



# Nigeria

## Rapid Food Security Assessment in Mobbar Local Government Area, Borno State

### Key Messages for Decision Makers

- According to the April 2019 Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA), **the prevalence of global food insecurity** (severe and moderate) **was 41.2 percent**, of which **4 percent of households were severely food insecure**. The prevalence of global food insecurity was highest amongst IDPs (65 percent) and returnees (41.7 percent) compared to host populations (25 percent).
- The level of global food insecurity in Mobbar **witnessed a reduction of 27.1 percent** compared to the same period last year (February 2018). However, **there was an increase of 11.5 percent compared to October 2018**, in spite of the expected seasonal reduction in global food insecurity expected between October and February (where food stock from the rain-fed and dry season farming were still expected to be available).
- Although crop production when compared to pre-conflict is below average, **land access and cultivation has improved significantly**, as farming activities can be done within a safe distance of 10 km from Damasak town. Moreover, **over 50 percent of households in Mobbar** participated in both the **rain-fed and off season (irrigated) farming** during the last planting season.
- There **are no security restrictions on commercial activities**, and the main roads axis (Damasak – Maiduguri; Damasak – Niger) are open to commercial trucks. **Markets are functional**, as essential **locally produced staples are widely available** in most markets such as maize grain, locally produced rice and millet being the three most important food communities.
- In spite of the pronounced levels of food insecurity (more than one in every three households) and pockets of vulnerability observed in Mobbar (particularly among returnees and IDPs), **an upscale of conditional livelihood assistance to the most vulnerable host communities, returnees and IDP households is strongly recommended in close coordination with partners (NRC, ACF, ICRC)**, considering the huge potential for livelihood opportunities (access to land, markets etc.).
- **Continued provision of the ongoing nutrition support** to children under five and pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) is as well recommended to forestall a decline in malnutrition rates.

### Background

The prolonged conflict in the North East and Lake Chad Basin continues to have severe effects on livelihood and food security amongst households in the affected areas. Humanitarian and development actors including the government of Nigeria are providing ongoing support to over one million people to alleviate the brunt of the ongoing conflict on food security and livelihoods.

Damasak is the main town of the Mobbar Local Government Area (LGA), in Borno State. It is located near the confluence of the Yobe River and Komadugu Gana River, adjoining the border with Niger 34 km from Difa in Niger and 3 km between Damasak and the border with Niger. Two primary roads reach Damasak, one of which leads south to Gubio and Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, and the other, which heads east towards Kukawa and Baga LGA.

Damasak town is divided into two districts, Dashari and Damasak, and has 15 community leaders and 13 wards, of which a good number of the wards are currently inaccessible. Hence, residents from these inaccessible areas are currently sheltered in Damasak town or neighbouring Niger. Non-State Armed Group (NSAG) occupied Damasak on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014 to June 2016, after which there have been flash incidences of attacks by NSAGs. According to IOM's DTM, there are over 7,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mobbar LGA<sup>1</sup>. Moreover, recent attacks in neighbouring communities of Niger (Siyam, Gan Dogo, Gisgiru, Alhaji Mainari, Gan Gam, Gani, Wanzam) continues to leave Damasak vulnerable to risk of influx of refugees, which would potentially stretch resources within the locality.

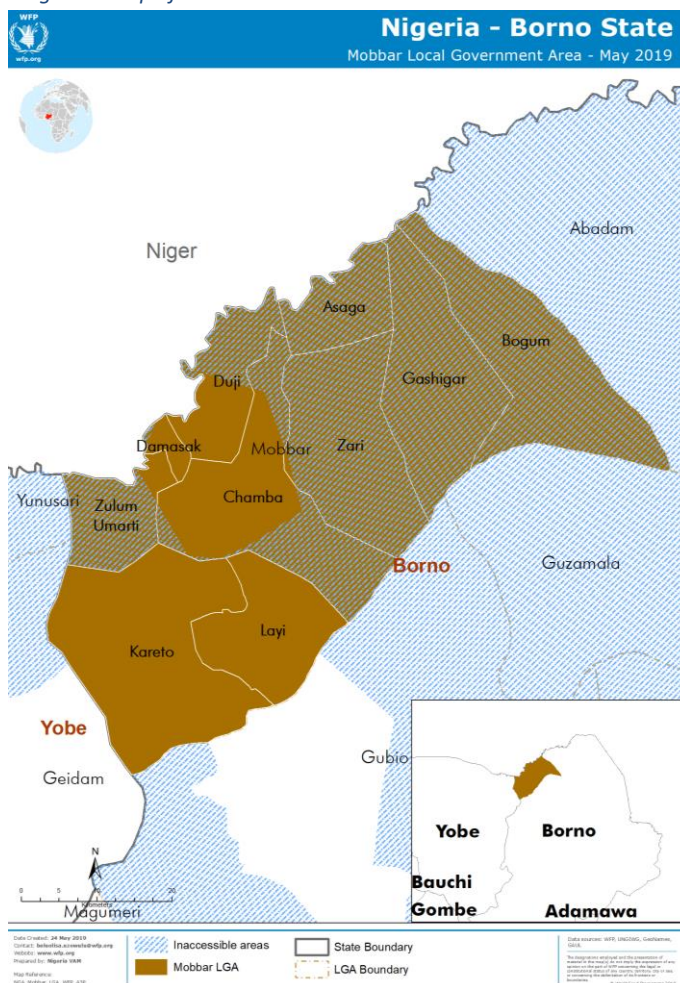
Humanitarian actors have been providing livelihood and protection related programmes in Damasak. NRC currently have 24,785 people under their agriculture and livelihoods programme<sup>2</sup>. Other humanitarian actors intervening in Damasak are ACF, UNHCR, INTERSOS, CHAD, Fhi360 and National Red Cross. It is worthy of note that the availability of rivers and water bodies bordering Mobbar (Nigeria) and Niger, enables dry-season farming in the zone, and thus support a second cropping beyond the rain fed cropping season that is currently being practiced.

According to military reports, refugees affected by the ongoing conflict in neighbouring communities of Niger are expected to arrive Damasak in the near future, which could potentially stretch existing resources within the locality. This assessment sought to gain insights into the food security, livelihoods and market situation, including recent population movements in communities in Mobbar (specifically Damasak), in order to make informed decision on the scale of humanitarian needs and assistance priorities.

## Methodology

The assessment combined secondary data collect through the April 2019 Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) which covered 300 households in Damasak, Kareto and Layi wards of Mobbar

Figure 1 Map of Mobbar Local Government Area



<sup>1</sup> IOM's DTM Round 26 <https://nigeria.iom.int/dtm-round-26>

<sup>2</sup> Food Security Sector Dashboard, Nigeria <https://fscluster.org/nigeria>

and complimentary primary data collection in Damasak. The complimentary data collection, being focus group discussions (FGDs) held on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019 with various actors including community leaders, market leader and some retail traders. A group of IDPs, host communities and returnees were amongst those interviewed. Therefore, this report combines both the quantitative (household survey) and qualitative data (FGDs and interviews).

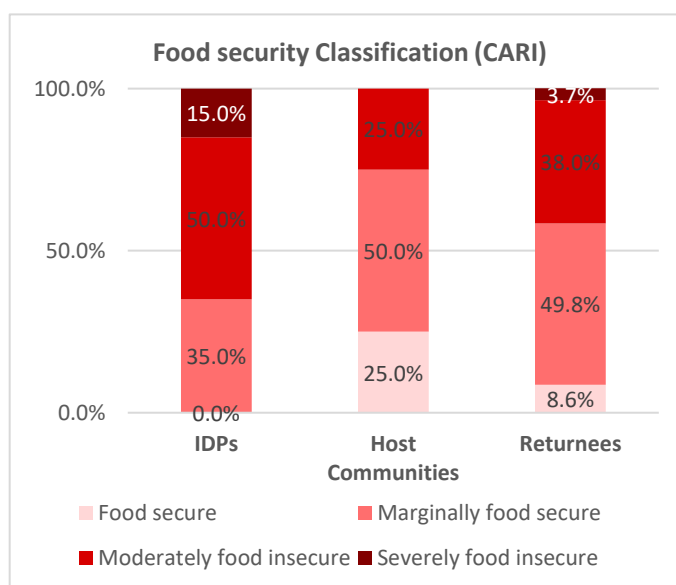
## Key findings

### Population movement

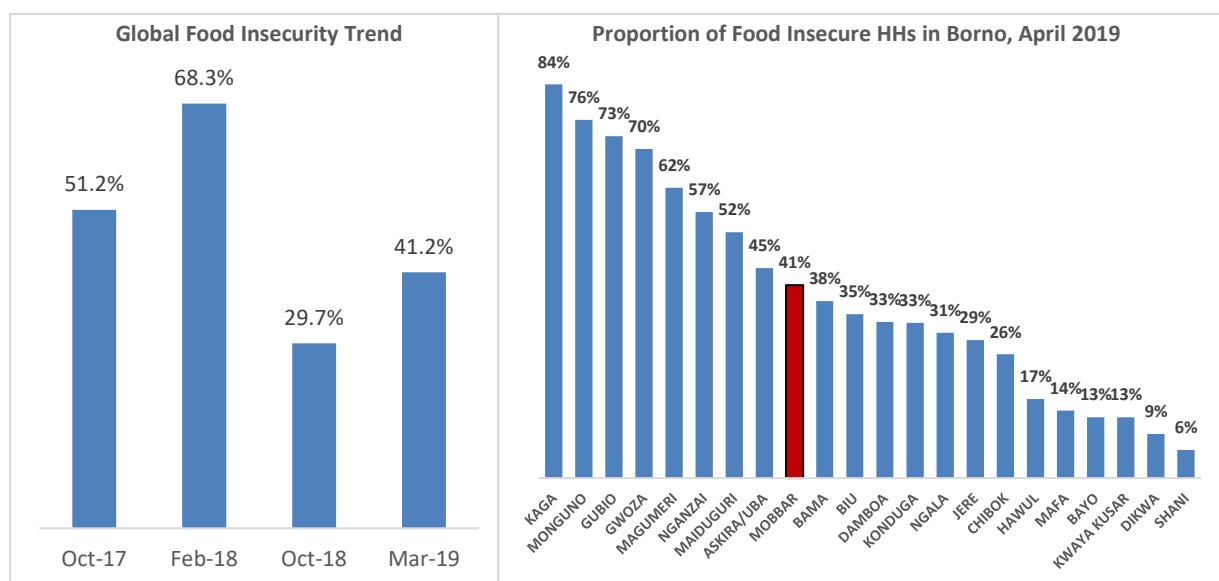
In the month of April, 392 households (810 individuals) were registered and reported by IOM. On a weekly basis, an average of 15 households are received as returnees and this number is expected to decline in the coming days, attributed to people returning due to opportunities for livelihood and food assistance in Niger, especially households who are receiving food assistance in Siyam IDP camp. The Nigerian Immigration Service is on ground registering people, with the support of IOM, before they can come into town. At the moment, there is no reception center in Damasak. After registration, people move into the host communities in close coordination with the community leaders (Bulamas). According to the returnees and key informants, almost 70% of returnees were originally residents of Gashigar, while the remaining 30% consist of people from other wards like Bogum and Ashagar. Some households were discovered to have returned to Siyam IDP camp in Niger, due to the ongoing food assistance in Niger, of which some were benefiting from previously before the attack in March, 2019.

### Food Security Situation

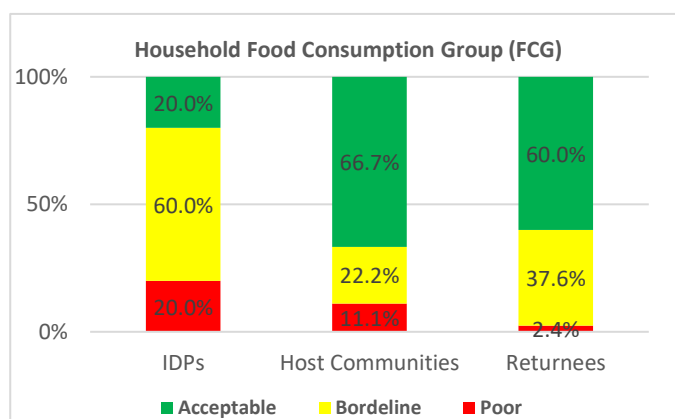
According to the April 2019 EFSA, overall, the prevalence of global food insecurity (severe and moderate) was 41.2 percent, of which 4 percent of households were severely food insecure. The prevalence of global food insecurity was highest amongst IDPs (65 percent) and returnees (41.7 percent) compared to host populations (25 percent). **The level of global food insecurity in Mobbar witnessed a reduction of 27.1 percent compared to the same period last year (February 2018). However, there was an increase of 11.5 percent compared to October**



**2018, in spite of the expected seasonal reduction in global food insecurity expected between October and February (where food stock from the rain-fed and dry season farming were still expected to be available).** The level of food insecurity in Mobbar as well ranked high compared to other LGAs in Borno. The pronounced levels of global food insecurity (more than one in three households) and the trend observed depicts the fragile nature of the food security situation in Mobbar, particularly among displaced and returnee households.

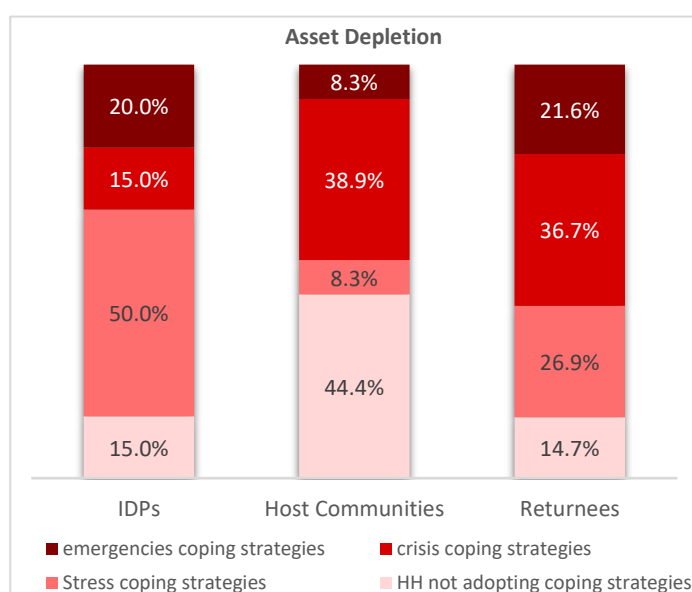


Poor food consumption of 20 percent, 11.1 percent and 2.4 percent was observed amongst IDPs, host and returnee households respectively. Borderline food consumption was also highest among IDP households (60 percent) compared to 22.2 percent and 37.6 percent among host community and returnee households respectively.



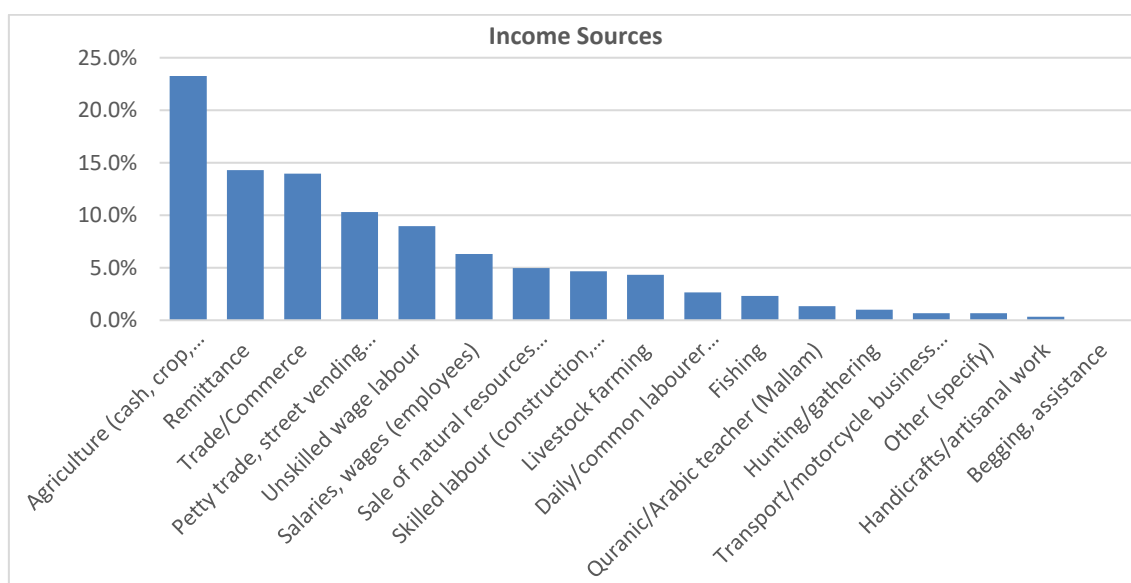
## Livelihood Based Coping Strategies

Due to constraint to have access to food and income, vulnerable households have employed stress or crisis coping mechanisms, putting their livelihoods at risk. The overall reliance on livelihood coping strategies was relatively significant as about 65 percent of households have relied on these strategies, in order to meet their food needs. It is particularly notable that 47 percent of the host community households have engaged in both **crisis and emergency coping strategies** such as begging and sale of last female animals, both of which can jeopardize the future productivity of the households. This may be attributed to pressure from the support being rendered to the returnees and IDP families living within the host communities.

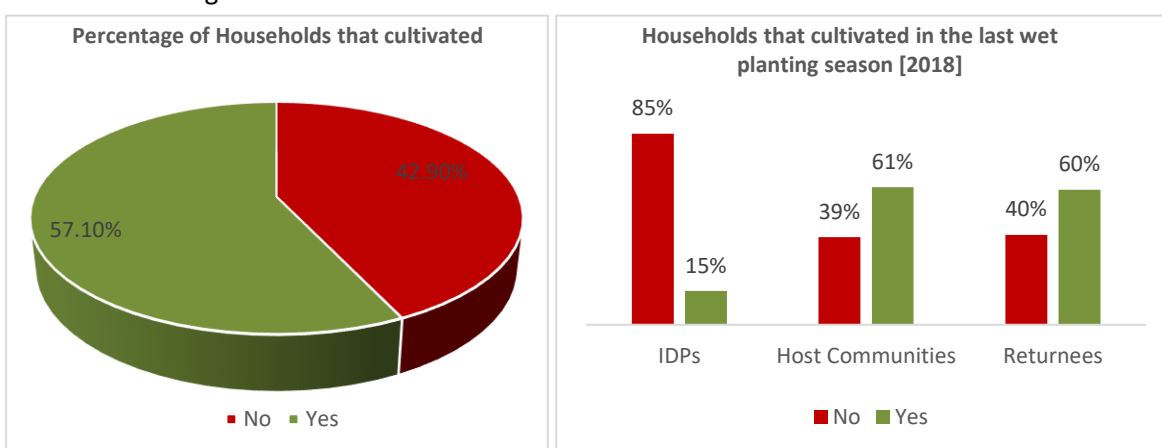


## Income Sources and Agricultural Production

Agriculture (23 percent), remittance (14 percent) and trade (24 percent) were the main income sources in Mobbar. Returnees are more engaged in farm labor, fire wood gathering, water vending, mat making, masonry, and firewood splitting for the men, while the women are engaged in making of local hand fan, cap knitting and selling of street food. Some returnees were allotted some land to cultivate, either on communal (group shared) or on an individual basis.



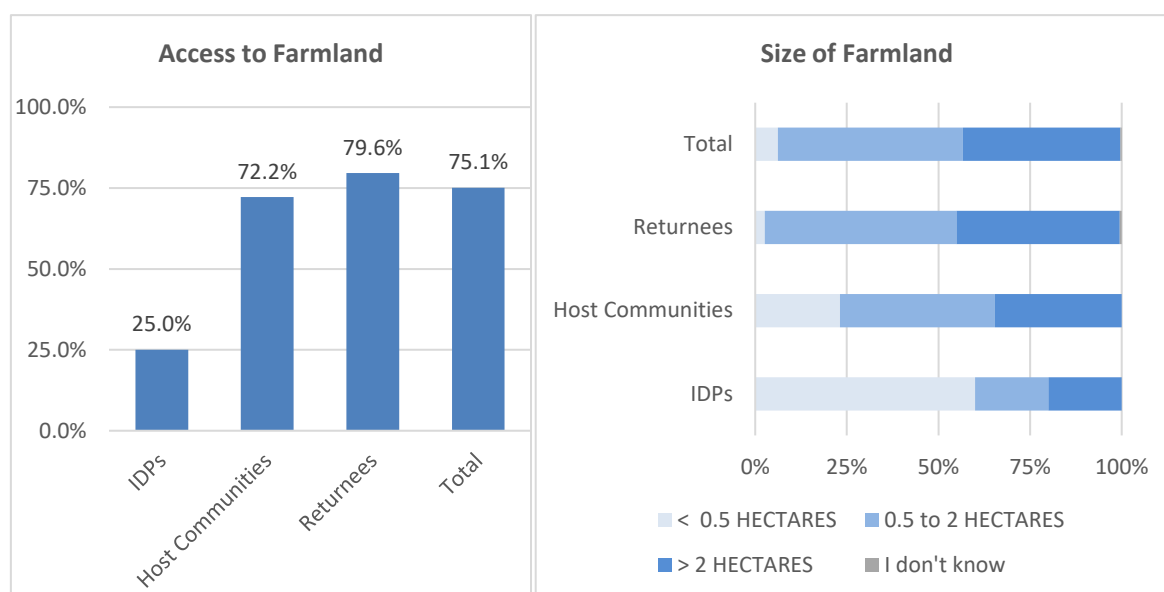
Before the conflict, farming was practiced by about 80 percent of the population, with crops like millet, groundnut, maize and onion produced in copious quantities. Although crop production when compared to pre-conflict is below average, land access and cultivation has improved significantly, as farming activities can be done within a safe distance of 10 km from Damasak town. About 57 percent of households were able to farm during the 2018 rainy season with more of such households being host communities.



Although the military allow residents to move as far as 10-15 km, the threat of possible attacks on farm lands cannot be ruled out. Reports of kidnaping and killings continue to discourage households from accessing farmlands further away from town. Finding from the EFSA confirmed this where 75 percent of households were seen to have access to farmland, albeit very low at 25 percent among



displaced households. Moreover, the size of the farmland was more than 0.5 hectares for most of the households that have access to farmland, which shows opportunities for livelihoods and resilience oriented support.



In the last planting season, farming households indicated they produced rice from the seeds distributed by NRC in 2018. This local production of rice was confirmed by market traders, who purchased from some of the households that cultivated.

















## Market Conditions

At the point of this assessment, Damasak Central market was functional with daily market operations, although still sub-optimally compared to pre-crisis level. According to key informants, Damasak has more than 500 retailers and about 50-70 wholesalers. The production and availability of millets, groundnuts, local rice and maize had have improved, but still below production as compared to pre-insurgency. Other food products that were readily available within the market were vegetable oil, spaghetti/noodles, palm oil, salt, fruits (water melon, carrots and oranges) and milk.

Trading activities have picked up with traders having stocks of grains, maize, sorghum, beans, groundnut (peanut), provision (grocery), clothing and other non-food items. Residents and traders access other secondary markets, such as Gamari (a major grain and livestock market 15Km away from Damasak), Shettimari (Grain and livestock markets 15-20KM away), Gesgeru market (pepper market), Gangam (a livestock market 60KM away), Kanama, Kaula markets.

Main staples that are sold by traders and consumed by households are supplied from Maiduguri, Gubio and markets in Diffa region in Niger. Imported rice and vegetable oils are supplied mostly from Niger. Traders stated previously they bought off food commodities (imported rice and sorghum) from households benefiting from food assistance, during which, they reduced purchase of imported rice from Maiduguri or Niger. After WFP phased out its unconditional GFD support from Damasak, the grain market became stimulated, particularly for rice and sorghum, as traders sourced for these commodities from Maiduguri and Diffa (Niger), in a bit to respond to demand.

The preferred staple food are millet, rice and maize and sweet pepper is also an important item in the households' food basket. The prices of food were observed to have decreased or remained stable over the last 3 months. Moreover, retail prices of key staples were observed to have decreased significantly when compared to the same period 2018, except for imported rice and local rice which either was stable or increased respectively.

Market	Food commodity	Current price	3 months ago	1 Year ago	% Change in current price		Degree of change	
					3 Month	1 Year	3 Months	1 Year
Damasak market	Peanuts (Kg)	600	600	700	0.0%	-14.3%		
	Maize flour (Kg)	300	300	400	0.0%	-25.0%		
	Wheat (Kg)	400	500	500	-20.0%	-20.0%		
	Red beans (Kg)	500	500	700	0.0%	-28.6%		
	Imported rice (Kg)	800	800	850	0.0%	-5.9%		
	Local rice (Kg)	700	680	600	2.9%	16.7%		
	Vegetable oil (Litre)	400	400	450	0.0%	-11.1%		
	Palm oil (Litre)	400	450	450	-11.1%	-11.1%		

Source: Rapid Market Assessment, May 2019

## Presence of Partners and Ongoing Interventions

During the assessment, the team interacted with partners planning or currently implementing food security, agricultural and livelihood programmes in Mobbar.

NRC had trained 200 beneficiaries on income generating activities, after which the beneficiaries would receive a conditional grant of NGN 52, 500 (One off payment). The 200 beneficiaries were selected from Kairi, Goni, Grema, Bulami and Gashi communities. A similar intervention was done in 2018, targeting and training 250 beneficiaries for income generating activities. The modality of transfer was direct cash payment, facilitated by a financial service provider- United Bank of Africa (UBA). While NRC has planned to scale up current agricultural intervention, last year NRC targeted 240 beneficiaries for their irrigation farming. A scale up of the 2018 agricultural activity has started, with registration ongoing to target 400 beneficiaries. These beneficiaries would be receiving water pumps, seeds (onion, water melon, maize, okra) and 100 Kg of NPK fertilizer.

On the other hand, 1532 beneficiaries are targeted for rain fed agriculture, across Chambar, Layi, Masakale, Kadori, Malari, Sansa and Kareto wards. Additionally, NRC are planning to provide food assistance to about 152 households.

From information gathered on the ground, ACF is planning to distribute seeds to 1,500 farming households in Mobbar and Gubio LGA and yet to decide on the split between both LGAs. ICRC distributed cards to large number of households. This resulted in a pull factor, triggering a high influx of people from neighboring communities and villages surrounding Damasak, even as far as Niger. The card distribution suggests that ICRC perhaps have plans to implement an intervention in Damasak sometime in the near future.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The food security situation in Mobbar remains very fragile with pronounced level of global food insecurity (*more than one in three households*), particularly among displaced and returnee households. This was further stretched with the recent influx of a few returnee's in Damasak from Niger. **However, considering the huge potential for livelihood opportunities (access to land for wet and dry season farming, markets etc.), an upscale of conditional livelihood assistance to the most vulnerable host communities, returnees and IDP households, is strongly recommended.** This would build resilience of just not the participating households, but communities at large to respond to immediate and future shocks such as influx of returnees and IDPs, which could potentially stretch resources as seen in recent past and flash attacks by NSAGs. This would mitigate the risk of deterioration of the food security situation on a short, medium and long term. Moreover, the sales of food commodities (particularly imported rice and sorghum) at the time when food assistance was implemented at scale in Mobbar, reflects the need for alternate intervention approach to ensure optimal impact.

A continued provision of the ongoing nutrition support to children under five and pregnant and lactating women (PLWs) is as well recommended to forestall a decline in malnutrition rates. ACF has established OTP center, four in Damasak and one operating in Layi ward. Additionally, ACF has one stabilization centre for patience with complicated cases.

It is worth mentioning, that access to land for irrigation and rain fed agriculture has improved, as seen in the increased production of local rice. Partners like NRC have leveraged on this, providing seeds (Onion, okra, cucumber, water melon, maize and rice) and NPK fertilizers to farmers. This is expected to bolster food stock at household level particularly for those that benefited from these interventions. This further highlights the need for actors to implement more agricultural oriented interventions and income generating activities.

There is also a need to coordinate response to avoid duplication with ACF, NRC and ICRC, all of which are either currently implementing or planning to intervene in the accessible wards in Mobbar. Most of these actors are currently support a few beneficiaries with food assistance, but with more focus on income generating activities and livelihood and asset restoration interventions, geared towards restarting lost livelihoods.



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