

SKBN Coordination Unit Humanitarian Update

August 2020



Yabus Balla Market, Yabus - Blue Nile (August 2020)

FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURE

Household food stocks remain low across the Two Areas

Blue Nile

Harvesting of short-duration sorghum, maize, lemons, chilies, pumpkins, cucumber and okra on jibraka (near farms) is ongoing. As reported before, shortage of seeds was the main challenge facing farmers (seeds were consumed due to depleted food stocks). In addition, pests and diseases such as powdery mildew affected the quality of the crops which resulted into poor production.

A successful seed distribution by a partner was conducted in July and August across all payams. Of **10,565** households targeted, **5941** received in July while **1638** received in August and the remaining households will receive by September.

Food security improved in the region including Komo Ganza, which was badly hit by floods last year. The main sources of food included own production from Jibraka, food assistance (**1638** households in Komo Ganza and Yabus payams received food aid) and from the market.

Markets were partially functional due to COVID-19 restrictions on the South Sudan and Ethiopian borders which led to high commodity prices compared to the same time last year. 20 per cent of households depended on their own food production from the jibraka farms; while 50 per cent of households depended on markets, but only some of them could afford to buy food. Also flooding of the Yabus River cut off communities of Darsumma, Ishkab, Kafeh and Tukabele in Komo Ganza payam, from the markets and health services. Canoes were improvised for transportation of people and supplies, but these were not sufficient causing scarcity.

Highlights

Increased food prices due to partial opening of markets

Food distribution takes place in the Two Areas

Primary 8 and Senior 4 candidate classes resume lessons



Men carrying a Quad bike across the Yabus river

South Kordofan

It was an unfavorable start to the agricultural season which forced farmers to replant their seeds due to uneven distribution of rainfall. On mechanized farms, farmers were unable to cultivate because of heavy rains that made it difficult for tractors to plough. In addition, lack of fuel and spare parts for tractors as a result of COVID-19 containment measures on crossline and cross-border markets was also a challenge.

On the other hand, lack of seeds resulted in a poor planting which led to reduction in the area planted. According to [FSMU's July Quarterly Report](#) "This reduction in the area planted was most significant in Heiban and Thobo, where 48 percent of respondents in both counties indicated that the area, they planted was less than normal. The main reason given for planting less area than normal was the weather... Other key reasons were a lack of seeds, particularly in Dallami and Thobo, and a lack of labor. Ten percent of households in Thobo mentioned insecurity as a reason for less planting which, given the insecurity within the Thobo / Kadugli area over the planting season, was not surprising."

The general food security remains fragile in the region despite opening of some markets. This was due to high prices and influx of returnees and IDPs mainly in Thobo. Increase in prices was due to poor roads as a result of the rainy season.

Partners completed emergency food distribution for IDPs in Western Kadugli and it is ongoing in other IDPs' localities. Similarly, food distribution has been completed across South Kordofan.

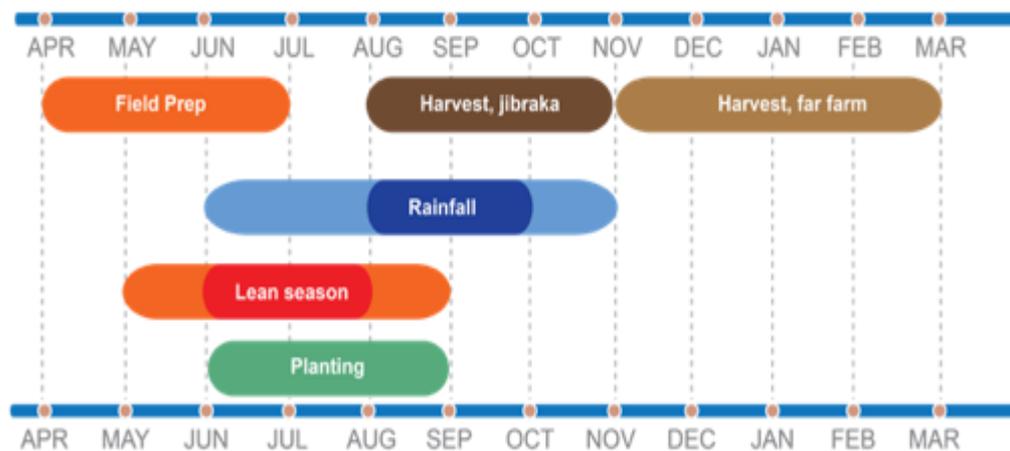
Markets were fully functional, but sorghum the staple was scarce due to a previous poor harvest, and due to an increase in demand from the influx of returnees and IDPs. In Thobo county insecurity affected the functioning of some markets.

Western Jebel

Fewer farmers attended to their far farms due to insecurity from the recent clashes in Lagawa.

Around 95% of households are still food insecure as food stocks are depleted, especially in Sunut County. This led to an increase in livestock selling and labor to raise money for food. The households who depended on labor faced challenges due to COVID-19 movement restrictions, and insecurity (August clashes in Lagawa and Habilla), while cattle owners could not get attractive prices for their livestock.

Sorghum was only available in some parts of Western Jebel. Dilling, Habila, and Lagawa all had at least two markets where sorghum was unavailable.



Seasonal calendar for South Kordofan and Blue Nile

COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Awareness still low despite continued preparedness

FSMU reported in July that awareness of the pandemic across the region remained low despite an increase in risk communication and messaging. However, there has been an improvement with 51 percent of households aware of the COVID-19 pandemic compared to 30 percent of households in April. In April, the percentage of households not knowledgeable about COVID-19 mitigation measures stood at 70 percent.

NEEDS:

The following needs and gaps were identified in response to COVID-19 pandemic in the Two Areas:

- Scaling up of risk communication and messaging to reach a large wider coverage;
- Furniture and equipment in planned isolation centers throughout the region;
- Soap, hand washing facilities and increased water supply in crowded settings;
- Strengthening of screening and quarantine facilities at points of entry, especially in Blue Nile;
- Medical devices such as diagnostic tests, ventilators, and personal protective equipment including surgical masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves

- Improving food availability and temporary shelters for new arrivals quarantined at points of entry
- Increasing vehicle and fuel supply to conduct awareness and transportation of humanitarian supplies;
- Improvement and scaling up of isolation centers especially in Western Jebel and Blue Nile.

GAPS:

- Delay of medical supplies across the Two Areas due to COVID-19 restriction measures and poor road network due to the rainy season;
- Low levels of stock of medicines and medical supplies in the SPLM-N controlled areas;
- Funding in health and WASH sector at points of entry;

EDUCATION

Candidate classes resume lessons

Primary Eight and Senior Four candidate classes resumed lessons, in preparation for the final South Sudan National Examinations. However, the education sector in the Two Areas faces lack of trained teachers, school supplies and learning materials, feeding and teacher incentives.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

Lack of essential drugs to meet demand

Blue Nile

675 cases of malaria, 628 LRTI/Pneumonia and 434 skin infections were registered as well as flu and acute watery diarrhea. Moreover, all the 23 Primary Health Centres have registered shortage of essential drugs due to funding and a high demand from returnees from South Sudan. Communities most affected include Balila and Mufu in Wadaka payam and Dereng, Madit and Tukabele in Komo Ganza.

Also 64 malnutrition cases were reported in Yabus Bala, Yabus Payam.

South Kordofan

Malaria, cough, eye infection among children, diarrhea and respiratory infections are some of the commonly reported diseases that were registered by the Secretariat of Health (SoH) throughout the region especially in the unmonitored areas of Kau, Nyaro and Wareni, New Tagele and Abassiya. The shortage of drugs in the entire region is caused by the increase in the number of returnees and IDPs which is constraining the already stretched centres.

According to SoH July report of the health clinics in Thobo, W. Kadugli, Um Durain, Heiban, Delami and Dilling reported 6719 cases of malaria, watery diarrhea 3328, pneumonia 4246, diarrhea with blood 961, eye diseases 1439, malnutrition 621, other respiratory infections 6510 and skin diseases 782.

Total measles vaccinations carried out by SoH in July were -Measles 1: 7716 and Measles 2: 142.

Western Jebels

Common diseases like malaria, skin infection and upper respiratory infections, and pneumonia were reported. SoH provided drugs but could not be delivered on time due to bad roads resulting from heavy rain. The area has 54 health facilities in the 4 counties including 1 rural hospital, but they are struggling to meet the demand for health care services because they have no drugs.

WASH

Increased risk of waterborne diseases in the rainy season

Blue Nile

Some of the hand-dug wells, especially in Soda in Chali Payam, collapsed since the onset of the rainy season. The available water points are not enough to meet the demand for clean drinking water. There is need for more water and waste management practices in homes, market places and schools to reduce the spread of diseases.

South Kordofan

Water availability increased with the onset of the rains, which eased the pressure on the limited number of water points. Construction of latrines in schools is ongoing and broken boreholes were repaired in Kauda and Gidel in Heiban county to aid accessibility to clean safe drinking water. The provision of safe water, sanitation, hygiene promotion are top priority gaps particularly due to COVID-19 pandemic.

ANIMAL HEALTH

Limited access to veterinary medicine

Blue Nile

Animal health remains poor in Blue Nile region. Cough, diarrhoea and fungus in the hooves were reported. Poor animal health resulted into poor quality of meat and milk. On top of that, livestock vaccination has not taken place since last year mainly due to lack of funding. In addition, farmers couldn't afford to buy medicines from markets.

FAO plans to conduct an assessment on livestock and desert locusts in Yabus soon.

South Kordofan

The livestock sector which contributes to the food security basket, registered lack of veterinary drugs. There has been no veterinary drug supply since last year. As a result, livestock mortality has been reported in all the counties in the region. This level of mortality could well have an impact on household nutrition levels and overall food security.

Western Jebel

Cattle raiding, and theft are on the increase hence livestock grazing is limited to closer home pastures. The number of cattle lost to diseases has also increased especially in Dilling. Further assessment of the livestock situation is needed.

PROTECTION, ACCESS AND SECURITY

Displacements in South Kordofan and Western Jebel continued

Blue Nile

As usual, there was a high influx of returnees from camps in Maban, but for just cultivation purposes.

South Kordofan

There was a high displacement into the areas particularly in Thobo and Western Kadugli. This was primarily as a result of tensions and insecurity in Kadugli.

An assessment conducted in August to verify returnee figures reported that the total number of returnees was **21,989** - Eastern Rural **745**, Thobo **15,492**, Um Durain **4,075**, and Western Kadugli **1,677**. The returnees are in urgent need of food and NFIs.

1786 households in both Um Durain and Thobo were provided with food and non-food items while **384** were supported by WFP with food.

Peacebuilding groups have been established to mitigate tensions between Angolo and Shat tribes.

Western Jebel

On 6 August, clashes between Golfan community with the Hawazima nomads who passed through Golfan farmlands during their seasonal migrations northward resulted into displacement of **262** households from Watta and Tungule and about **199** farmers' farms were destroyed by cattle.

The SKBN CU reports security incidents according to the information received from a variety of sources. This information does not include a comprehensive verification of perpetrators or damages.

This monthly update on humanitarian issues in the Blue Nile and South Kordofan states is compiled by the SKBN Coordination Unit. With three main functions of information, coordination and advocacy, the SKBNCU strives to put out regular and accurate information on the humanitarian situation of people affected by the conflict since 2011.

Please send your comments to advocacy@skbncu.org