

West Darfur, Sudan

Food Security Monitoring, November 2014



World Food Programme

Executive Summary

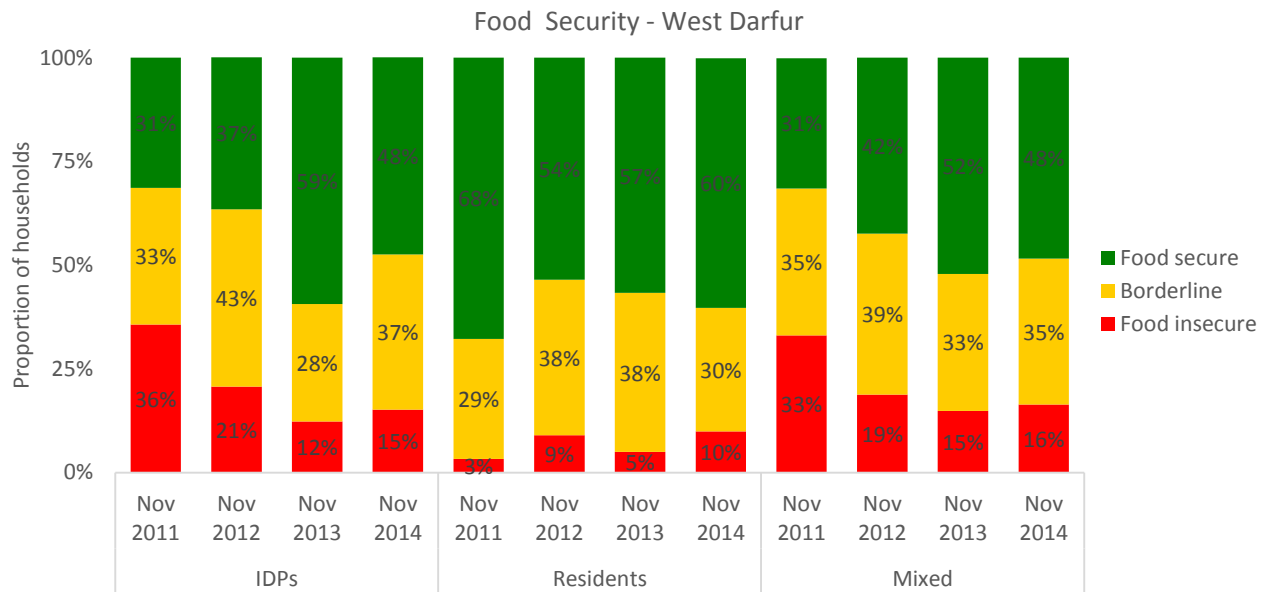
- Data collection was carried out in collaboration with the West Darfur State Ministry of Agriculture (SMoA) during November and December 2014, which constituted the beginning of the harvesting season. A total of 474 households from 20 locations in West Darfur were interviewed.
- The overall food security situation deteriorated among households in IDP camps and remained largely unchanged for households in resident communities and mixed communities. The main factor contributing to the deterioration among IDPs was poor purchasing power due to increased prices of food items.
- After a four month long period of declining sorghum prices – following a normal seasonal pattern – the price of sorghum prices in Geneina market were still slightly higher compared to November 2013 and almost double the five-year average. Main causes of the high price level included high general inflation and currency devaluation.
- In November 2014, small businesses represented the main livelihood activities for IDPs households. Households in mixed communities appeared to have more diversified income activities than IDPs and residents. Reliance on sale of crops increased significantly among the resident communities in November 2014 which is attributed to the good harvest.
- The cost of the local food basket (LFB) was SDG 6.51 per person per day in November 2014. The cost was 50 percent higher than in November 2013, and more than 120 percent higher than in November 2012. The dramatic increase in the cost of the LFB was due to the increases in the prices of foods, such as sugar, dry okra, sorghum and milk.
- In a dramatic deterioration of purchasing power, over three quarters of households, across the community types, could not afford the cost of one local food basket.
- The proportion of households who spent less than 65 percent of their total expenditure on food (and therefore less likely to be vulnerable to economic shocks) remained unchanged for all community groups, compared to the same time last year. Likely, decreases in purchasing power was offset by increased households food production.
- Food consumption among IDP and mixed communities deteriorated in this round compared to the same time of last year. The deterioration in food consumption was attributed to the increased cost of food which limited affordability. Even though the decline in purchasing power was as severe for residents as for IDP and mixed communities, it seemed that the food consumption of residents was cushioned by greater engagement in crop production, enabling them to benefit from the good 2014/15 agricultural season.
- The percentage of households who reported facing food shortages remained similar compared to previous FSMS rounds. It may be that households adopted mostly long-term livelihood coping strategies (which were not captured in the FSMS) to acquire food rather than short-term strategies such as mere changes in food consumption.

Food Security

The food security situation among camp IDP households deteriorated compared to November 2013, with the proportion of households classified as food secure shrinking from 59 to 48 percent. The situation for residents and mixed communities remained largely unchanged over the same period. The severity of food insecurity was similar among households in IDP camps and in mixed communities, while a larger proportion of resident households (60 percent) was found to be food secure.

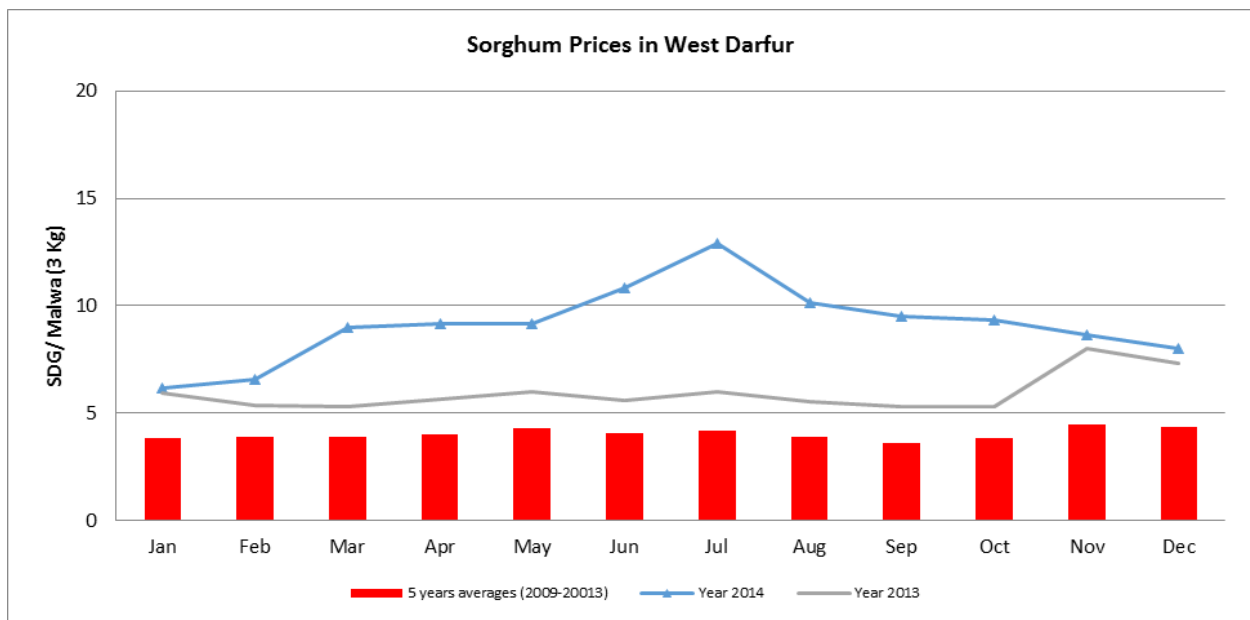
The main factors contributing to the deterioration of the food security among IDPs were the increased prices of food in the state due to increase demand from Chad, high cost of transportation from central Sudan and the high

rate of general inflation in the country as a whole. The most recent issue of the WFP Market Monitor (January 2015) elaborated on the extant and causes of high food prices.



Market Conditions

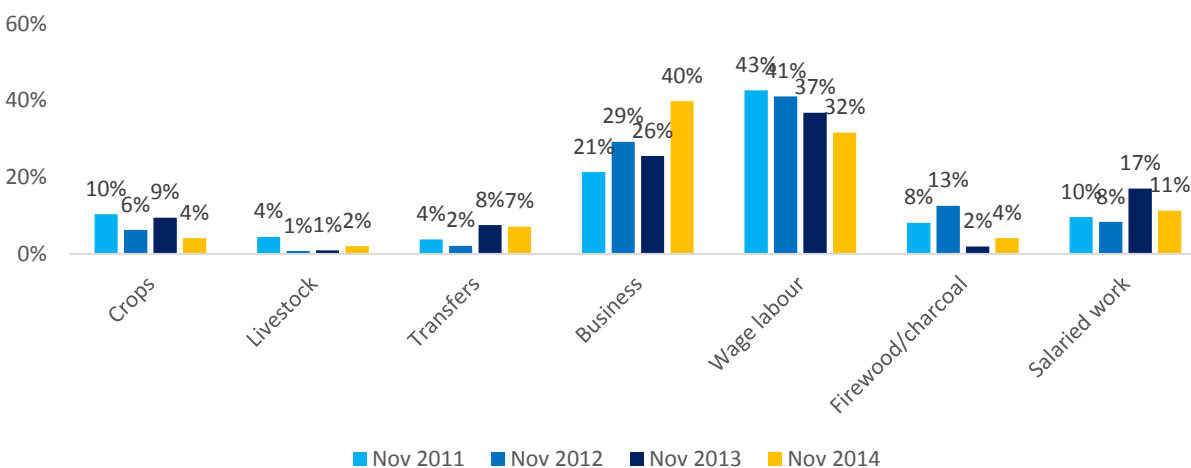
In November 2014, the average sorghum prices in Geneina market were slightly higher compared to November 2013, but almost double the five-year average and this may be largely because of the lingering effects of high inflation. The removal of the oil subsidy in 2013 was a key contributing factor in increasing commodities prices that has put inflationary pressure on sorghum prices, through higher costs of agricultural inputs and transportation. Sorghum prices have followed a downward trend since the August 2014, when the anticipation of a good agricultural season interrupted a 6 month period of continuous price increases.



Income Sources

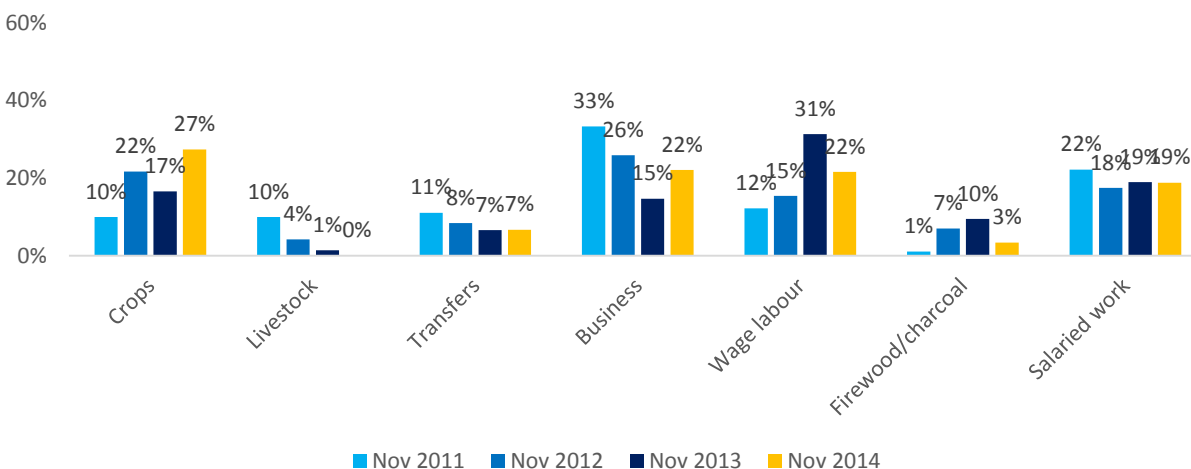
The findings of this FSMS round revealed that more households among IDP communities were engaged in small business activities in November 2014 compared to the previous three years. Small business seems to have grown in importance over the years, which could indicate an increased demand of services provided, such as cart transport, donkey renting, and tea making. Others livelihood groups such as sale of crops and livestock, transfer and salaries remained largely unchanged compared to previous years. Despite the prolonged period of displacement, IDPs appear not to have developed a similar pattern of income generation as resident communities, with IDPs being more likely to engage in wage labor and less likely to engage in sale of own crop production, compared to residents.

Main Income Source, IDP communities - West Darfur



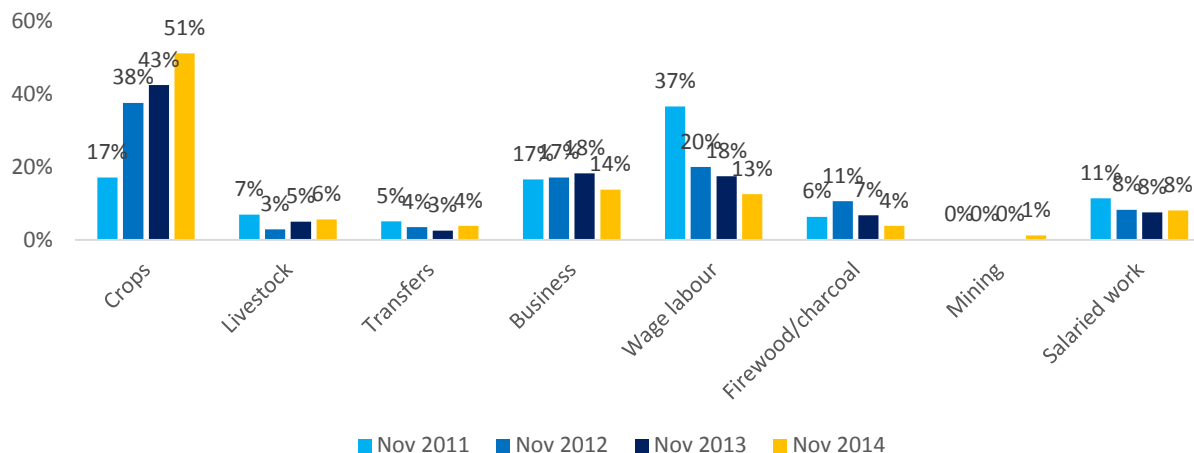
Mixed communities appeared to rely on more diversified income generation profile compared to IDP and resident communities. Over seventy percent of mixed community households depended on sales of crops, wage labour or small business in this round of data collection. Notably, during this good harvest season the proportion of households engaging in secondary income source, such as firewood and grass collection, diminished. Meanwhile, more households were engaged in agricultural activities.

Main Income Source, Mixed communities - West Darfur



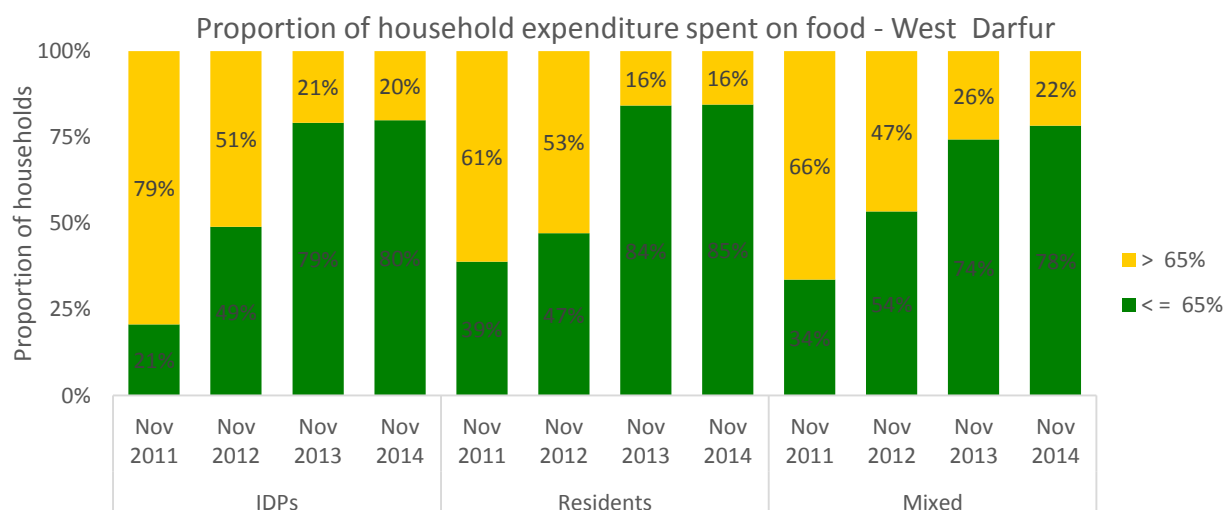
Reliance on sale of own agricultural production increased among resident communities in November 2014 to the point that half of surveyed households reported sale of crops as their most important income source. The increase was a result of an exceptionally good agricultural season, and off-set by decreases in small business and wage labor. The revived phenomena of traditional mining in South Darfur was the primary income source for only one percent of surveyed households.

Main Income Source, Residents communities - West Darfur



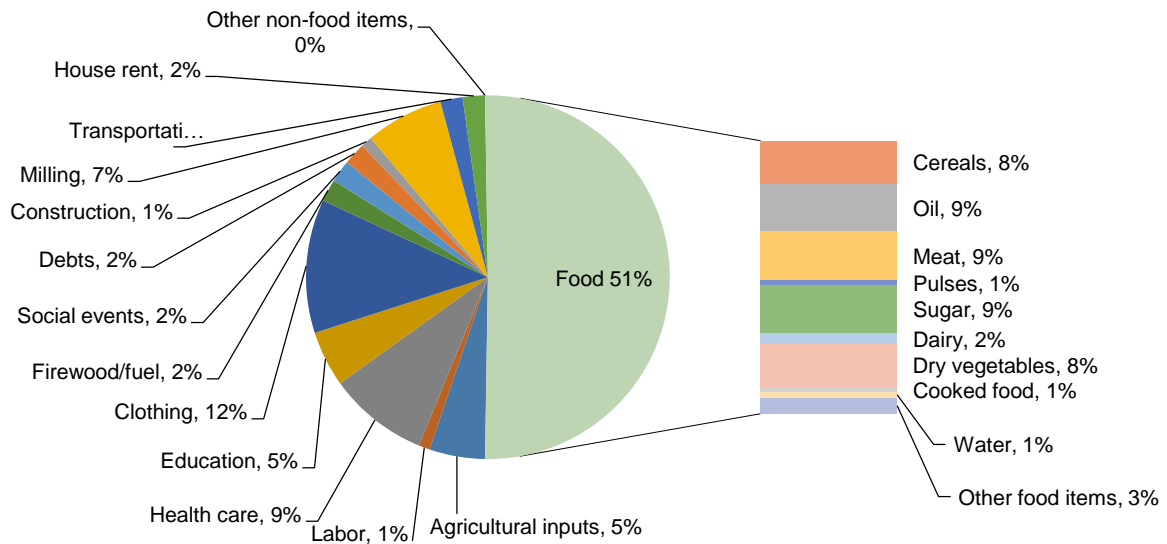
Expenditure

The share of household expenditure spent on food was used as a proxy indicator of economic stress: a larger share of food expenditure may indicate a greater vulnerability to price and income shocks. Commonly used thresholds for the share of food expenditure were used to classify households into poor (more than 65% of expenditures) and good (less than 65%). The proportion of households who spent less than 65 percent of their total expenditure on food remained unchanged in November 2014 compared to 2013. The results were somewhat unexpected, given that the 2014/15 agricultural season was much better than the 2013/14 season. It is possible that the impact of the dramatic deterioration in purchasing power (as discussed further below) on relative expenditure was offset by increased household food production.



The largest components of household food expenditure were meat, oil and sugar (9 percent each) and dry vegetables and cereals (8 percent each). Main non-food items included clothing, health care and milling.

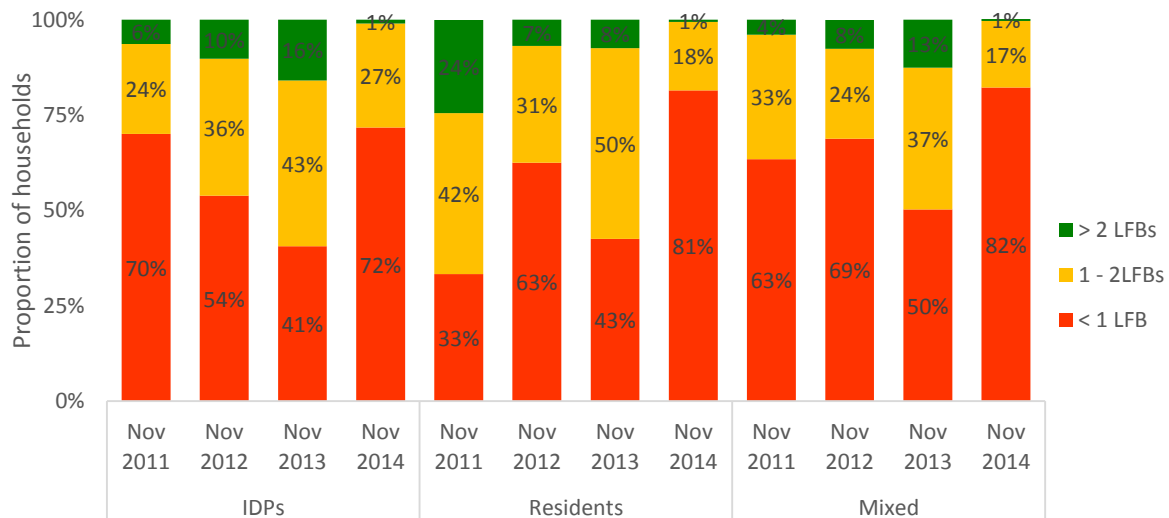
Breakdown of household expenditures - West Darfur



Purchasing Power

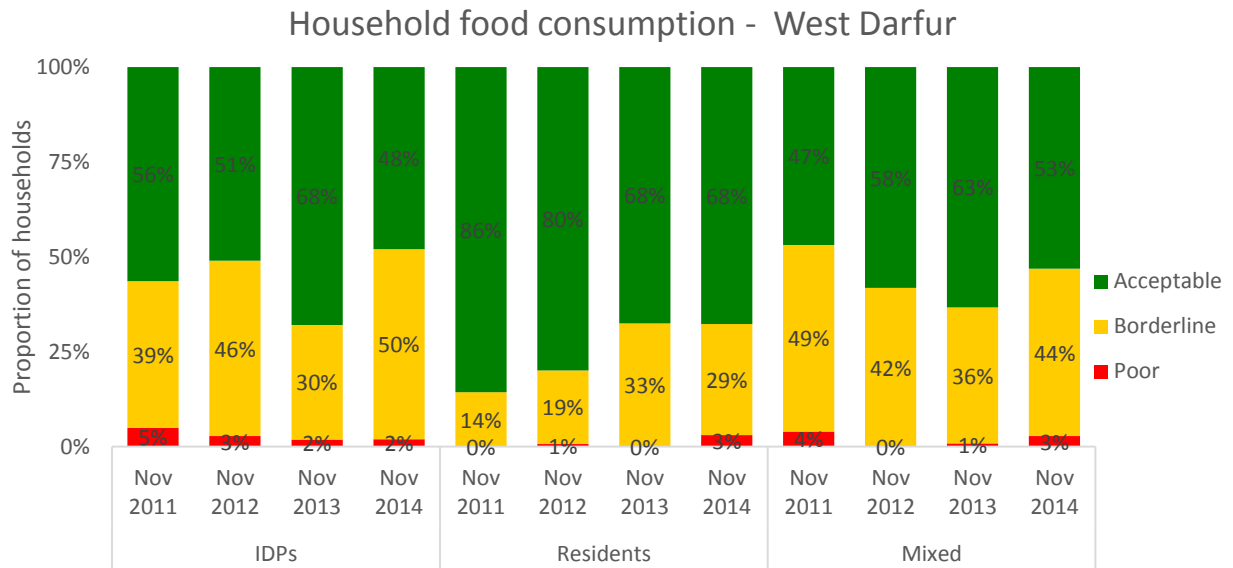
The cost of the local food basket (LFB) was SDG 6.51 per person, per day in November 2014, considerably more expensive compared to November 2013 (SDG 4.32), and more than double compared to the cost in November 2012 (SDG 2.91). The increase of the cost of the LFB reduced significantly the purchasing power of all community groups. In a dramatic deterioration, the analysis showed that over three quarters of households, across the community types, cannot afford the cost of one local food basket.

Purchasing power - West Darfur



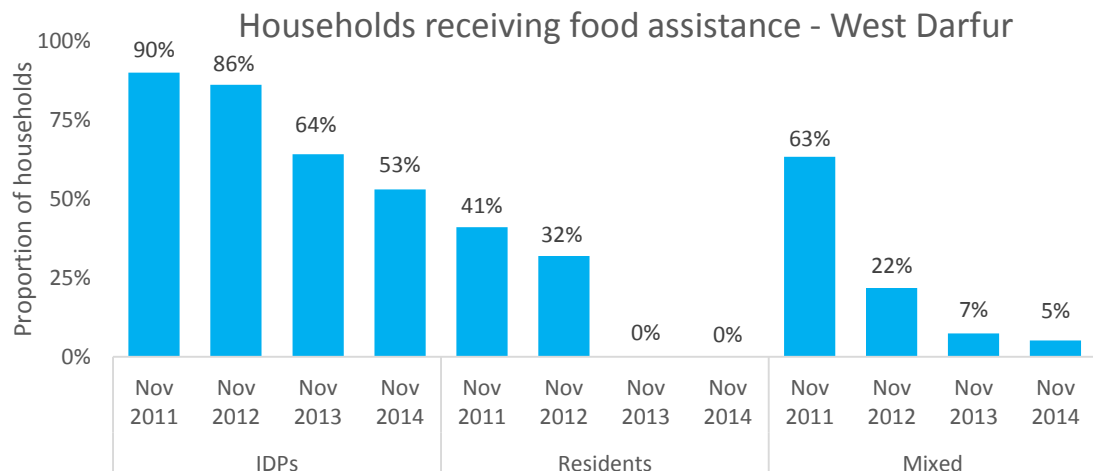
Food Consumption

The percentage of the households with acceptable dietary intake was reduced within IDPs and mixed communities from November 2013 to November 2014. Food consumption remained largely unchanged among resident communities over the same period. The deterioration in food consumption was attributed to the increased cost of food which limited affordability. Even though the decline in purchasing power was as severe for residents as for IDP and mixed communities, it seemed that the food consumption of residents was cushioned by their greater engagement in crop production, benefitting from the good 2014/15 agricultural season.



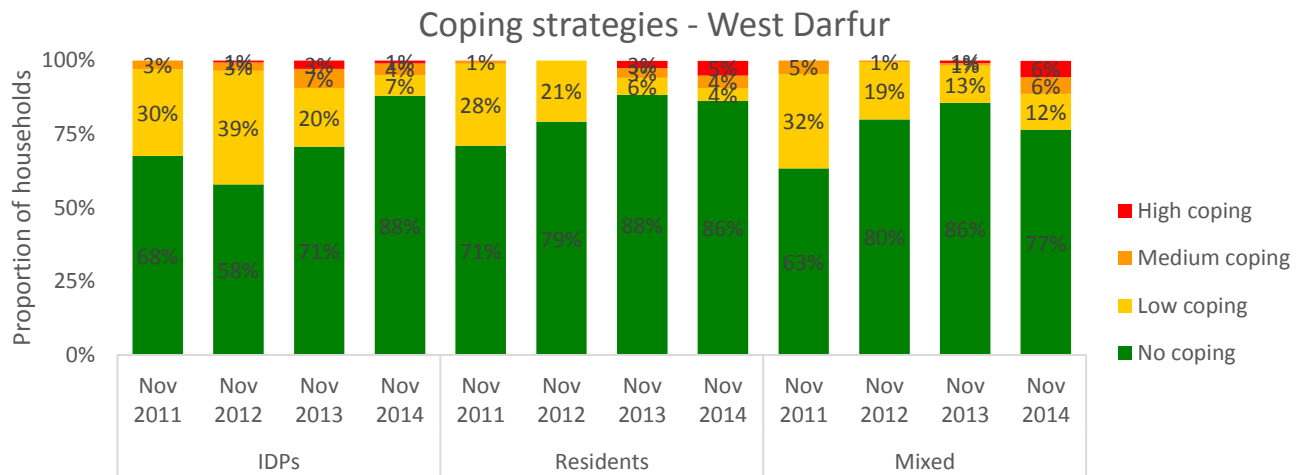
Food Assistance

Unlike the IDPs in camps who receive regular general food distribution (GFD), the phasing out of seasonal support in West Darfur in 2013 has reduced the percentage of households in resident and mixed communities that receive food assistance. Seasonal support was initially implemented to target households in rural resident communities and IDPs outside camps during the lean period. The percentage of IDPs receiving regular GFD (in kind or vouchers) also decreasing as a result of WFP's new strategy of moving gradually from emergency assistance to a more recovery based and targeted interventions.



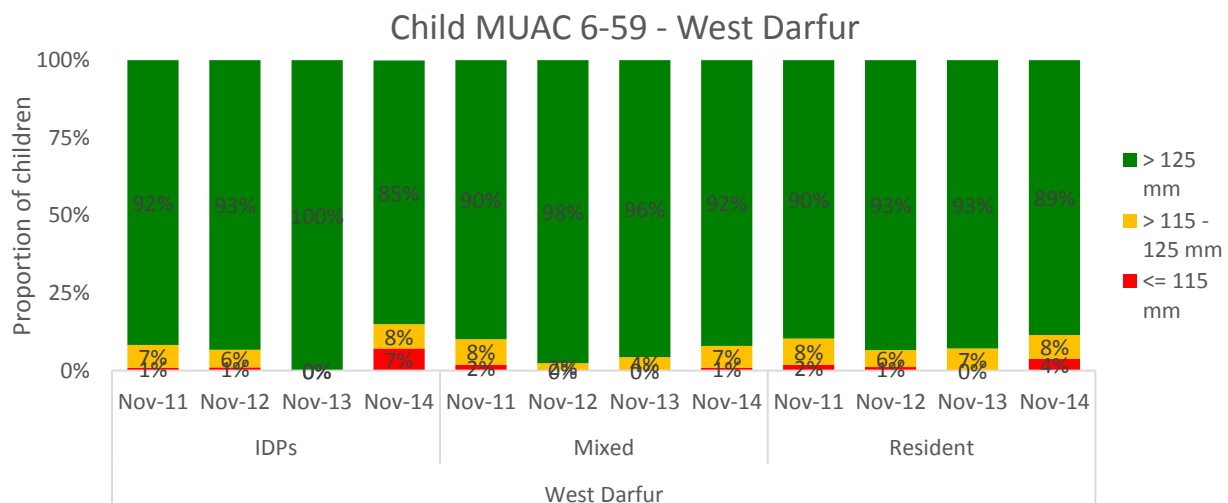
Food Access Perceptions

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 asked what strategies they employed to cope with the shortage. The percentage of households who reported experiencing food shortage remained small across all community groups and fairly similar to November 2013. An improvement was seen among IDPs and a moderate deterioration among mixed communities.



Child Nutrition

The mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC) was measured on 565 children aged 6-59 months 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. IDP children were found to be worse MUAC measurements compared to children in mixed and resident communities. Fifteen, 11 and eight percent of children in IDP, resident and mixed communities, respectively, exhibited either very low or moderately low MUAC. MUAC measurements deteriorated in all community types compared to previous rounds, especially among IDP children. Children from households with food access problems were more likely to have low MUAC. No relationship was found between low MUAC and household food security, nor with household wealth groups.



Who are the Food Insecure?

Household food security status was cross-tabulated with a series of household characteristics to identify common traits among food insecure households. Household heads with low educational level were more likely to be food insecure than those with secondary and higher educational levels: more than 23 percent of households with illiterate head were food insecure compared to only 6 percent of household headed by a secondary educated head. Unlike in previous FSMS rounds, no significant difference was seen in food insecurity between households headed by men and women (13 and 15 percent, respectively).

The type of housing and access to improve sanitation was linked to household food security status. The results show that households living in mud/mud brick or stone/concrete brick houses were more food secure than those living in houses made from thatch or plastic sheeting. Household with access to improve sanitation were more likely to be food secure. Sixty-four, 52, and 46 percent of households who used improved latrine, traditional pit latrine and bush/stream were food secure, respectively.