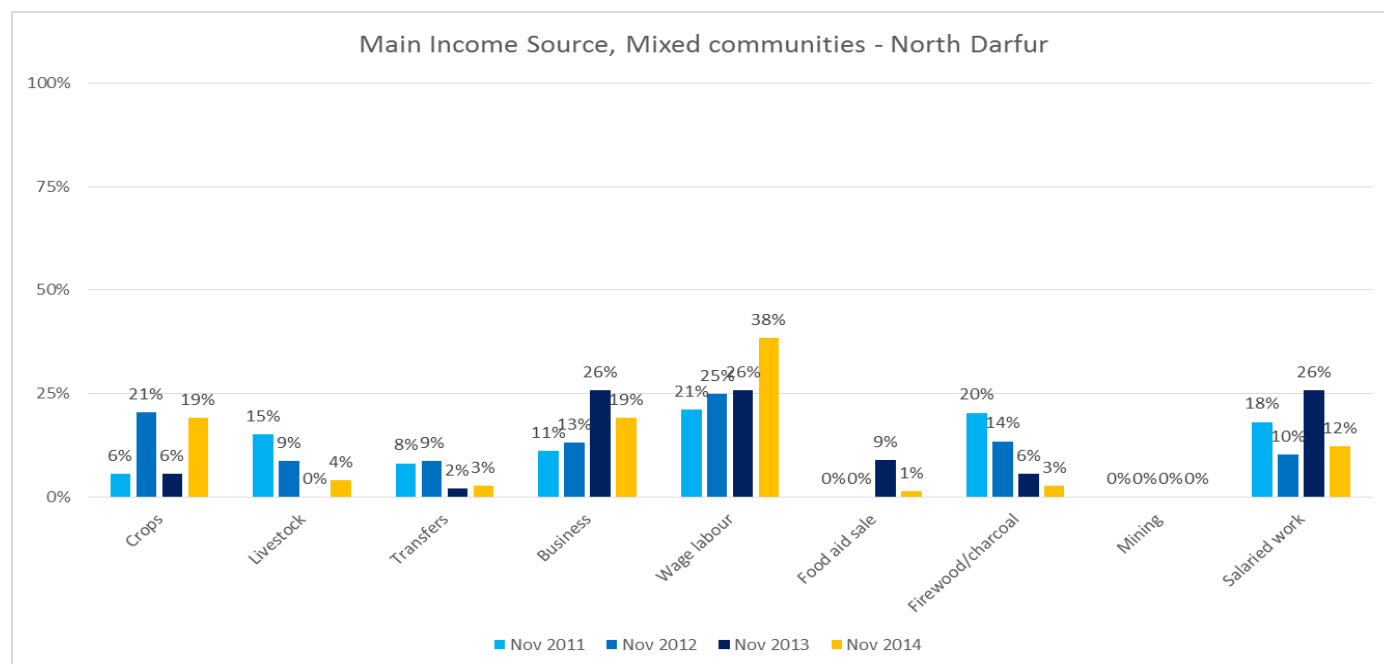
The resident communities had more diverse and relatively balanced income sources, compared to IDPs, such as wage labour, sale for crops and livestock and salaries. In November 2014, the contribution of salaries and small business had increased slightly compared to the same month of last year. However the proportion of households engaged primarily in wage labour, sale of crops and sale of livestock had slightly decreased over the same period.



Income sources in mixed communities

The proportion of households who rely on wage labour and sale of crops among mixed communities increased considerably compared to the same time of last year. These changes were a result of increased availability of agricultural wage labour and better production in this season. Similar to residents, the mixed communities had relatively more choices of income generation compared to camp IDPs, for whom reliance on wage labor is more pronounced.

The mixed communities of Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra still had opportunity to produce irrigated crops in the winter season using surface water from shallow hand-dug wells, which enabled them to cultivate winter crops such as onion, potato and variety of vegetables.

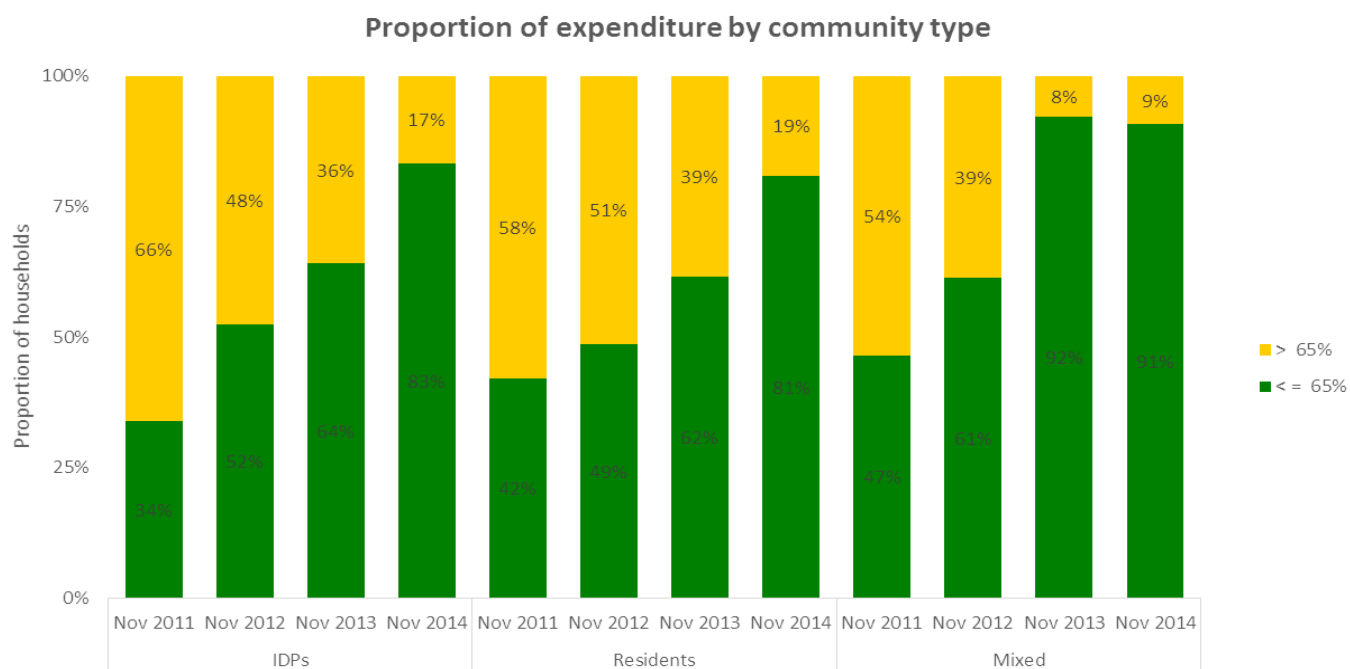


Expenditure

In November 2014, 48 percent of the households' expenditure was spent on food items, which constituted a decrease compared to 61 percent in November 2013. A decrease typically indicates an improvement in the economic stress faced by households. However, in this case the reduction is likely to be a reflection of this year's good harvest, resulting in a diminished need of households to purchase foods grown by the household. Homegrown crops, including cereals, oil crops and vegetables, account for a large proportion of food expenditure on food. Reduced expenses on these items will shrink the share of households expenditure on food.

Seventeen percent of the camp IDPs spent more than 65 percent of their income on food (a proxy indicator of economic vulnerability), while the corresponding figures for resident and mixed communities were 19 and 9 percent, respectively. The proportion of IDP households who spent more than 65 percent of their income on food decreased compared to same time in the last three years.

The main food items purchased were dry vegetables (accounting for 10 percent of total household expenditure), cereals and oil (nine percent each); meat (seven percent) and sugar (six percent). Main non-food items in November 2014 were education (11 percent of total household expenditure), followed by health care (eight percent), clothing (seven percent), and milling and firewood (five percent each).



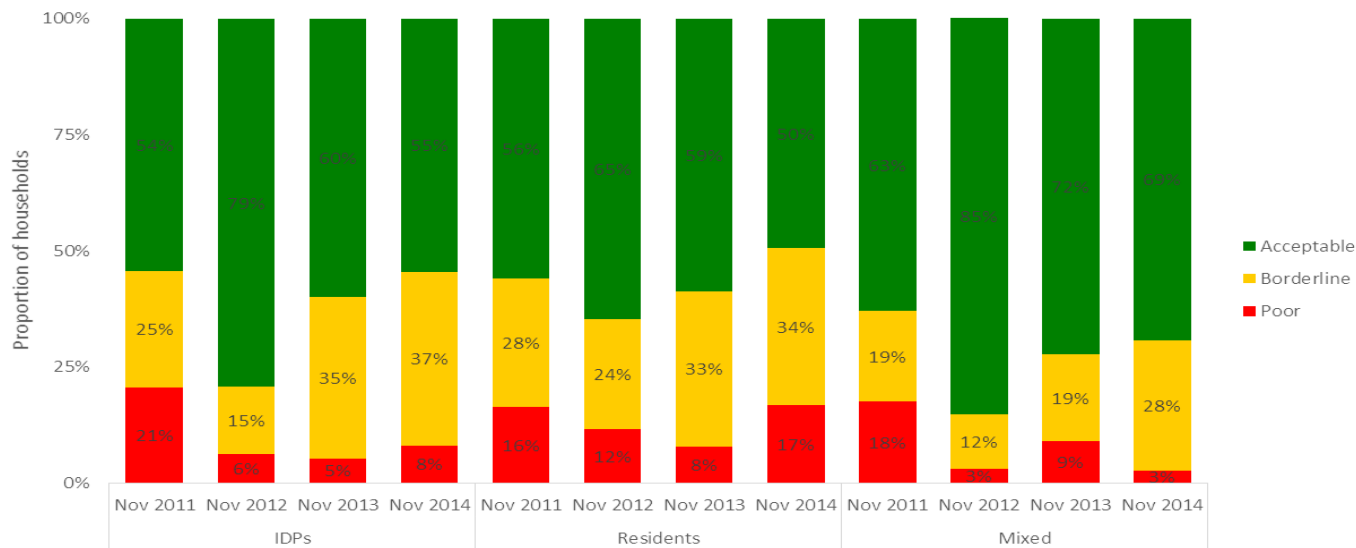
Food consumption

Even though the harvest was better this year compared to last year, the dietary diversity among the various population groups did not display improvement as expected. It is possible that the improved harvest was offset by economic pressure, as shown in the next section on purchasing power.

In November 2014, just over half of the camp IDPs had acceptable food consumption. The percent of IDP households who have poor or borderline dietary diversity increased compared to same season in the past two years. A similar shift towards poor dietary groups was found among the resident communities. Fifty percent of resident households had acceptable food consumption in November 2014, compared to 59 percent in November 2013. The trend was similar for mixed communities.

In a new development, it is worth noting that residents were found to be the community type with the poorest food consumption, performing worse than IDPs.

Food consumption by community type



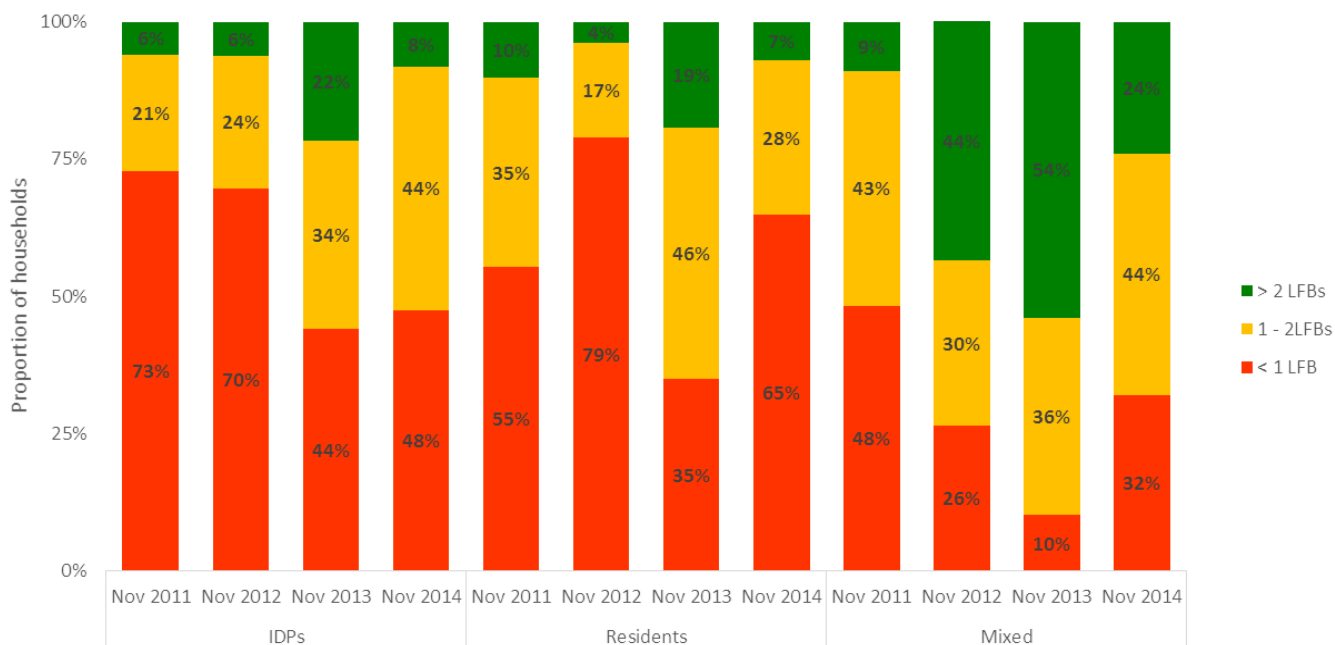
Purchasing power

The cost of the local food basket (LFB) was 4.05 SDG per person per day, a decrease by 6 percent compared to May 2014. The decrease was a result of lower prices of cereals, vegetable oil, and dry tomato, following the good harvest of this season. Comparing the LFB cost in November with the same time last year reveal a considerable increase of more than 20 percent.

The proportion of household who were unable to afford the cost of the LFB within the camp IDPs increased slightly compared to November 2013. However the situation was far better when compared to November 2011 and 2012. On the other hand, the proportion of IDP households who can afford two LFBs had significantly dropped compared to November 2013. Among resident communities, over 60 percent of households could not afford the cost of LFB, compared to 35 percent in November 2013.

A considerable reduction in purchasing power was noticed among mixed communities in this round compared last year. Consequently, the proportion of households who can afford the cost of the LFB dropped considerably in comparison with November 2013.

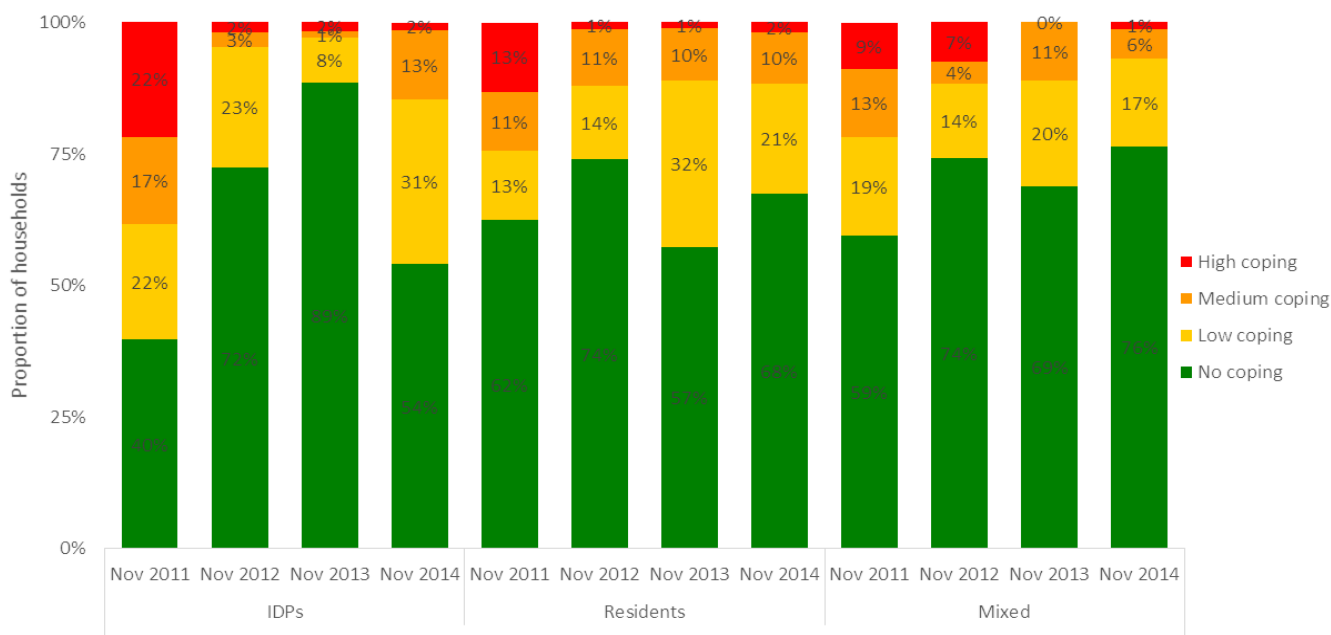
Purchasing power by community group



Perception of food access

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 asked what strategies they employed to cope with the shortage. The proportion of IDP households who reported facing food shortage increased significantly compared to last November. Almost half of all surveyed IDPs reported experiencing food shortages. Both resident and mixed communities saw a moderate improvement over the same period. Households across community types employed mostly less severe coping strategies such as relying on less preferred or less expensive foods, relying on help from relatives and borrowing food.

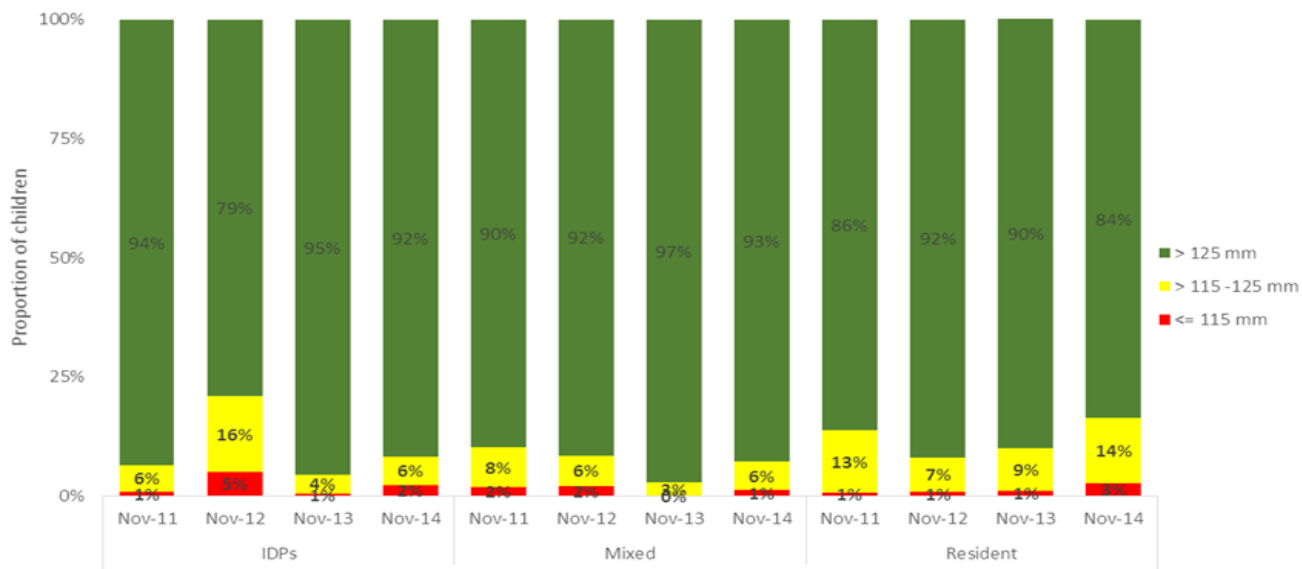
Use of coping strategies by community type



Child nutrition

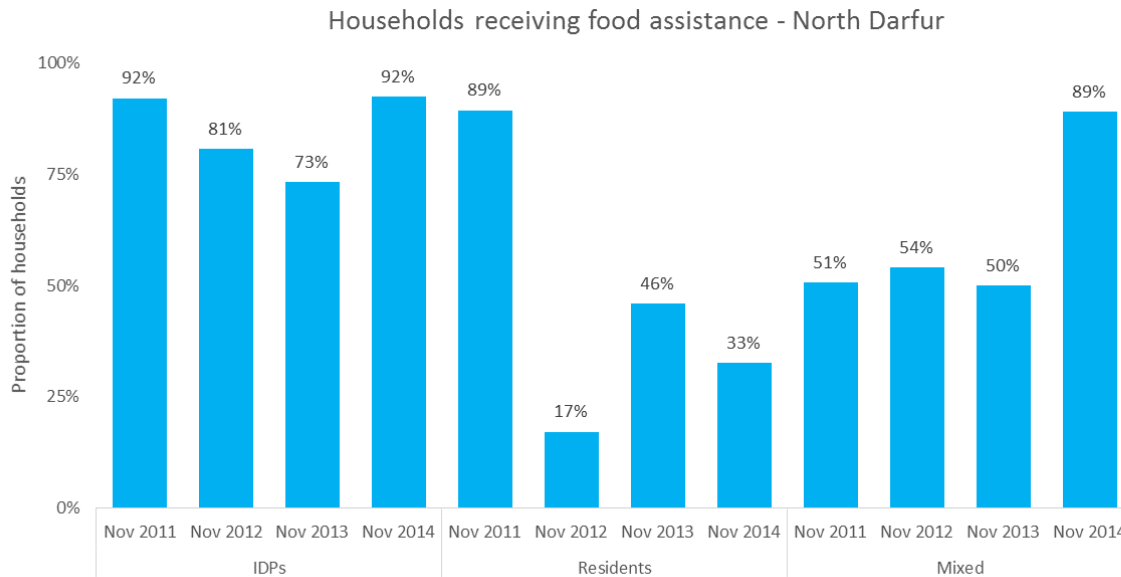
The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of all children aged 6-59 months in surveyed households was measured and classified as very low (below 115 mm, a proxy for severe acute malnutrition), moderately low (between 115 and 125mm, a proxy indicator for moderate acute malnutrition), and normal. Camp IDPs and resident communities had a similar proportion of children with low MUAC (8 and 7 percent, respectively), while the children in mixed community households had the highest rate of low MUAC (17 percent). There was a minor increase in the proportion of children recorded very low (≤ 115 mm) and moderately low (115-125 mm) MUAC within all community group comparing to the same time last year.

Child MUAC 6-59 - North Darfur



Food assistance

All camp IDPs and mixed communities were receiving regular GFD, either through in-kind or through vouchers. Three of the IDP camps in North Darfur were assisted by vouchers, this includes Zamzam, Abu Shouk and El Salam. The rest of the camps received in-kind food assistance. For the mixed communities, Kebkabiya and Saraf Omra communities received voucher, while the community in Kutum town received in-kind food assistance. The lack of appropriate government response to the food gap created by the poor harvest in 2013 necessitated WFP to start the seasonal support earlier than planned.



Who were the Food Insecure?

In this round, household's characteristics such as head of household gender, education level are defining features for household's food security status. In this round female headed households are more likely to be food insecure (42%) compared to male headed households. Educational level of the household head was positively correlated with food security. Findings indicates 44 percent, 59 percent, and 72 percent of households headed by non-educated, primary, secondary and university educated heads are food secure, respectively. Educational level of the household head was positively correlated with food security. Findings indicates 22 percent, 16 percent, and 9 percent of households headed by non-educated, primary, secondary and university educated heads are food secure.

Description of the sample

The 25 primary sentinel sites were visited as planned. A total of 646 Households were interviewed. The average household size was 6.4 persons. Forty-two percent of surveyed households were headed by a female. The proportion of households that reported being IDPs in camps, IDPs outside camps, residents and returnees were 30, 8, 60, and 2 percent, respectively. 77 percent of camp IDPs had lived in the camp for more than 6 years. Fifty-three percent of surveyed households were illiterate, 31 percent had primary education and 16 percent had secondary education and above.

Ten percent of the surveyed household were sourcing water from public tap, 41 percent from boreholes with hand pump, two percent from protected dug well, 15 percent from unprotected dug well, 17 percent from water bladder, two percent from surface water (river/stream) and 12 percent from tanker truck. Forty-nine percent of surveyed household reported using traditional latrine, 31 percent using improved latrine and 20 percent reported using open areas.