

South Darfur, Sudan

Food Security Monitoring, November 2014



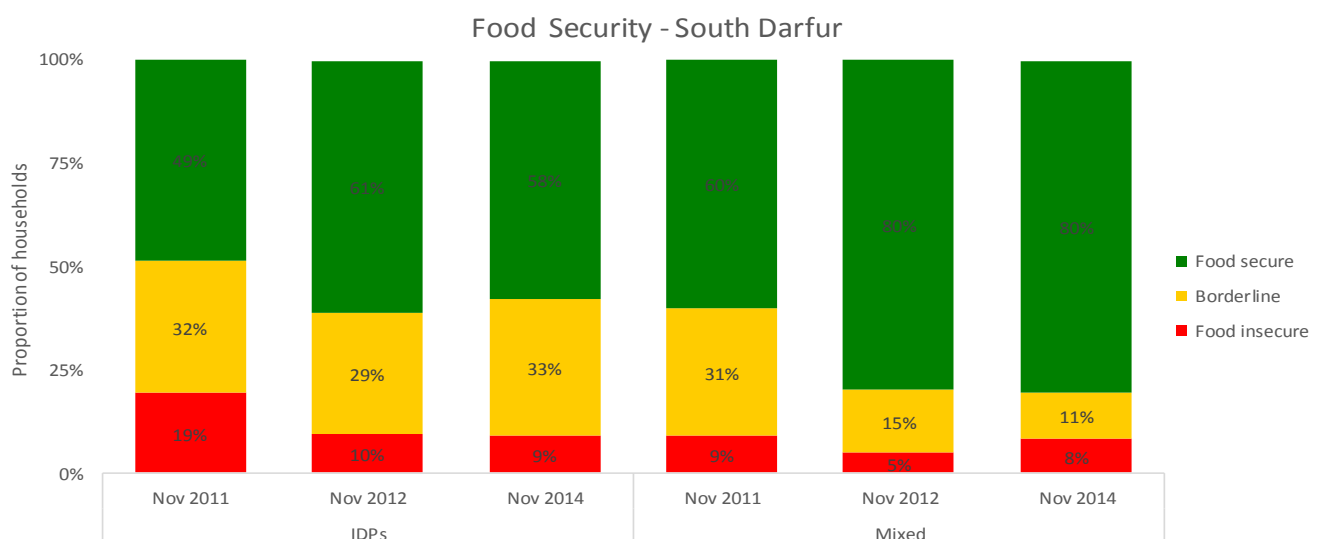
World Food Programme

Executive Summary

- Data collection for Round 18 of the Food Security Monitoring System was carried in November 2014, conventionally considered the peak of the harvest season in South Darfur.
- The proportion of households that were food secure remained relatedly unchanged compared to November 2012, both for households in IDP camps (58 percent) and mixed communities (80 percent). (The most recent food security monitoring that took place at the same time of the year was in November 2012.)
- Food consumption deteriorated moderately compared to the same period in 2012. Despite the negative change, a very large majority of households in mixed communities were found to have acceptable food consumption. Households in IDP camp communities were comparatively worse off, with 69 percent having acceptable food consumption.
- The cost of the local food basket (LFB) in November 2014 was 5.16 SDG/person/day, an increase of five percent from May 2014 (4.91 SDG/person/day). The increase in the cost of the food basket was primarily due to rising prices of main food items particularly, sorghum, groundnut oil, milk and sugar. As a result, the purchasing power of the population had been eroded significantly, to the point where over 70 percent of surveyed households could not afford even one local food basket.
- The main income sources for IDPs were wage labour, firewood and charcoal and salaries work. Among the resident community salaried work, business, sales of livestock, and sales of crops were found to be the major sources of income. For the mixed communities the main income sources were sales of crops, followed by wage labour, salaried work and business. It appeared that IDP communities had access to more diverse income opportunities compared to households of mixed and resident communities.
- For the better part of 2014, sorghum price in Nyala market was far above last year's level and the five year average, in part due to the poor 2013/2014 harvest and general food price inflation at the macro level. Starting in September, the sorghum price started to fall, following a normal, seasonal pattern, amplified by the prospect of a successful harvest. December prices were similar to last year, but still above the five year average.
- In a moderate deterioration from 2012, anthropometric measurements indicated that six percent of children in IDP camps had low mid-upper arm circumferences. The corresponding figure for children in mixed communities was 11 percent.
- 22 primary sentinel sites were visited in this round and a total of 523 households were interviewed. The average household size was 7 persons. Female headed households constituted 26 percent of the sample.

Food Security

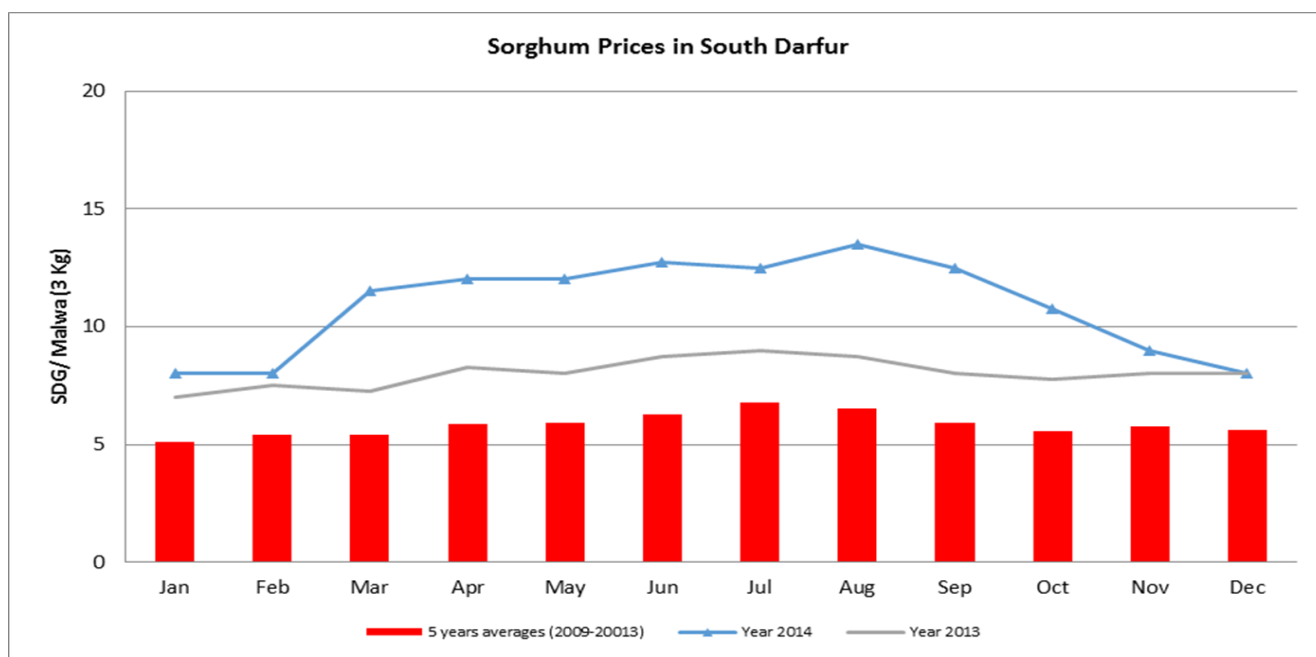
The food security situation for IDPs and mixed communities remained largely unchanged in November 2014 compared to November 2012. The absence of improvement in food security, despite a very good agricultural season, could be attributed to significant erosion of the purchasing power, in turn caused by high food prices, as discussed below. Mixed communities continued to be considerably more food secure compared to IDP camp communities.



Markets

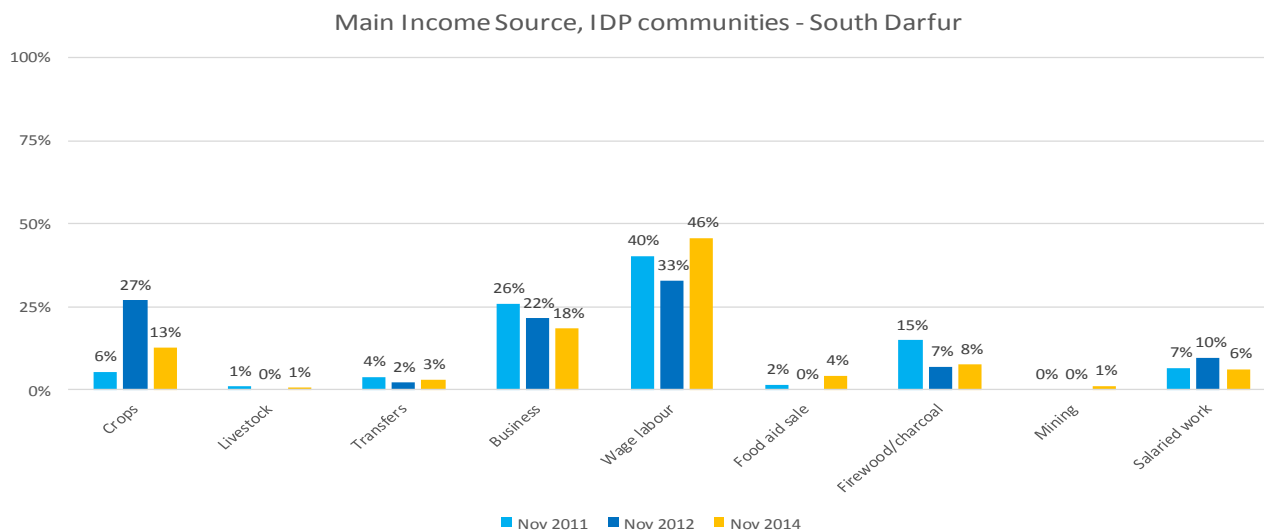
The price of sorghum in Nyala market dropped in November 2014 but remain moderately above last year's level and significantly above the five year average. Cereal prices typically exhibit a downward trend at this time of the year, following the harvest season. The record cereal prices during the better part of 2014 was due to the poor harvest in the 2013/14 season, high cost of production and general, nation-wide inflation. Even though the agricultural season was good in most parts of the state, large-scale displacement during 2013 and the first half of 2014 limited the area under cultivation, as many displaced farmers was forced to skip the season.

The increase in supply was expected to stabilize sorghum prices during the first quarter of 2015, during the harvest and post-harvest periods. Increased transportation costs and informal road taxations have strong bearing on the supply chain, especially during the dry season.



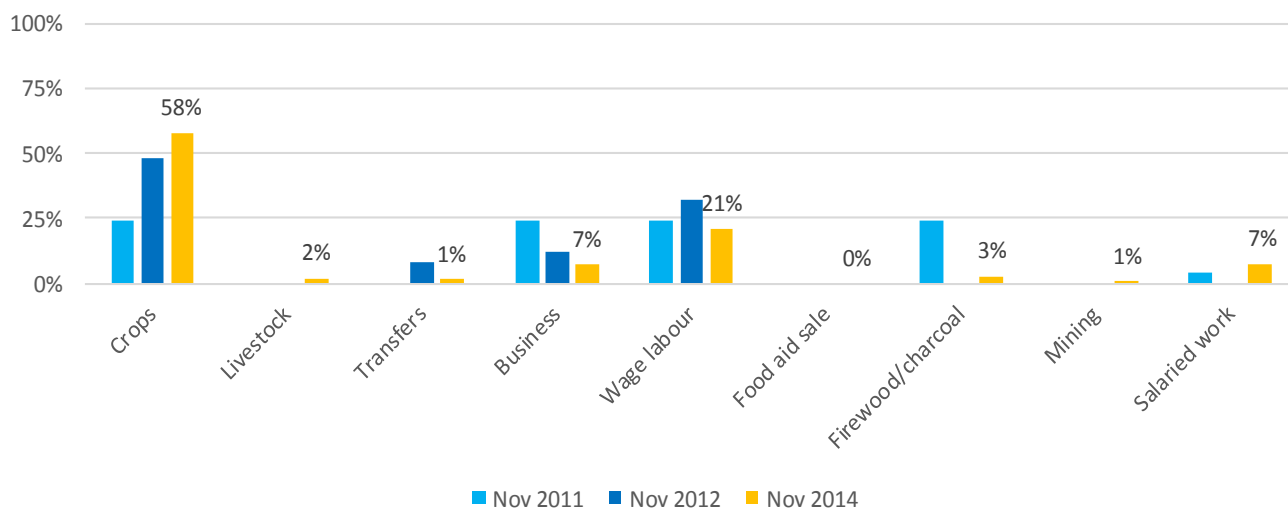
Income Sources

The main income generating activities for IDPs in November 2014 was wage labour, sale of crops, charcoal and salaries. The proportion of households who reported wage labour as their main income source increased significantly among the IDPs in camps compared to 2012. The corresponding figures of sale of crops dropped from 27 percent of households to 13 percent over the same period. Traditional mining was a relatively new activities in the state and its share was expected to increase during the dry season



Income sources for mixed communities were found to be more diversified than for the camp IDPs. The most frequently reported income source for mixed communities in November 2014 was sale of crops (58 percent of households) followed by wage labour (21 percent). In a marked increase from 2011 and 2012, sale of crops was the main income source for more than half of the households, as a result of the good season and. Mixed communities were concentrated in rural areas where access to cultivable land was relatively available.

Main Income Source, Mixed communities - South Darfur

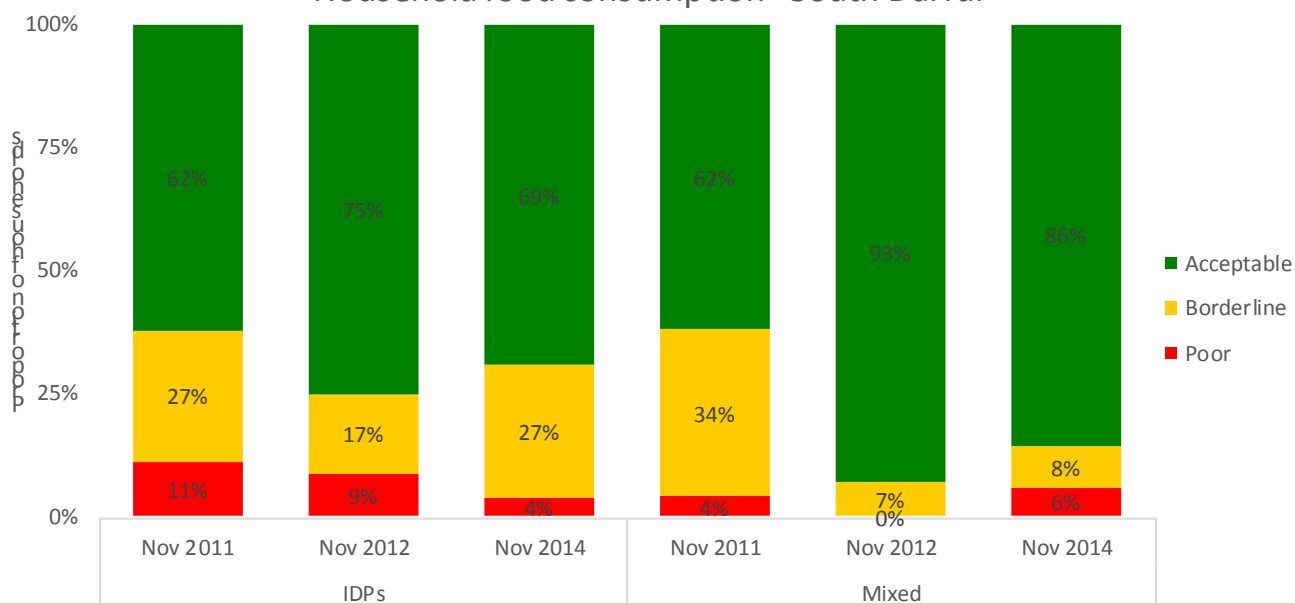


Food Consumption

The dietary diversity and frequency of the interviewed households (as measured by food consumption score) was found to be acceptable for 69 percent of IDPs in camps and 86 percent of households in mixed communities. The comparatively poor performance of IDPs in camps could be a reflection of weak purchasing power (see below) and worse access to their own agricultural production.

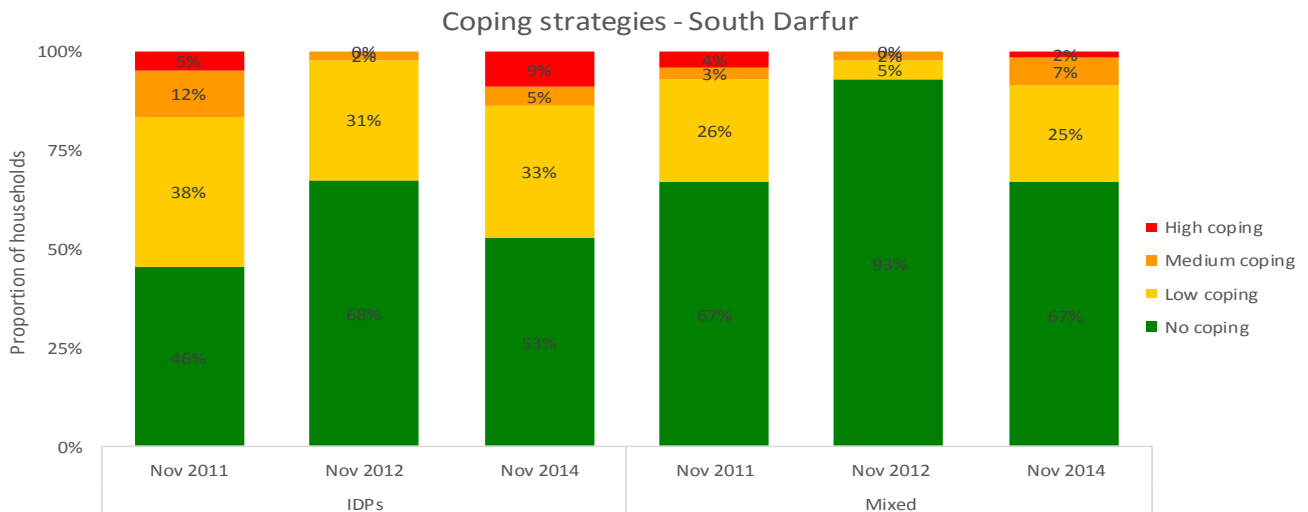
Food consumption deteriorated moderately compared to the same period in 2012, despite a very good agricultural season in the 2014/15 season. The lack of improvement could have been due to dramatically increased economic stress on many households, as discussed below.

Household food consumption - South Darfur



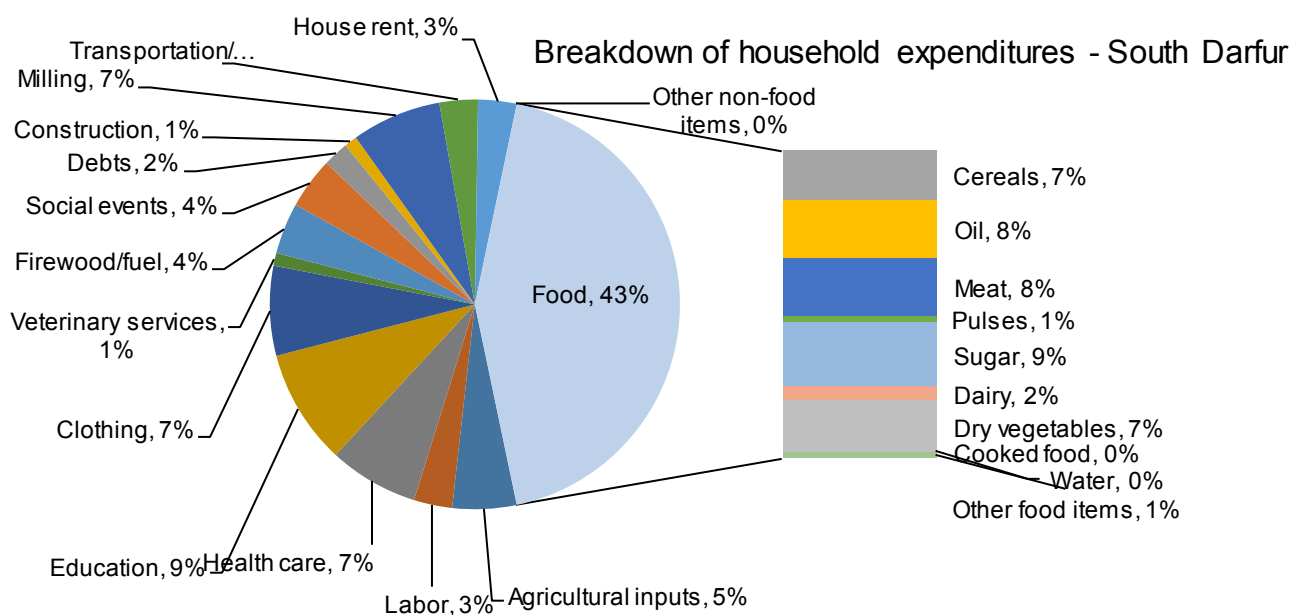
Perceived Food Access

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 households who reported not having enough food increased compared to 2012, both within camp IDPs and households in mixed communities. The deterioration could be related to weakened purchasing power, increased displacement and the arrival of newly displaced persons into IDP camps or host communities. A greater proportion of IDPs (47 percent) considered themselves to have food access problems, compared to households in mixed communities (33 percent). The main type of coping strategies practiced in South Darfur included reliance on less preferred or less expensive food items; consumption of borrowed food or cash to purchase food items; and reliance on help from friends or relatives.



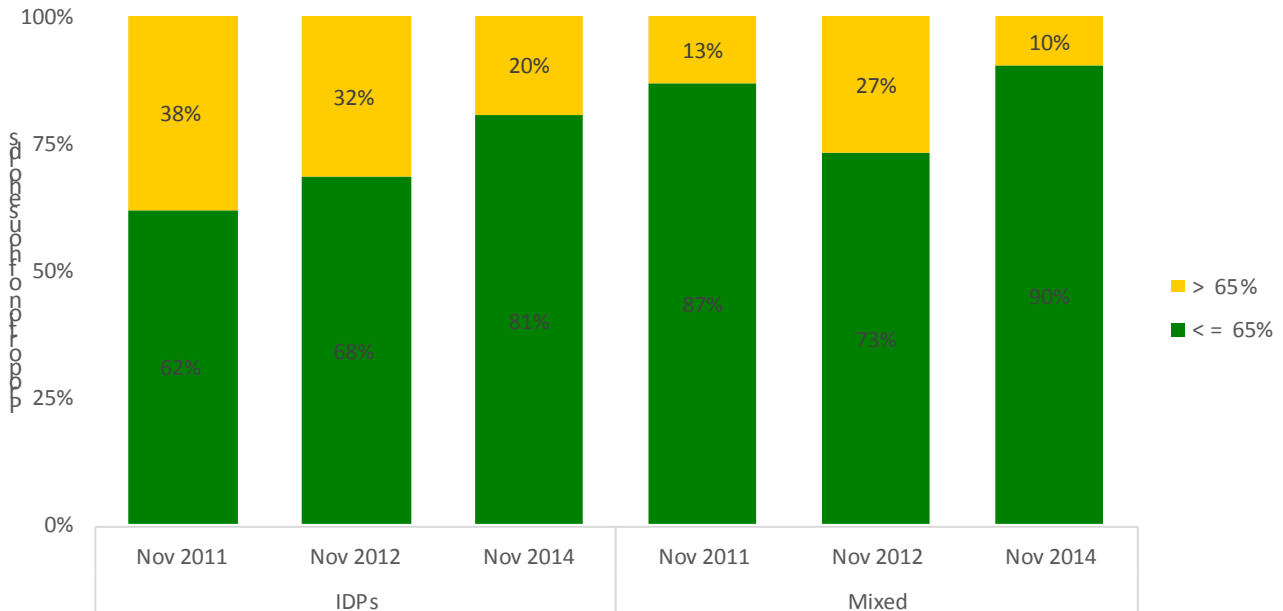
Expenditure

Among all sampled households, the results suggested that an average of 43 percent of the households' monthly expenditure was spent on food items; a decrease from 56 percent reported in November 2011 and 60 percent in November 2012. This might be attributed to increased reliance on own production, following the good agricultural season. The main food items typically purchased were sugar, vegetable oil, meat, cereals and dry vegetables and milk. The main non-food items expenditure were education, followed by health care, clothes, milling, while spending on agricultural inputs represented only five percent of the households' non-food expenditure.



The proportion of households who spent more than 65 percent of their expenditure on food (a threshold above which households are more likely to experience economic stress) dropped significantly compared to November 2012 and 2011. Although often interpreted as indicating an improved economic situation, it was believed, in the light of the eroding purchasing power discussed below, that the decrease in relative food expenditure was related to increase food production in the household during the harvest period.

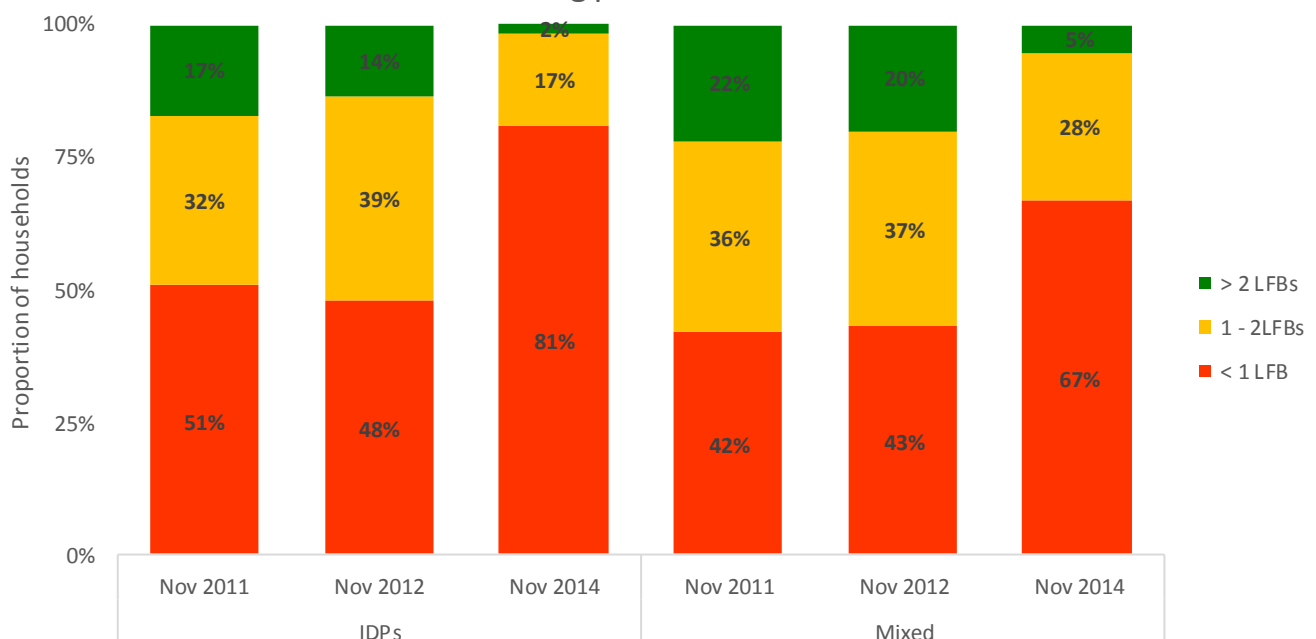
Proportion of household expenditure spent on food - South Darfur



Purchasing Power

The cost of the local food basket (LFB) in South Darfur was 5.16 SDG/person/day in November 2014, considerably higher than the price recorded in May 2013 (4.91 SDG/person/day). The high cost of the LFB was mainly due to increased prices of major food items such as cereals, oil, milk and sugar. The rising price of food adversely affected households' purchasing power, to the degree that 81 percent of IDPs in camps and 67 percent of households in mixed communities were unable to afford minimum food requirements. The results constituted a severe deterioration, compared to 2012, when the corresponding percentages were 48 and 43 for IDPs and mixed communities, respectively.

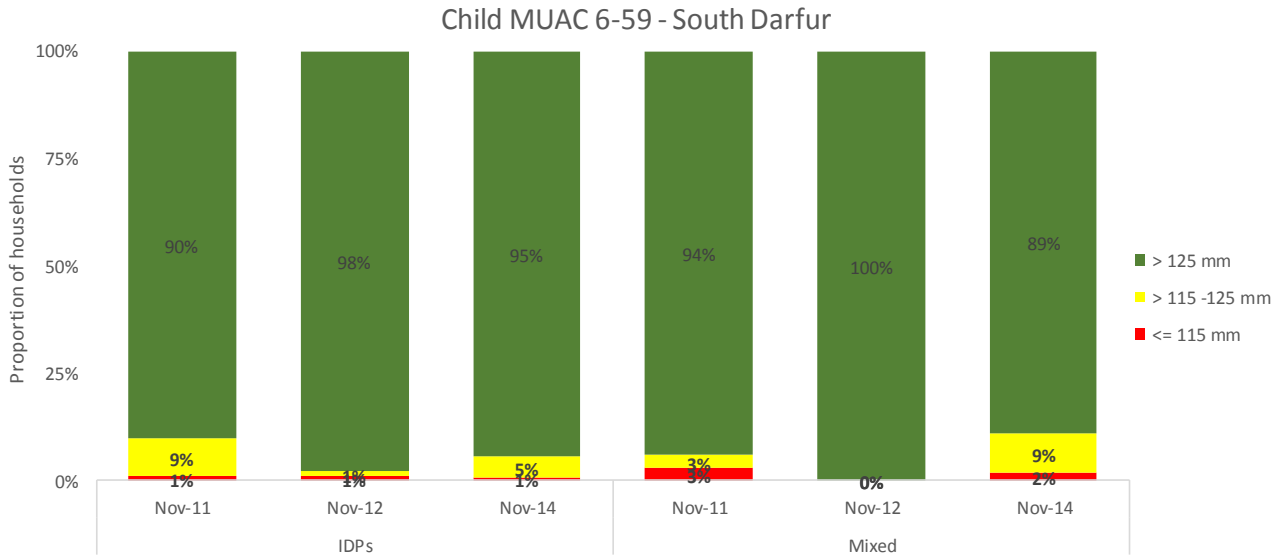
Purchasing power - South Darfur



Child Health and Nutrition

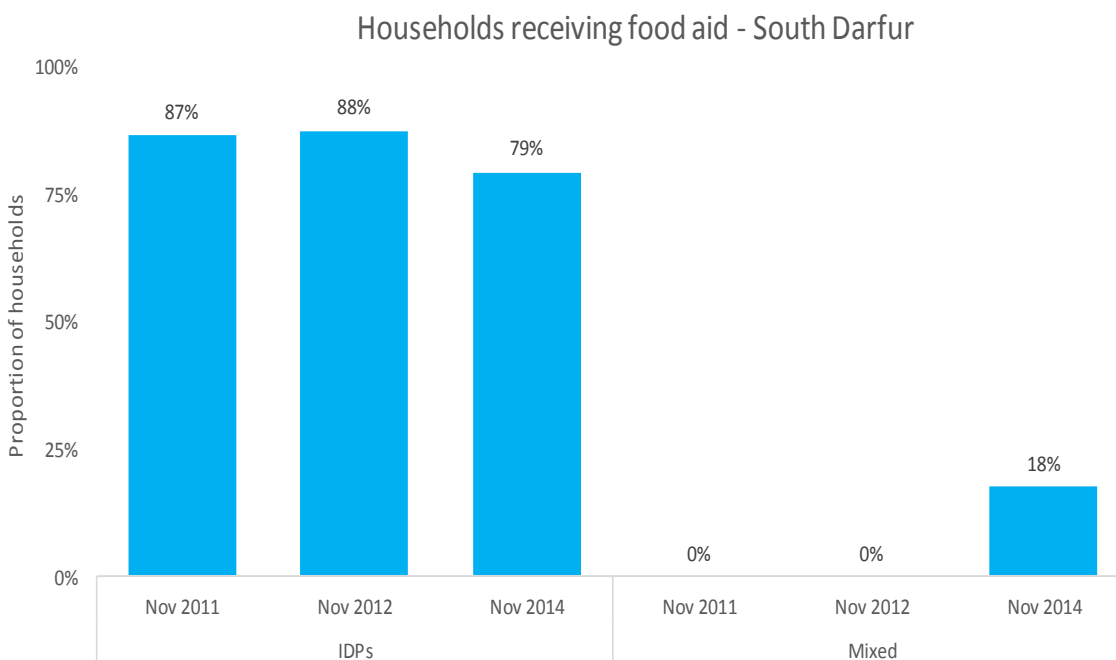
The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) of all children aged 6-59 months in surveyed households was measured and classified as very low (below 115 mm, a proxy for severe acute malnutrition), moderately low (between 115 and 125mm, a proxy indicator for moderate acute malnutrition), and normal.

One percent of IDP children were found to have very low MUAC and five percent had moderately low MUAC. Compared to November 2012, the MUAC measurement of IDP children had deteriorated. The MUAC result for mixed communities was worse, with the proportion of very and moderately low MUAC in this group totaling 11 percent. This constituted a deterioration, compared to 2011 and 2012.



Food Assistance

The percentage of households receiving food assistance was 43 percent in IDP camps and 18 percent in mixed communities. The relatively low coverage of food assistance for IDPs, compared to 2011 and 2012, could be a result of under-reporting and of disruption to food assistance delivery related to population verification processes. Seasonal food assistance support to mixed communities had shifted its geographical focus.



Who were the Food Insecure?

The analysis revealed a moderate difference in food security depending on the gender of the household head. Female headed households were more likely to be food insecure (16 percent) compared to male headed households (6 percent). Camp IDP households tended to be more food insecure compared to mixed and resident communities. The educational level of the household head was positively related to household food security status. Households with non-agricultural labor as their main income sources tended to have lower purchasing power than those who rely on other sources of income and as a result they were more food insecure than those who relied on crop sales, small business and salaried work. Households having members with special needs had similar food security situation compared to households with no members with special needs.