



Nigeria

Dikwa Rapid Food Security Assessment

January 2017

Key messages for decision makers

- Due to the inability of households to engage in farming during the past two years, Dikwa and its environs have been transformed from being one of the breadbaskets of Borno State to an area of large food production deficit.
- A large portion of households (89%) have poor and borderline food consumption (39% and 50% respectively) while the mean reduced coping strategy index remains high (22).
- Prevailing security restrictions have impacted negatively on the functioning of the livestock market, thus constraining the purchasing power of agro-pastoral households.
- Though the market for staple food is functioning, the food production deficit in the area has contributed to a reduced availability of food commodities and high prices. The situation could further deteriorate in the coming months, leading to skyrocketing prices.
- Sustained food assistance to the most vulnerable households will be crucial during the lean season to prevent widespread incidents of food insecurity and malnutrition.

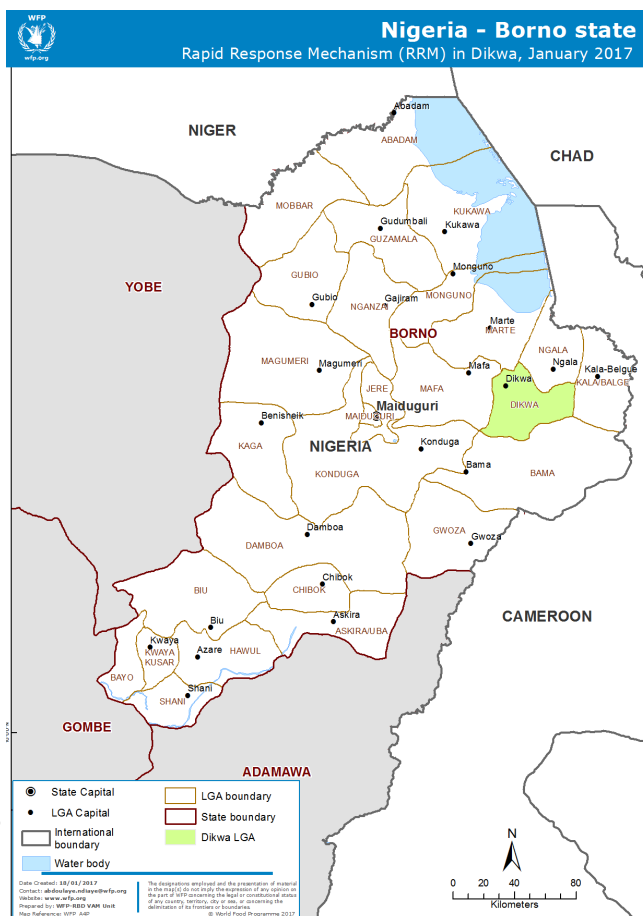
Introduction

From 9th to 13th January 2017, WFP conducted a rapid food security assessment as part of the rapid response mechanism (RRM) to Dikwa. Following the recapture of Dikwa by Nigerian Armed Forces in July 2015, the residents began returning home. With the military operations launched by the Nigerian Forces to liberate the remaining settlements under Boko Haram control, the affected population continue to seek refuge in main cities.

Thus, in addition to the IDPs returning to their places of origin, humanitarian actors have had to respond to the needs of new IDPs who are fleeing military operations or have been advised to come into safe areas.

Dikwa symbolizes not only the complexity of the main challenges faced by humanitarian community in responding to rapidly changing needs in hard to reach areas, but also how effective coordination amongst food security sectors and partners could prevent further deterioration in the food security and nutrition situation.

The International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) has been the main humanitarian organization which provided food assistance to the people of Dikwa until December 2016. In January 2017, ICRC handed over all their beneficiaries in Dikwa to WFP to ensure continued provision of food assistance to this population.



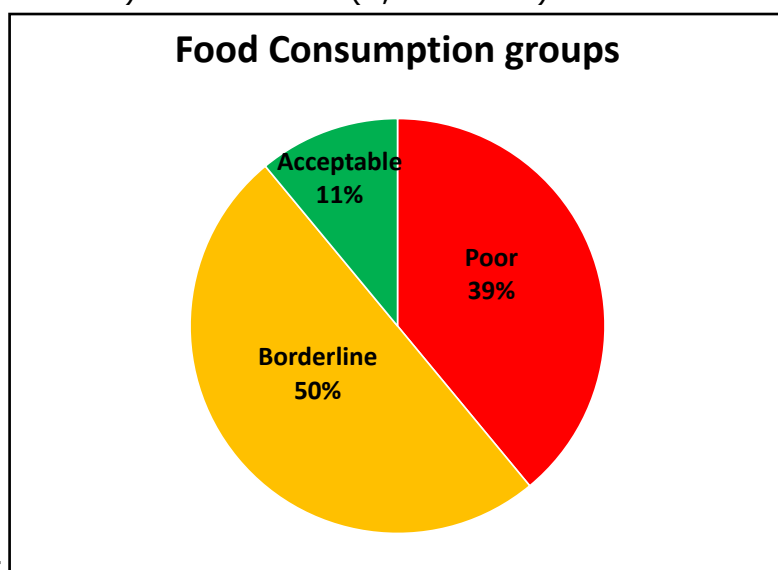
Methodology

A total of 200 beneficiaries were interviewed during the registration exercise to obtain information on the current food security situation. The respondents were randomly selected by community volunteers to respond to questions on food consumption and the strategies used to cope with limited access to food. Some 81% of households are male-headed and 19% are female-headed. While the vast majority of households are IDPs (82%), 8% are returning IDPs and 10% have not been displaced.

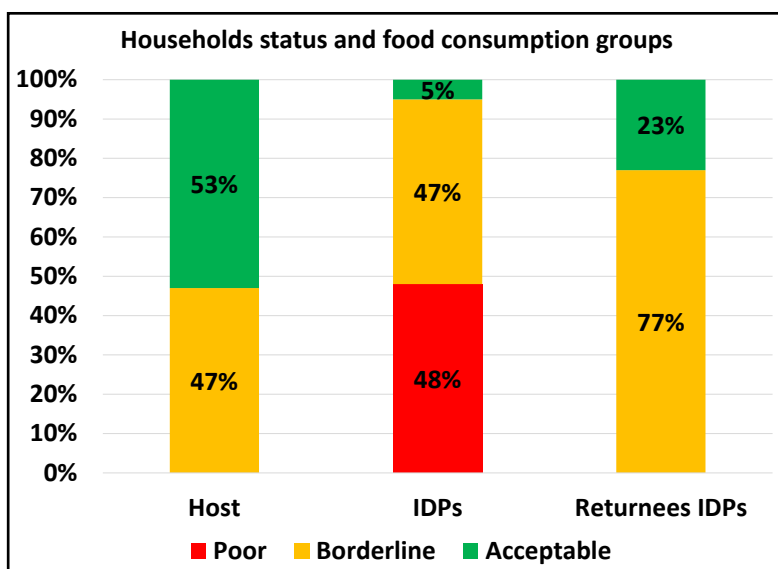
Food consumption

Food assistance is currently the main source of food for households in Dikwa. Security restrictions are still in place, and households were not able to cultivate their land during the last two years. The day before the survey, 8% of households consumed only one meal, while the rest had two (74%) or three meals (18%). The proportion of households having three daily meals is higher among host population households (42%) compared to IDPs (16%) and returnees IDPs (12%). Monthly food expenditure is higher for households consuming three daily meals (5,000 Naira) compared to those who have one (1,800 Naira) or two meals (2,000 Naira).

Some 39% of households have poor food consumption, while the rest have borderline (50%) or acceptable (11%) food consumption. The average monthly food expenditure is higher for households with acceptable food consumption (8,000 Naira) compared to households with borderline (2,300 Naira) or poor (1,200 Naira) food consumption. The differences in food expenditure is explained by the fact that households with acceptable food consumption consume proteins three days per week while others do not. The proportion of households with poor food consumption score is lower amongst households consuming three meals per day (31%) compared to those who consume two (41%) or one meal per day (47%).



IDPs households are most vulnerable to food insecurity. Some 48% of them have poor food consumption and it is worth mentioning that only IDPs households have poor food consumption, probably those who arrived after the previous distribution. Conversely, only 5% of these households have acceptable food consumption. Host community households on the other hand seem to be less vulnerable since 53% of them have acceptable food consumption. Returnee IDPs are also vulnerable since 77% of them have borderline food consumption. A number of rapid assessments conducted in Borno in December 2016 State found that IDPs from newly liberated areas were facing highly precarious food security conditions.



There is therefore the need to closely monitor the situation and register new arrivals on a regular basis in these targeted locations.

RRM in Dikwa - Key figures

During the RRM mission that took place from 9th to 13rd January 2017, WFP registered almost **90,000 beneficiaries** including **5,000 children aged 6-59 months**. After the registration, WFP team distributed **770 metric tons of food** (cereals, vegetable oil and salt) to all beneficiaries and **15 metric tons of Plumpy Sup®** to all **children aged 6-59 months**

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. During this period, almost all households reported using coping strategies. The mean rCSI remains high (22), and households with poor (21) and borderline (24) food consumption more frequently use these strategies than those who have acceptable food consumption (17). Households consuming one meal (24) or two meals (23) per day tend to engage in frequent coping strategies than those consuming three meals (19). The high mean rCSI amongst IDPs (23) and returnees IDPs (25) is a tangible evidence of their level of vulnerability compared to host communities (15).

Market conditions

The market component of the rapid assessment focused on qualitative data collection through focus group discussions with key informants and direct observation. The assessment team only visited the main market in Dikwa town. Commercial activities are gradually resuming in the town. Of the two markets, only the food market is currently functioning, the second being a live-stock market. According to key informants, a lot of livestock such as cattle has been looted by insurgents. Currently, all livestock related transactions have been put on hold by security forces.

During the past two years, insecurity made it impossible for farmers to plant food and cash crops and as a result, Dikwa town and the surrounding areas have been transformed from being one of the breadbaskets of Borno State to a large food production deficit area. Staple foods are available, but not in large quantities. Since markets were not functioning in January 2016, there is therefore no benchmark for a year-to-year price comparison. However, according to key informants, prices are currently very high, and will continue to go up given the large food deficit.

Conclusion

WFP took over the provision of food assistance to the beneficiaries in Dikwa in January 2017 following a handing over by ICRC. This transition ensured continued provision of food assistance to affected people. While many IDPs are returning back home, ongoing military operations to recapture settlements under Boko Haram control are also creating new waves of displacements, posing some operational challenges to humanitarian actors. There is therefore a need to regularly update the number of people in need of food assistance in this community.

Considering the level of vulnerability associated with the loss of large heads of livestock among pastoral households and the inability of agricultural households to engage in agricultural production during the past two years, coupled with the current trend of food insecurity in Dikwa, the provision of food and nutrition assistance need to be sustained in order to prevent widespread incidents of food insecurity and malnutrition.



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