**Key messages for decision makers**

- As a result of two rounds of food assistance to households in Dikwa, the proportion of households with poor and borderline food consumption has decreased from 89 percent in January to 63 percent in February.
- The mean reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) remains high at 21 for households with poor consumption, but has decreased from 24 in January to 17 in February for households with borderline food consumption. For households with acceptable food consumption, the rCSI has increased from 17 in January to 21 in February.
- In view of the level of vulnerability and high proportion of households with borderline food consumption, food assistance and livelihood programs need to continue to target this population to engage in food production and maintain access to food.

**Introduction**

A second round of rapid food security assessment was conducted in Dikwa during the week of 7th to 14th February 2017 as part of the rapid response mechanism jointly implemented by WFP and UNICEF. Despite the ongoing delivery of food assistance to households fleeing conflict-affected areas, food security conditions remain challenging due to large-scale displacements and the overwhelming loss of livelihoods by a substantial portion of the population.

These conditions are further exacerbated by the persistent insecurity which affects both local markets functioning and the ability of households to engage in livelihood and income generating activities.

The second round of RRM was intended to sustain access to food for IDPs returning to their places of origin as well as new IDPs and host community households. It also sought to provide nutrition support to prevent malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months, through provision of blanket supplementary feeding.

So far, the food assistance provided to people living into these hard to reach areas has been crucial for the survival of many families as it has become the main sources of sustenance.
Methodology

During the second round of food distribution, a total of 300 beneficiaries households were interviewed to ascertain their food security status. These households responded to questions on their current consumption of a range of food items as well as the strategies used to cope with limited access to food. Some 88% of households are male-headed and 12% are female-headed. While 57 percent of the interviewed households are IDPs in camps, 39 percent are IDPs in host communities. The rest of them are IDPs living in collective settlement (2%) or permanent resident (2%).

Food consumption

The food security situation of the interviewed households is generally characterized by heavy reliance on food assistance (73 percent). Thanks to the food assistance delivered to these households in January 2017, the proportion of households with poor food consumption declined from 50 percent in January to 23 percent while the proportion of households with acceptable food consumption increased from 11 percent to 47 percent in February. At the same time, the proportion of households with borderline food security also declined from 39 percent in January to 30 percent in February.

On average, households with acceptable food consumption ate two meals during the day before the assessment which is similar to the number of meals consumed by poor and borderline households. However, the quality of these meals varied between food consumption groups.

On average households with poor food consumption ate staples for 5 days, pulses for 1 day, and oil for 2 days with little consumption of meat or fish and fruits. Household with acceptable food consumption on the other hand had much better consumption of various food items with staple cereals being eaten for 7 days, pulses for 5 days, vegetables for 1 day, fruits for 1 day and meat or fish for two days.

Similar to the previous assessment in January, households in IDP camps are more affected by poor food consumption than their counterparts in host communities. As a result of the delivery of food assistance during the past two months, more IDPs households have attained acceptable food consumption status.

IDPs in host communities have the lowest proportion of households with poor food consumption and the largest proportion of households with acceptable food consumption. Overall, the food consumption situation remains fragile, and 30 percent of households are at risk of dropping in the lower food consumption group.

RRM in Dikwa - Key figures

During the first RRM mission, WFP provided food assistance to almost 90,000 beneficiaries including 5,000 children aged 6-59 months. During the second distribution, WFP reached 121,860 beneficiaries with 1,741 metric tons of food (cereals, pulses, vegetable oil and salt). Blanket supplementary feeding reached 10,160 children aged 6-59 months with 35 metric tons of Plumpy Sup®. New IDPs are still arriving in Dikwa as a result of the ongoing military operations. To meet the needs of these new arrivals, systematic registration is taking place prior to food distributions.
**Food consumption-based coping strategies**

The reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI) measures the use of five food consumption-based coping strategies during the seven days preceding the assessment. Four in every five households experienced some difficulties accessing enough food during the week preceding this assessment. However, the mean rCSI decreased slightly from 22 in January to 20 in February. The mean rCSI remains high at 21 for households with poor consumption, but has decreased from 24 in January to 17 in February for households with borderline food consumption. For households with acceptable food consumption, the rCSI has increased from 17 in January to 21 in February. With respect to household groups, the rCSI for IDPs decreased from 23 in January to 20 in February. Despite the difficulties encountered by these households, community solidarity remains high and 76 percent of households have shared their ration with other households.

**Conclusion**

The delivery of food assistance to conflict-affected households in Dikwa over the past 2 months has had the effect of improving access to food and reducing the proportion of food households with poor food consumption from 89 percent in January to 63 percent in February. Despite this progress, the proportion of food insecure households remain substantially high and future food assistance will be necessary especially as the lean season approaches and further decrease in food access is expected due to rising prices and season decline in food availability.

As a considerable proportion of households are vulnerable, these households need to be specifically target with appropriate programs to enable them to cope with limited access to food. The high proportion of vulnerable households along with those having borderline food insecurity would likely remain food insecure during the lean season. Sustained food assistance to those households will also be necessary until food access is improved after a new harvest.

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