



Nigeria

Rapid Food Security Assessment in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka, Borno State

June 2017

Key Messages for Decision Makers

- The **prevalence of poor food consumption is relatively high** across Banki (73%), Gwoza (41%) and Pulka (36%). Households in Banki are most affected due to the high influx of refugees. **Poor food consumption was also higher among newly arrived households** and those that had not received food assistance, highlighting the importance of sustained food aid to these households.
- Reliance on **emergency coping strategies such as begging and sale of productive female animals** in order to bridge food gaps **remains high with 61% of households** adopting such. Use of these strategies **was more common among newly arrived households**.
- While the malnutrition situation in Gwoza and Pulka was not beyond alert thresholds, in **Banki the situation is concerning based on admission rate of severely malnourished children**. On average, 10 new SAM cases were registered daily in the treatment center during the last 5 days.
- Market systems are frail with activities yet to attain pre-crisis levels and **local food deficits** and **high food prices remain pronounced** across the three communities. Therefore, cash based transfer (CBT) is not recommended in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka for the moment.
- The **volatile security situation has limited livelihood activities**, which will exacerbate food insecurity and vulnerability in the absence of sustained food assistance.
- The reinforcement of the existing **buffer stock** specifically earmarked for newly arrived households is key in order to bridge food gaps within newly arrived vulnerable households.
- Humanitarian response should consider an **integrated approach** since there are other prominent challenges such as access to **firewood** and **clean water**, both of which can aggravate further food utilization if left unattended to.

Background

The Boko Haram insurgency in the north-eastern part of Nigeria disproportionately affected local populace within communities particularly those proximal to Sambisa forest such as Banki (Bama LGA), Gwoza and Pulka (Gwoza LGA). At the peak of the insurgency, there was a near complete displacement of the local population within these communities predominantly to Cameroun and other safer adjoining LGAs within Borno. Despite recent liberation and resettlement of local population within this region due to intensified military operations, Bama and Gwoza local government areas (LGAs) remain partially accessible only with military escort¹, thus limiting humanitarian response within these LGAs.

In May 2017, there was a spontaneous influx of more than 10,000 returnees through Banki from Minawao refugee camp in Cameroun, the camp hosting a substantial number of displaced Nigerians in Cameroun. In Banki alone, the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) increased by about 40 percent (+16,000 IDPs) between March and May 2017² which brought the

¹ Presentation to the Presidential Delegation, May 2017, UNOCHA.

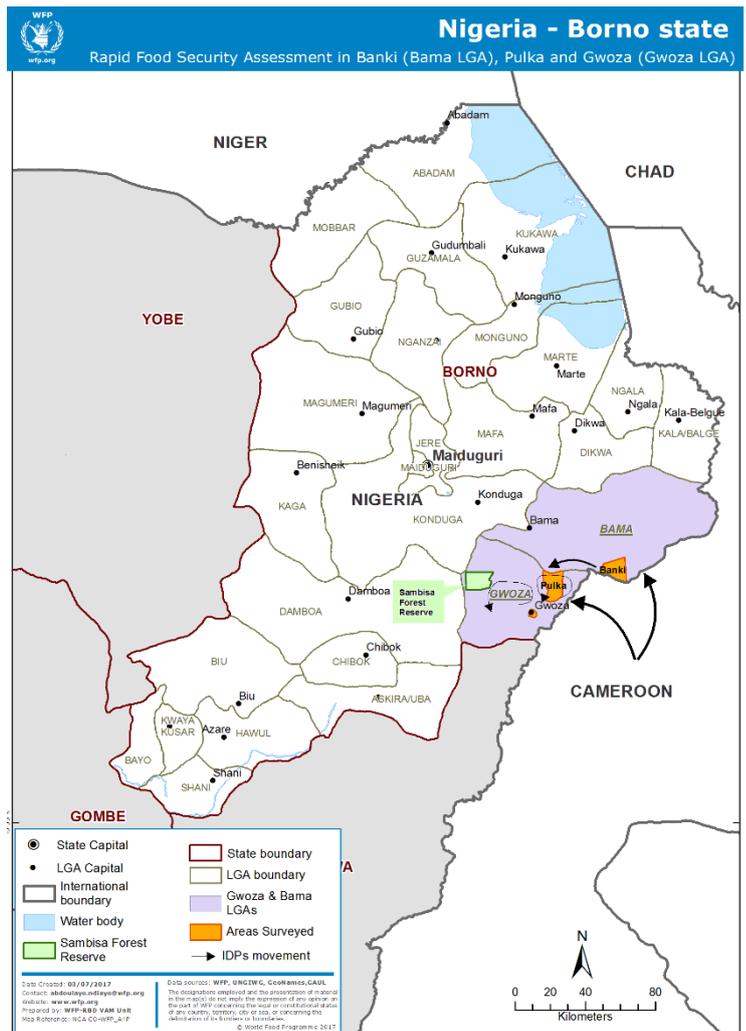
² Situation Report No 12, 31 May, 2017, UNOCHA.

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/10062017_ocha_nga_ne_sitrep_no_12_16_31_may_2017.pdf

total number of IDPs to 43,440³. As a result, the settlement for newly arrived IDPs was expanded beyond the only IDP Camp to vacant unoccupied houses. Moreover, there is an ongoing excavation around the community to create some measure of barrier against invasion by insurgents and further secure Banki's perimeter. This population increase further stretched already limited basic resources such as food, shelter, water and health facilities. To limit the effect of this new influx, the government and humanitarian community have provided relief assistance. Between the months of May and June however, Banki witnessed a shortage of food supply which was underscored by inaccessibility issues.

About 4,000 IDPs were relocated from Banki to Pulka and Gwoza in order to decongest the camp. There are ongoing efforts by the government and humanitarian partners to establish more camps in Bama and Gwoza in order to accommodate more IDPs².

About 64,000 IDPs are currently living in Gwoza (9,349) and Pulka (55,000) with the newly arrived ones hosted in transit camps where they receive immediate relief assistance such as emergency shelter, health, food and WASH. New arrived IDPs however stay longer within these transit camps due to limited or in most cases, complete lack of space within already fully occupied and sometimes, overcrowded permanent IDP camps⁴. Despite the provision of relief assistance within both communities, access to clean water remains a predominant challenge in Pulka due to its topography which makes the installation of borehole extremely difficult and the water scarcity has been further aggravated by the sporadic population increase. About 3,000+ newly arrived households in Pulka, most of which are from neighbouring insecure villages (up to 5km radius) will remain in Pulka for some time due to the volatile security situation within their communities. Moreover, key informant interviews (KIIs) with newly arrived IDPs in Banki signifies that residents



² Situation Report No 12, 31 May, 2017, UNOCHA.

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/10062017_ocha_nga_ne_sitrep_no_12_16_31_may_2017.pdf

³ WFP/INTERSOS General Food Distribution (GFD) Beneficiary List, June, 2017.

⁴ Flash update #3 on the influx of refugees returning to north-east Nigeria from Cameroun, May 2017, UNOCHA. <http://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/ocha-flash-update-influx-refugees-returning-north-east-nigeria-cameroon-update-no-3>

of Pulka (about 10,000 of Banki populace) are desirous of returning to Pulka, a move which could overstretch the already limited resources.

When IDPs from Cameroun and other neighbouring communities arrive in these communities, they were first screened and registered, after which they were admitted into transit camps or holding camps as they were called in Pulka, except for Banki where such camp was inexistent. At these temporary camps, these households received WFP food support predominantly through a communal feeding system where food is cooked at the community level and shared amongst respective households. Following full integration within these camps, households are registered for enrolment on WFP's general food distribution (GFD). WFP's food assistance remains the main source of food in Banki, Pulka and Gwoza. Other non-food items (NFIs) are as well issued to the newly arrived households within these camps.

Considering the recent sporadic influx IDPs from Cameroun and other adjoining localities coupled with the onset of the rainy season, a rapid assessment was conducted by WFP to gain an insight into the food security and nutrition situation within these communities.

Methodology

This report combines both the household and market data. A total of 273 newly arrived IDP households (HHs) were randomly sampled and interviewed by trained enumerators across Banki (105 HHs), Gwoza (89 HHs) and Pulka (79 HHs). These selected households responded to questions regarding their food consumption and coping strategies deployed to manage food shortage. Households surveys were conducted by WFP's cooperating partners, namely **Social Welfare Network Initiative** (Pulka and Gwoza) and **INTERSOS** (Banki).

Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with a cohort of newly arrived female IDPs within the three communities to gain deeper insights into potential abnormal coping strategies deployed when access to food is limited.

In all, 49 percent of all the assessed households were female headed across Banki (25 percent), Gwoza (54 percent) and Pulka (41 percent). Moreover, 48 percent of the households were newly arrived returnees (i.e. previously residing within community prior to displacement) and the remaining 52 percent were newly arrived IDPs (i.e. displaced from other communities). About 40 percent of these newly arrived households have spent less than one month within the communities with the highest in Banki (60 percent), Gwoza (36 percent) and Pulka (25 percent).

The market interviews were administered primarily to market chiefs. Availability and prices of most consumed food commodities were collected.

Food Consumption

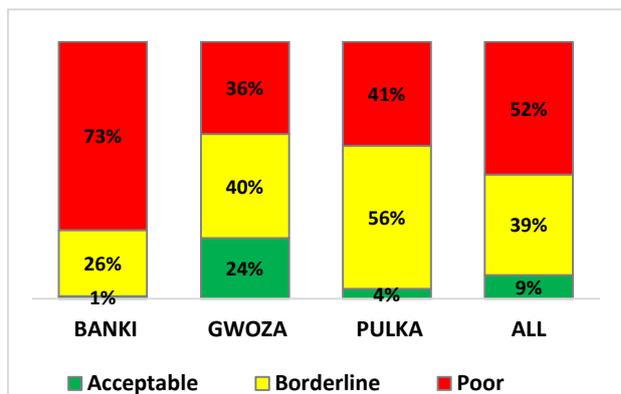
Majority of the households are heavily reliant on food assistance in order to meet their food need as 84 percent of them consented to receiving food assistance within 30 days prior to the assessment. However, about one quarter (27 percent) of households in Banki had not received food aid within the 30 days preceding the assessment compared to their counterparts in Gwoza (2 percent) and Pulka (13 percent) which is worrisome but unsurprising due to the sporadic influx of IDPs into Banki and also the food shortage recorded in May and the first few days in June.

Poor food consumption is relatively high across the three communities (52 percent) with the proportion of households affected in Banki (73 percent) disproportionately higher than those in Gwoza (41 percent) and Pulka (36 percent).

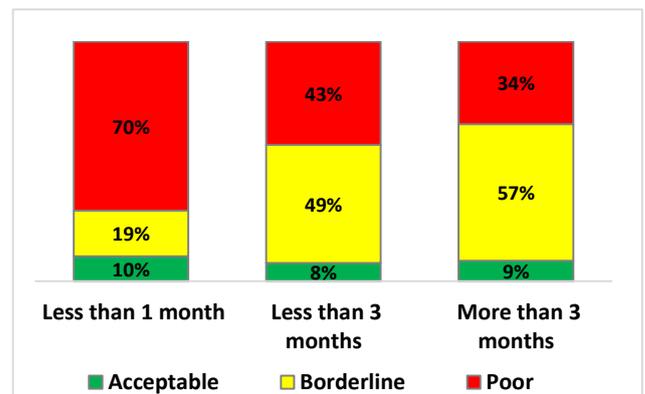
There were more households in Gwoza (24 percent) with acceptable food consumption compared to Pulka (4 percent) and Banki (1 percent). Moreover, poor food consumption was more prevalent among newly arrived households that had spent less than a month within the communities (70 percent) compared to those that had spent less than three months (43 percent) and more than three months (34 percent). As expected, poor food consumption was higher in households that had not benefited from food assistance (82 percent) compared to their counterparts that has benefited from such (46 percent). This finding was consistent across Banki and Pulka but different in Gwoza where there were more food aid beneficiaries with poor food consumption. A contributory factor to the poor food consumption across the communities is the scarcity of firewood which has to be fetched with military escort, which is often lacking due to other conflicting military operations. As a result, cooking has been streamline to once per day.

“Poor food consumption rife across the three communities with Banki most affected”

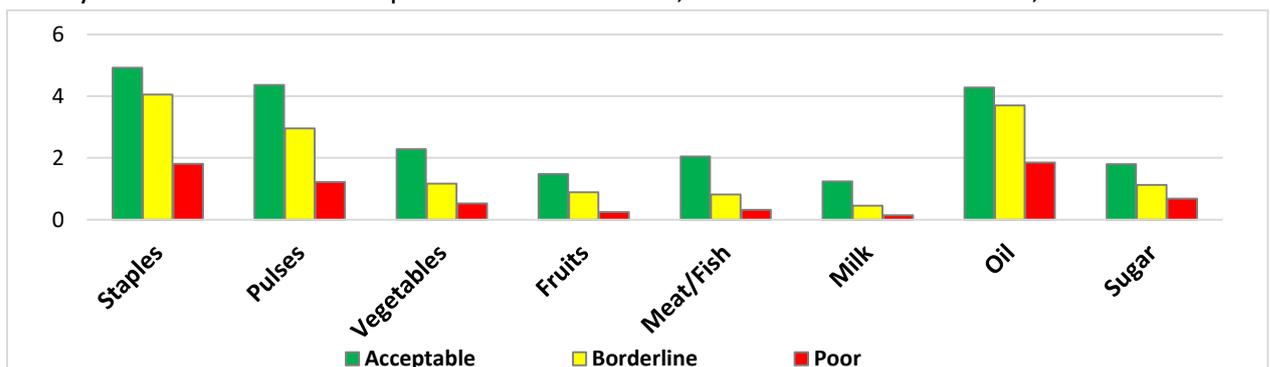
Food Consumption Group by Location (FCG)



FCG and Arrival Period (Number of Months)



On the average, households with poor food consumption ate two meals during the day preceding the assessment whereas those with borderline and acceptable food consumption ate three meals during the same period. Moreover, the quality of meals consumed during seven days preceding the assessment varied across the different food consumption groups. Averagely, households with poor food consumption ate staples and oil for 2 days, pulses and vegetables for 1 day with little or consumption of meat or fish, milk and fruits. Whereas, households with

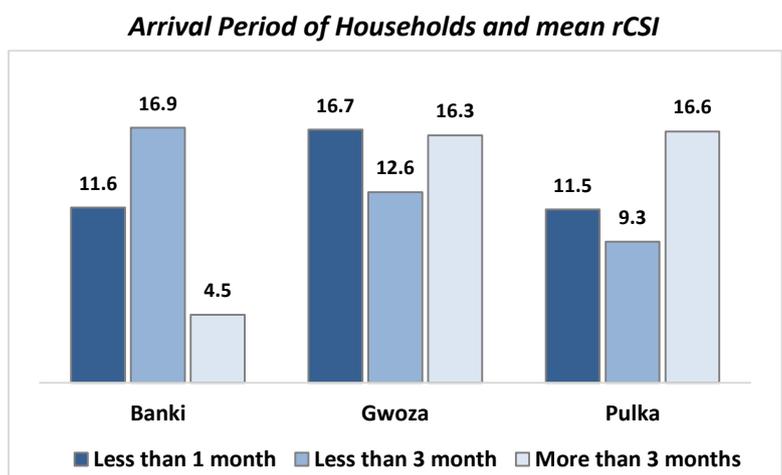


acceptable food consumption had better consumption of the various food items with staples being eaten for 5 days, pulses and oil for 4 days, meat or fish and vegetables for 2 days, and fruits and milk for 1 day.

Despite the high consumption of staples and pulses generally among households with acceptable food consumption, those in Banki had relatively low consumption of both food varieties with staples and pulses on consumed for 2 days within a week. Moreover, consumption of staples was lower among new arrived households that have spent less than one month (2 days) and those that had not received food assistance (2 days) compared to their counterparts that have spent less than three months (3 days), more than three months (4 days) and those that have received food assistance (3 days).

Food and Livelihood 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. Overall, one in every two households (50 percent) experienced difficulty in accessing food within seven days preceding this assessment with Banki (56 percent) having the highest number of such households, then Gwoza (53 percent) and Pulka (37 percent). The mean rCSI across the three communities was 14.6 and Gwoza had a higher rCSI (16.1) compared to Banki (13.8) and Pulka (13.6). Moreover, the rCSI was generally highest among households that have spent a longer time within the communities compared to newly arrived households that have spent less than a month. However, newly arrived households in Gwoza (16.7) had a higher rCSI compared to their counterparts that have spent a longer time.



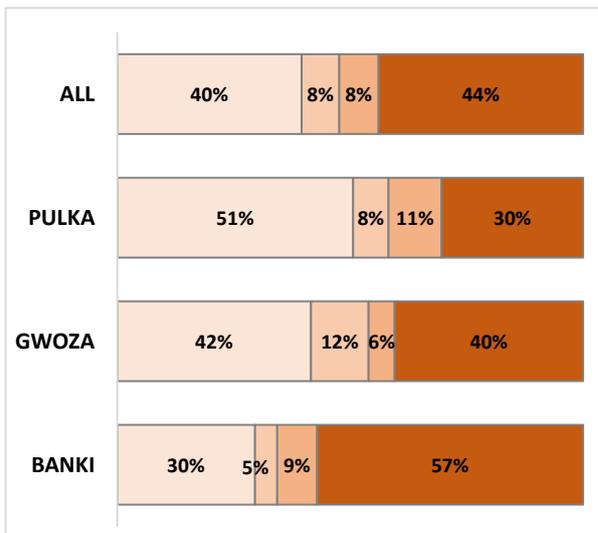
The Livelihood Coping Strategies indicator measures the livelihood stress and asset depletion during the 30 days prior to survey⁵. The overall reliance on livelihood coping strategies is relatively high as about 61 percent of households have relied on these strategies in order to meet their food needs across Banki (71 percent), Gwoza (58 percent) and Pulka (49 percent). It is particularly worrisome that 44 percent of the households have engaged in **emergency coping strategies** such as begging and sale of last female animals, both of which can jeopardize the future productivity of the households. The highest proportion of these households were from Banki (57 percent), then Gwoza (40 percent) and Pulka (30 percent). Moreover, the proportion of households that were reliant on emergency coping strategies was higher among newly arrived households that had spent less than a month within the communities (51 percent) compared to those that had spent

“Future productivity of households at risk as about half (44%) of all households have engaged in emergency coping strategies”

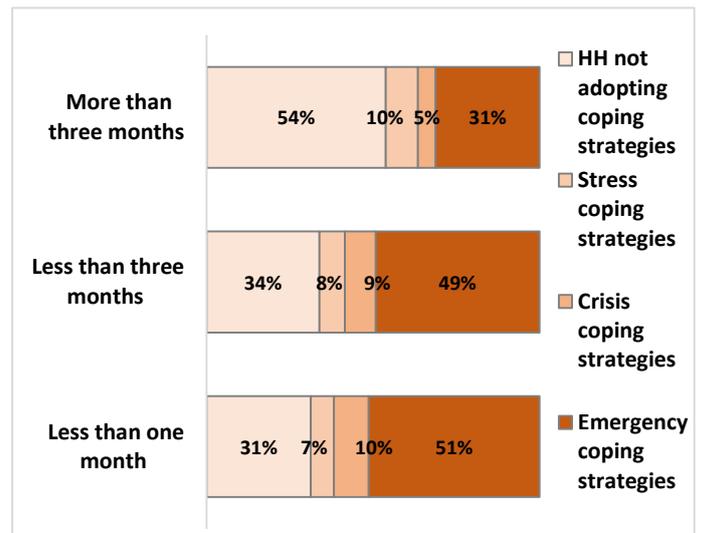
⁵ More information on the Livelihood Coping Strategies can be found here: https://resources.vam.wfp.org/sites/default/files/CARI%20Guidance_2nd%20ed.pdf

less than three months (49 percent) and more than three months (31 percent). Households that had not received food aid within 30 days that preceded the assessment (54 percent) tend to engage in emergency coping strategies more compared to those that had received food aid (42 percent). 8 percent of the households have deployed **crisis coping strategies** such as sale of productive assets, which increases the economic vulnerability of these households. The use of these strategies is higher in Pulka (11 percent) and among newly arrived households that had spent less than a month (10 percent) compared to households that had spent less than three

Livelihood Coping Strategies used by Households



Livelihood Coping Strategies used by Arrival Period



months (9 percent) and more than three months (5 percent). Lastly, another 8 percent of the affected households across Banki (5 percent), Gwoza (12 percent) and Pulka (8 percent) have used **stress coping strategies** like resorting to credit and savings for food procurement.

Livelihood and Income Sources

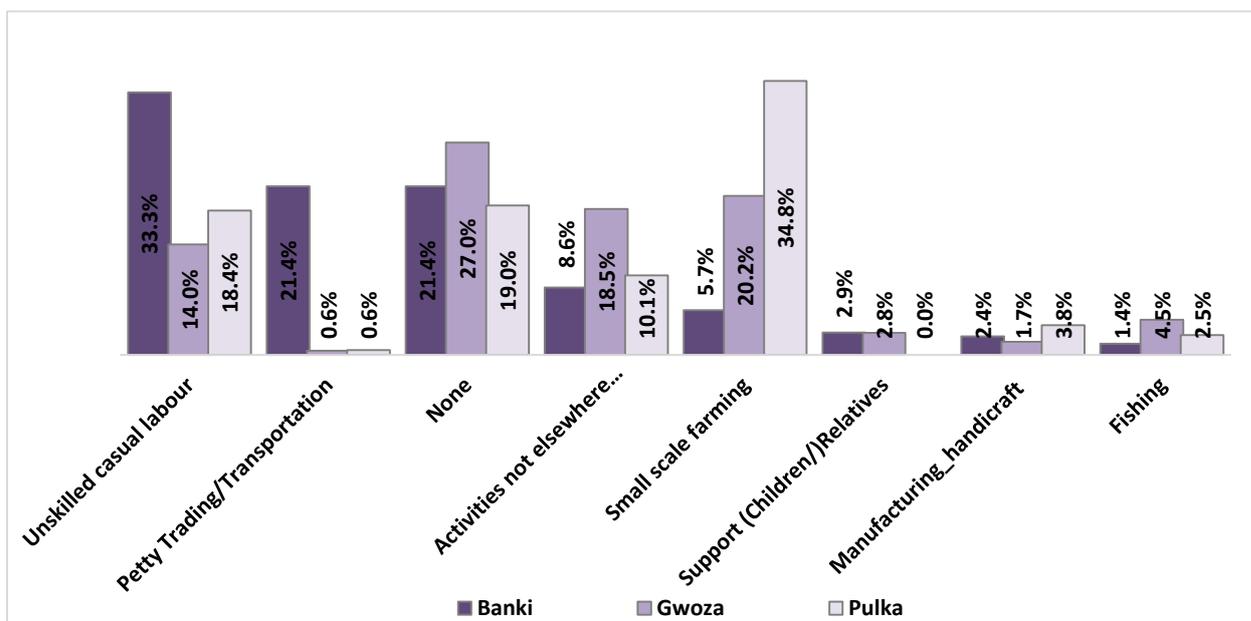
Overall, livelihood activities remain negatively impacted within the three communities as such activities were non-existent in about 22 percent of the households assessed. This is predominantly due to ongoing military operations and restrictions in addition to heightened insecurity within remote neighbouring communities.

For households involved in some sort of livelihood activity, unskilled casual labour which pays an average of 500 naira/day (\$1.5) was the predominant source of income (23 percent). Small scale farming (19 percent) and petty trade (9 percent) were other major income sources that contributed to the upkeep of the households. There were fewer households practicing small scale farming in Banki (6 percent) compared to Gwoza (20 percent) and Pulka (35 percent). Findings from the FGDs sessions confirm this trend as respondents from Pulka and Gwoza consented to having access to small portions of farmland for limited farming practices such as the cultivation of vegetables. However, large scale farming remains impossible in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka due to inaccessibility to large portion of farmlands and high risk of destruction of cultivated land and theft of farm produce by insurgents. Also, households are advised by the military not to travel beyond a certain radius around the communities for safety reasons.

There were fewer households involved in daily manual labour and petty trade in Gwoza and Pulka compared to Banki. Findings from previous assessment had shown that young men often travel

down to neighbouring communities to partake in unskilled casual labour in order to boost the purchasing power of their households⁶, a situation which is impossible in the case of Banki, Pulka and Gwoza due to security restriction. Such restrictions have heavily constrained livelihood activities to the confines of these communities and consequently reduced the purchasing power and increased the vulnerability of households, particularly the casual labour dependent ones.

Main Income Activities



Market Conditions

The ongoing insurgency has greatly hampered the accessibility and functionality of markets within Banki, Gwoza and Pulka. Recent findings from a market monitoring in Bama and Gwoza suggest near complete inaccessibility to markets within these LGAs. These prevailing trends are worrisome since the findings from key informant interviews show that markets in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka were central hubs for local and cross border trade of millet and sorghum in Northern Nigeria and neighbouring countries like Cameroun prior to the onset of the insurgency. Additionally, Banki is a local hub for the export of rice within the northern region and Cameroun. In Gwoza alone, an average of 20 trucks of these food items were moved out daily to major markets in Maiduguri, Mubi, Kaduna, Kano and Jos before the insurgency.

At the point of this assessment, only one market is functioning at a relatively suboptimal level in each of the three communities respectively. The main active actors within these markets were predominantly local traders, merchants and consumers. Due to the security restrictions and inaccessibility issues, foreigners were not sighted within the three markets, which suggests limited local cross border trade with neighbouring towns particularly those in northern Nigeria. While Banki IDP market and Gwoza central market are both everyday markets, the market in Pulka is only open for trading activities on Tuesday. About 55 percent of the respondents consented to having access to these markets, majority of which were from Banki (63 percent) and Pulka (63 percent). About two in every three (63 percent) households within Gwoza signified that they have

⁶ Emergency Food Security Assessment in Madagali and Michika, Adamawa State, April 2017. <https://www.wfp.org/content/nigeria-emergency-food-security-assessment-madagali-michika-adamawa-state-april-2017>

accessibility challenges to the local market within the community. The high percentage of households that complained about market accessibility issues is potentially underpinned by acclimatization and settling in challenges, since some of these households are relatively new within these communities.

Staples like pasta (indomie noodles and spaghetti), sorghum, maize and millet were all common food items across the markets. According to key informants, the production of sorghum, maize and millet had drastically dropped when compared to pre-insurgence. Moreover, majority of the rice within circulation in the three communities were those received by WFP beneficiaries.

“Markets are functional at sub-optimal level with extremely limited cross border trade and an upward trend in the price for all food products except millet”

Household members often sell some portion of the rice received to traders in order to buy condiments. Moreover, the exportation of rice from Banki to neighbouring towns and Cameroun had stopped completely due to the insurgence. Pulses like cowpeas, groundnuts and Bambara nuts (*Vigna subterranea*) were as well available within the markets. Like rice, cowpea from WFP beneficiaries remains the main source of cowpea that is traded within Gwoza market. Other food products that were sold within these markets were vegetable oil, palm oil, fruits (orange, water melon, date seed and mango) and milk. The presence of livestock was more pronounced within the market in Pulka market compared to Banki and Gwoza.

The impact of insecurity on local production and markets caused a drastic fall in local availability and rising food prices. This observed trend correlates with findings from previous assessments where price hike for food products was linked to an increased importation of food products due to reduced local agricultural produce and the depreciation of naira against dollar^{7,8}. The availability of certain food commodities such as imported rice became rare in the markets. Moreover, a large part of the food commodities marketed come from food assistance. Compared to pre-insurgence, the price of millet, sorghum, maize, local rice and palm oil drastically increased across all three markets. There is a significant difference by markets for prices of food commodities. Compared to the previous month, the price of local rice, imported rice, vegetable oil, millet and sorghum decreased in Gwoza, while in Banki and Pulka these prices increased significantly except for millet. The decrease in price of food products in Gwoza was a deliberate measure by market leaders to dissuade the sales of food commodities (sourced through food assistance) to neighbouring towns. Whereas, the increase in price in Banki and Pulka can be attributed to an increase of the demand linked to the influx of new arrival in those two locations.

The limited livelihood activities have extremely reduced the purchasing power of the households and this is further complicated by the hike in food prices. In the absence of sustained food assistance, this increases the risk of food insecurity and vulnerability of the households.

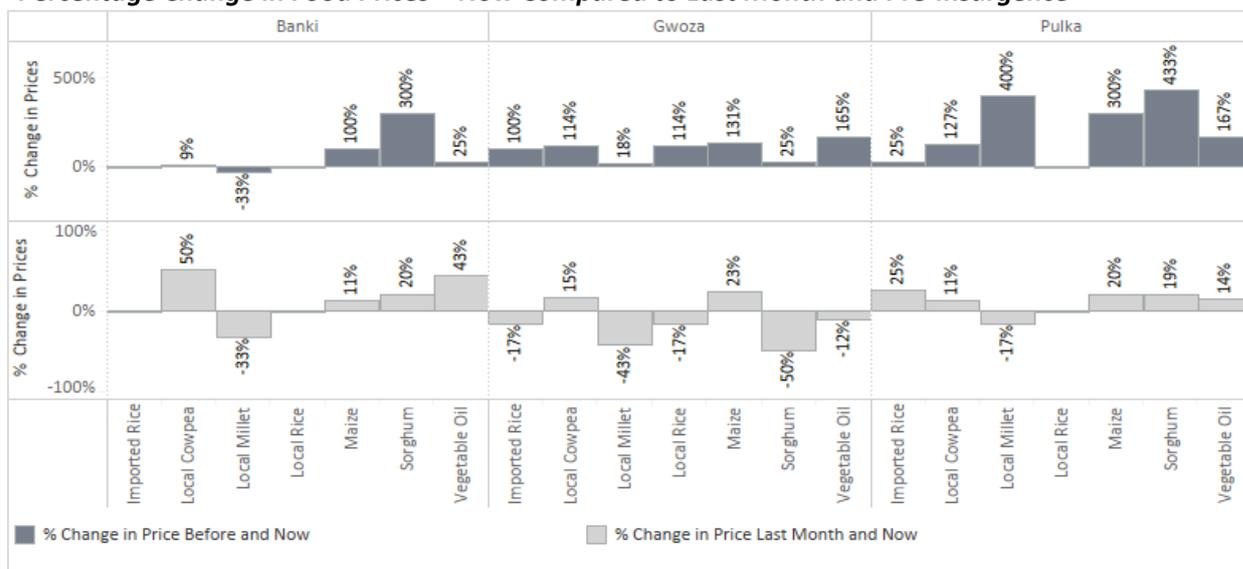
⁷ Borno and Yobe States Market Monitoring Report, April 2017 – Issue 4.

http://fscluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/orno_yobe_market_monitoring_report_april_2017_final.pdf

⁸ Market Monitoring Bulletin, March 2017

http://www.fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/NIGERIA_MMB_Final20170314.pdf

Percentage Change in Food Prices – Now Compared to Last Month and Pre-Insurgence



Nutrition Overview

The nutrition situation in Pulka and Gwoza was not alarming as anticipated prior to this rapid assessment. In one of the transit camps (Holding Camp A) where new returnees in Pulka were kept, 150 children were screened using Mid-Upper Arm Circumference Tape (MUAC-tape) to determine their nutritional status.

The Global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate was found at 5.3% with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and moderately acute malnutrition (MAM) rates at 0.7% and 4.6% respectively. This shows that the GAM rate was at borderline between WHO acceptable and poor ranges of nutritional status. This un-alarming nutritional status observed given the expected critical living condition of the returnees (returned from refugee or Boko Haram Captivity) was largely due to action of humanitarian actors in Cameroun responding to the food, health and nutritional needs of refugees.

Mothers who fled from Boko Haram captivity confirmed that they are able to access and cultivate their farm lands even under Boko Haram captivity which has helped them have access to food to feed their children and families. Similarly, partners responding to this crisis in Pulka and Gwoza are able to provide wet feeding to the newly arrived returnees immediately upon arrival and transit to dry ration food distribution once the returnees are settled which contributed to the preservation of nutritional status of the returned children.

However, the situation was different in Banki where a large number of returnees were first received before relocation to other locations. Based on surveillance information from the UNICEF supported health facility serving a population of about 43,000 people, about 50 children with severe acute malnutrition were newly admitted in the last 5 days. This raises concerns on the nutrition situation in Banki. This was largely attributed to a combination of factors including poor water and sanitation situation as well as severe acute household food insecurity attributed to the stretched food supply as a result of the large influx of returnees. Moreover, the nutrition and health condition of the children was also aggravated by the limited availability of safe water and stretched health system due to the significantly growing population in Banki community.

Conclusions

- The prevalence of poor food consumption is relatively high across Banki (73 percent), Gwoza (41 percent) and Pulka (36 percent). Households in Banki are most affected due to the high influx of returnees. Poor food consumption was also higher among newly arrived households and those that had not received food assistance, highlighting the importance of food aid to these households.
- There is a high reliance on emergency coping strategies such as begging and sale of productive female animals in order to bridge food availability gaps in about 61 percent of households with more households within Banki adopting such. Moreover, the use of these strategies was more common among newly arrived households that had spent less than three months within the communities.
- Livelihood activities remain negatively impacted within the three communities due to ongoing military operations and restrictions, coupled with heightened insecurity in neighbouring towns. Consequently, the purchasing power of household remains frail due to extremely limited income.
- In addition to sub-optimally functioning markets, local food deficits and high food prices remain pronounced across the three communities. In the absence of sustained food assistance, these, coupled with limited livelihood activities will exacerbate food insecurity and vulnerability within households particularly newly arriving ones.
- While the malnutrition situation in Gwoza and Pulka was not beyond alert thresholds, in Banki the situation is concerning based on admission rate of severely malnourished children. On average of 10 new SAM cases are registered daily in the treatment center.
- Regarding needs prioritization, food remains the most important priority need in 74 percent of the households, followed by water (45 percent) and Shelter (39 percent), a trend which was consistent across the three communities.

Recommendations

- The reinforcement of the existing buffer stock specifically earmarked for newly arrived households is key in bridging food security gaps within newly arrived vulnerable households in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka.
- Considering the prevailing food security situation, continued spontaneous return of refugees and weak market systems with activities yet to attain pre-crisis level, Cash Based Transfer (CBT) is not recommended in Banki, Gwoza and Pulka for the moment.
- Access to firewood and clean water remain a challenge which could aggravate further food utilization. Therefore, humanitarian response should consider an integrated approach since food access is just one pillar within other prominent challenges across the three communities.



For further information, please contact:

Nigeria VAM team:

Nigeria.VAM@wfp.org

www.wfp.org

www.vam.wfp.org