

RAPID ASSESSMENT: Garissa District/Dadaab refugee camps October 12, 2011

Key Messages

- The food security of refugees arriving in Dadaab camps remains precarious as evidenced by heightened rates of child malnutrition in the outskirts of Dagahaley camp. UNHCR's preliminary survey results indicate Global and Severe Acute Malnutrition prevalence of 38 and 18 percent, respectively, in September in this area.
- As of late September, refugee populations total 448,000 people. These populations have access to a full basket of food commodities including blanket supplementary feeding for all under-fives and school meals for all children attending school.
- The number of incoming refugees has declined significantly to under 1,000 people per day. However, the food security status of newly arriving refugees remains at Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels.
- All agencies serving refugee populations are expected to allocate about 35-40 percent of their resources and effort toward addressing food insecurity among local communities. This is intended to address the unease by host populations regarding an imbalance in attention to local food security needs.
- Livestock conditions, as reflected in market prices (particularly for cattle), seem to have improved in Garissa market beginning in mid-September. These improvements are contrary to expectations that livestock mortality would escalate as the dry season peaked in September and early October. Uncharacteristic improvements were attributed to extensive water interventions across the northeastern pastoral districts that forestalled mortalities for about 20-30 percent of livestock remaining at homesteads. Pastoralists were also feeding livestock with hay sourced from Thika and some yellow maize, usually distributed as food assistance.

Figure 1. Garissa District and Dadaab refugee camps



Source: FEWS NET

Objectives

The FEWS NET East Africa regional team conducted a follow-up rapid assessment of Dadaab refugee camps and Garissa District from September 26-29 after a similar visit in August 2-5, 2011. The overall objective of the assessment was to evaluate the progress in the food security situation among refugee populations in and out of Dadaab camp and impacts on surrounding populations. The specific objectives were:

- To evaluate the extent and characteristics of food insecurity among refugee populations within Dadaab camp and in the outskirts.
- To clarify the impacts of the influx of refugee populations on the food security status of host communities and on the environment.
- To evaluate the functioning of key reference markets (both livestock and cereal) as they impact trade and food security for both Somalia and Kenya.
- To access nutrition data and understand the dimensions and dynamics of malnutrition in the camps and outskirts.

- To gather information on cross-sectoral interventions (Health and Nutrition; Water and Sanitation; and Food) and identify key gaps.

The FEWS NET team visited several institutions including UNHCR, WFP, CARE, UNICEF, OCHA, ALRMP, MSF-Spain, the local GoK administration and Dadaab and Garissa livestock and commodity markets during the September mission. Assessments were also conducted in the Dadaab refugee camps of Dagahaley, Ifo I and Ifo II and III extensions. The team also attended a water and sanitation cluster working group meeting, targeting host communities. The team appreciated greatly the extensive logistical support and security arrangements by ALRMP and WFP. While the team did not meet with all agencies, other agencies carrying out important cross-sectoral interventions within Dadaab camps and among host communities include IRC, NRC, GIZ, MSF-Swiss, LWF, IOM and ADEO.

Key findings in Dadaab refugee camps in late September

- The registration process instituted in July following an exceptional influx of refugees was revised once again, in mid-September, after numbers of incoming refugees declined. While all newly arriving refugees still go through verification, medical screening and vulnerability assessment, they are now provided with meals (BF 5–high protein biscuits) for only three instead of 21 days because the registration process is often completed within 48-72 hours. Non-food items including plastic tarpaulins, blankets, kitchen sets, sleeping mats and water cans are also distributed within the same period.
- Most distribution points in the old camps of Dagahaley, Hagardhere and Ifo I are severely congested. The Ifo II and III extensions and Kambios camp were all under construction and temporary distribution facilities and warehouses were set up within Ifo II to reduce the congestion at the old camps and reduce waiting time for food and non-food supplies. Efforts are ongoing to reduce the congestion in the camps.
- Out of a total of 448,000 refugees, the Ifo camps had the highest population of 161,000 people. There are 138,000 refugees in Dagahaley and 130,000 refugees in Hagardhere. Close to 139,000 refugees have arrived in Dadaab since January and about 65,000 of these people are residing in temporary camps around the Ifo II and III extensions and Kambios. Ninety percent of refugees in Dadaab camps are from Somalia, while refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of Congo constitute 10 percent.

Figure 2. Settlements for new arrivals in Ifo extensions



Figure 3. Refugees selling relief food in Dadaab town



- The global attention elicited by the crisis in recent months has meant that the response by local and international agencies has not been well coordinated. The implementation of emergency food and non-food interventions and allocation of resources has not always been effective or efficient. Several embassy and international organizations are providing food and non-food assistance to refugees and host communities outside the designated pipeline and not through lead agencies, and without a targeting mechanism or clear timeframe. The local GoK administrator indicated that the number of people seeking assistance at his office had dramatically declined over the past two months,

presumably because needs are being met through informal sources without using established channels of assistance. Such assistance in parts of the northeast may mask underlying household food vulnerability and give the illusion of household food security. If funding sources for this assistance decline significantly, household-level food insecurity may again significantly deteriorate.

- Each refugee had access to 2,141 Kcal on a daily basis, comprising a daily ration of 460 grams of cereal, 320 grams of pulses, 30 grams of vegetable oil and CSB plus-plus, for all children under five years of age, every 14-15 days. Supplementary feeding programs were also on-going for pregnant, lactating and malnourished women.
- An interview with some refugees in Dagahaley camp indicated that their food rations rarely lasted through the intended period and sometimes lasted only 10 days. This may be due to sharing and selling of rations, as there was no evidence to suggest that quantities distributed were less than recommended.
- School meals were also distributed to all children attending schools resulting in an escalation in enrollment amidst inadequate facilities (classrooms, teaching materials and teachers). Girls attending 80 percent of the school days also received an additional 500 grams of sugar per month as an incentive intended to enhance enrollment of girls in school. Initial indications suggested that the incentive was effective because enrollment rates of girls had increased from 30 to 42 percent over the past couple of months.
- WFP indicated that the normal three-month buffer stock of food has been erased by overwhelming numbers of new refugees arriving, especially over the past four months. The absence of a buffer stocks is especially problematic since the roads to Dadaab are extensively degraded and will likely be impassable after the onset of the short rains, toward the end of October. A food pipeline break would cause substantial food stress among the newly arriving refugees who have no alternative food or income sources.
- A study by the WFP indicated that a relatively small proportion of food is being sold into markets. Out of 9,500 MT of food that was distributed over the past two months, about seven percent was traded in markets. The FEWS NET team encountered a couple of refugees from Dagahaley camp transporting about six bags of 50-kg bags of maize to Dadaab town for sale at Ksh. 1,500, well below prevailing market prices for this period (Figure 2). The refugee community interviewed indicated that the sale of grain was intended to finance non-food needs and also provide income to supplement the diet with the more preferable pasta and rice.
- CARE is responsible for providing 80 percent of water needs for all refugees, with other agencies providing the remaining 20 percent. CARE indicated that refugees were accessing about 14-15 liters per person per day, close to sphere standards. However, water scarcity was reported in some areas, particularly around the temporary camps which were provisioned through water trucking.
- A number of small livelihood activities were being implemented by about 500 families in Ifo, Dagahaley and Hagardhere. The activities included small vegetable gardens and small stock rearing, intended to diversify diets to include foods that are not supplied by the regular food basket. However, CARE reported that the uptake of some activities such as vegetable gardening was not extensive because of pastoralist dietary preferences.
- Insecurity had worsened significantly over the past month largely due to an increase in raids by Al Shabab militia groups from Somalia who are targeting international agency vehicles and other valuable items. While a heavy security presence was a deterrent, the amorphous nature of militias and the ease with which they integrate with local refugee and other populations may compromise responsiveness of agencies. Some members of host communities were an additional source of insecurity as they were reportedly threatening agencies, demanding employment opportunities within camps.

Figure 4. Newly arrived children at Dagahaley's MSF-Spain's medical centre



Malnutrition and morbidity

- High and sustained prevalence of child malnutrition seemingly contradicts the comprehensive food assistance programs that include general food distribution, blanket supplementary feeding for all under-five children and the school meals programs. Causes of child malnutrition in Dadaab's refugee camps are complex and transcend access to food. Table 1 is a summary of health and nutrition outcomes in the refugee camps, indicative of rates that are in most cases above WHO emergency thresholds.

Table 1. Health and Nutrition Status in Dadaab camps

| Camp and survey date | Hagardhere | Ifo | Dagahaley | Dagahaley Outskirts |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | Aug 22-28 | Aug 22-28 | Sept 1-7 | Sept 1-6 |
| Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) - W/H (%) | 17.2 (13.2-22.1) | 22.4 (17.4-28.3) | 23.2 (18.4-28.9) | 38.3 (31.1-44.8) |
| Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) – W/H (%) | 4.6 (2.7-7.6) | 6.8 (4.2-11.0) | 8.2 (5.4-12.2) | 18.8 (14.7-23.6) |
| At Risk of Malnutrition - Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) – (12.5-13.4cm) | 14.3 (11.3-17.2) | 22.9 (18.4-27.3) | 19.1 (15.0-23.2) | 26.9 (23.2-30.5) |
| Severe Malnutrition - Middle Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) – (<11.5cm) | 1.8 (0.7-3.0) | 1.3 (0.4-2.1) | 1.9 (0.7-3.0) | 9.7 (6.3-13.1) |
| Morbidity (diarrhea - past two weeks) (%) | 13.5 (9.2-17.8) | 17.6 (13.2-22.2) | 8.7 (5.0-12.4) | 15.2 (8.9-21.4) |
| Crude Mortality Rates (per 10,000 per day) | 0.14 (0.14-0.46) | 0.41 (0.21-0.80) | 0.14 (0.05-0.36) | 1.23 (0.73-2.06) |
| Under Five Death Rates (per 10,000 per day) | 0.33 (0.08-1.36) | 0.94 (0.45-1.98) | 0.28 (0.07-1.17) | 3.02 (1.72-5.24) |

All the confidence intervals are 95 percent.

Source: UNHCR

- Despite recent improvements, UNHCR indicated that the prevalence of acute child malnutrition is three times higher than during a comparable period in the previous year. For example, prior to the influx of refugees, the GAM prevalence (W/H) in Ifo camp in August 2010 was 7.2 percent, compared to 22.4 in September 2011; and five percent in Hagardhere camp in August 2010 relative to the current 17 percent. Increased rates were attributed, in part, to sharing of food rations with new arrivals in older camps. Inadequate access to sanitation and health facilities has also exacerbated poor nutrition among refugee and host populations.
- The highest level of child malnutrition has been reported in the outskirts of Dagahaley camp (Table 1). Dagahaley camp is the closest camp to Somalia and is therefore the most accessible for new arrivals. A visit to the MSF's medical centre in Dagahaley showed a marked decline in the number of refugees seeking medical attention as compared to early August (50 during the September mission, as compared to over 200 in early August). In addition, the number of severely malnourished children admitted to MSF-Spain's therapeutic feeding centre had declined from about 50 per day at the peak of the crisis in July through early August, to about five in late September. Mortality rates have also declined significantly suggesting that the situation has begun to stabilize.
- UNICEF reported that up to 80 percent of all hospital wards were taken up by newly arriving refugees and that new arrivals accounted for 80 percent of severely malnourished children. Three cholera cases were confirmed across the camps, toward the end of September.

Identified Gaps

Most agencies interviewed identified critical gaps that included:

- Absence of the normal three-month food buffer stock, just before the onset of the short-rains season, is a cause for serious concern for households that are fully dependent on humanitarian assistance, because of characteristic impassable roads during the rainy season.

- Highly inadequate sanitation could predispose refugee population to proliferation of water and vector borne diseases especially during the upcoming short-rains season. The most vulnerable camps are the outskirts of Ifo II and III extensions, Dagahaley and Kambios where measles and diarrhea cases were already prevalent.
- Re-location of refugee populations to the outskirts of the new camps which are under construction severely constrained access to health facilities, water and proper shelter of the most vulnerable, newly arriving refugees.
- Education facilities including number of teachers fall well short of swelling numbers of children. The necessity of a good education cannot be under-estimated because the level of education of mothers in particular, is among other things, a good predictor of nutrition levels among children.
- Other intervention mechanisms such as food vouchers etc. that confer access to food without necessitating destruction of the environment also represented a key gap. Grains that were provided as food assistance, most notably maize, required a considerable cooking time and were fuel-intensive. Food vouchers would allow people to buy culturally preferred food such as pasta and rice in some instances.
- Improved and continual education among refugee populations - for example, not many households were aware that corn soya blend (CSB) was actually not part of the general ration but intended for young children only. Consumption of CSB by entire households tended to minimize its impact in reversing heightened rates of child malnutrition.

Food security and environmental conditions for host communities in Garissa District

The host community is defined as the people residing within a radius of about 50 km of the refugee camps. However, each agency tended to have its own working definition of 'host' community. For example, OCHA's definition included pastoral populations in the neighboring Wajir and Mandera districts. The total population is estimated at about 150,000 people and occupies an area of about 9,600 km² around Dadaab camp. The expansion of refugee camps has had both positive and negative effects on these communities. Most of the benefits are short-term and transitory in nature, whereas the negative effects are both short-term and long-term. Some of the food security related benefits include:

- **Improved access to cereal price below prevailing market rates:** Some refugees sell their food rations (especially maize) to the host community at a comparatively lower price and use proceeds to purchase other types of food and non-food commodities. The host communities in turn use these cereals as food and feed for livestock. During this visit, the refugees sold maize at Ksh. 20-30/kg within camps (i.e. Ksh. 1000-1500 per 50-kg bag). The price of maize was about Ksh. 50 per kg in Garissa town which is located about 90 kilometers away from the camps. Besides being a source of less expensive food, availability of sufficient volumes of lower-priced maize has also offered host communities opportunities to engage in petty trade thus diversifying their livelihoods.
- **Improved access to market for livestock and milk:** About 20-30 per cent of the livestock holdings (camels and goats) belonging to the host community had not migrated, most were lactating dams and young stock. The increasing numbers of refugees have continued to provide a fairly large and steady market for both slaughter livestock and milk.
- **Access to additional food:** Previous studies have shown that as of September 2010, about 27 percent of host community population possessed refugee ration cards that enabled access to general food distribution rations within the camps. Although this size may be contested, the same was corroborated by the provincial administration staff who indicated that local residents registered as ration card holders had not attained 18 years of age. However, these populations now have difficulty obtaining Kenyan identity cards because operationally they are refugees. Possession of these cards has continued to enable some members of the host community to access additional food on a regular basis. It was also noted that the previously existing refugee backlog of about 40,000 between July and August could

Figure 5. Hay from Thika District along the Garissa-Dadaab 'highway'



have been local residents and old refugees presenting themselves as new arrivals in order to access additional food and non-food items.

- **Improved access to water and sanitation (WASH):** Information obtained from the provincial administration indicated that humanitarian and development agencies operating in Dadaab were required to commit about 30-40 percent of their budgets toward addressing the needs of host communities. By September, about 40 agencies were operating in and around the refugee camps with most of them targeting the WASH sector. Some of the interventions included water trucking, donation of water bowsers, repair of bore-holes, water piping and construction of water kiosks, provision of bore-hole engines fuel subsidies, sinking of new boreholes and construction of latrines. The interventions improved access to water, sanitation and health services significantly for host communities. It was estimated that these interventions met over 50 per cent of host community water requirements.
- **Increased employment opportunities:** The increased numbers of humanitarian and development agencies in and around Dadaab had also enhanced employment opportunities for the host communities especially in non-technical positions.

In spite of existing benefits, increasing number of refugees had proffered constraints to host communities. The consequences of the constraints are long-term and include:

- Accelerated deterioration of range resources as trees and shrubs are cut down for construction of shelter and fuel use. In addition, some refugees own livestock (goats and camels) which they browse within the vicinity of camps further depleting vegetation and curtailing regeneration of resources as they are unable to migrate out of the camps.
- Depletion of water resources – the rate of water extraction from the aquifer has far exceeded recharge rates because water is being extracted from up to 150 meters, instead of 50, suggesting that future availability of water is severely compromised.
- Continued upsurge in game-hunting to supplement food rations by refugees for protein source, unbalancing the agroecology.
- The camps provide a conducive environment for militia groups to integrate and hide and could promote proliferation of small arms and cause insecurity to spread well beyond camp borders.

Response targeting host communities

Apart from WFP's Food for Assets program targeting about 24,000 people in Garissa district, there was no distribution of food through the WFP pipeline in August and September due to food shortages. However, the effects of the break were moderated by expanded, albeit uncoordinated, response by other actors in August and September. In most areas, these actors offered blanket distribution of food, non-food items and cash. It is believed that this response is short-lived and emanated from the world-wide international appeal in June-July. The stop-gap intervention may be able to sustain households through October. In addition to this stop-gap response, the government continued to supply 4,000, 50-kg bags of rice per division, through the provincial administration.

About Ksh. 2.5 million has been provided to support a livestock off-take programs at a cost of Ksh. 2,000 per goat. The program is to be implemented in the first half of October considered the peak of the dry season and will target small stock that remained with sedentary household members in Garissa. However, the impacts of the off-take program will be localized because allocated off-take funds are relatively small.

Other emerging issues

- Although most of the area occupied by the host communities remains dry, significant rainfall amounts were reported in the neighboring Ijara District during September. The rains contributed to regeneration of the rangeland for livestock that have migrated to this district. Some livestock from Mandera, Wajir and Garissa that had migrated to coastal areas have started migrating northward from coastal areas into Ijara, in anticipation of short rains.
- Livestock that remained with host communities were sustained on purchased fodder, hay, bran milled from maize and maize grain supplied as humanitarian assistance. Hay is supplied by traders from as far as central Kenya. One bale costs Ksh. 150-200, depending on its quality, while 2-kgs of bran cost Ksh. 15–25. Fodder is sourced from the banks of River

Tana which traverses Garissa district. Improved access to water due to the expanded response has significantly contributed to survival of remaining livestock.

Market functioning

- Commodity markets within Garissa District and most of the northeastern province were supplied sufficiently with rice, wheat flour, sugar, cooking oil, vegetables and potatoes. In addition, the supply of maize and beans improved with additional supplies from central Kenya and Tanzania, besides food from humanitarian assistance. While prices of most food commodities remained above seasonal averages, they were on a downward trend. Most traders were still reluctant to invest in large stocks of staples due to diminished effective demand, coupled with ongoing humanitarian responses.
- The livestock market which was trading about 20-30 percent of normal volumes in August continued to decline despite an increase in demand. Supplies were constrained by pastoralists holding onto their livestock in anticipation of improved pasture and water availability at the onset of rains and low numbers of animals, as most had migrated out of the district, while a few had died. However, demand for livestock had increased due to improved range conditions in the Coastal fattening ranches following unseasonable July-August rains. Overall, the quality of livestock supplied had improved, attributed in part, to enhanced range conditions in dry-season grazing areas in Kenya and Somalia.

Figure 6. Somalia Sahiwal cattle in Garissa market



Annex I: Institutions and people visited – September 27-28, 2011

| | NAME | INSTITUTION | DESIGNATION |
|-----|--------------------|---------------|---|
| 1. | Lourdes Ibarra | WFP | Head of Sub-office |
| 2. | John Munene | WFP | Senior Program Assistant |
| 3. | Dr. Ann Burton | UNHCR | Senior Program Officer |
| 4. | John Obiso | UNICEF | Head of Sub-Office |
| 5. | Ulrika Haapaneem | UNICEF | Program Officer – Water and Sanitation |
| 6. | Francis Asunah | UNICEF | Program Officer - Water and Sanitation |
| 7. | Linda Bayer | UNICEF-Kenya | Program Officer - Health and Nutrition |
| 8. | Francis Kidake | UNICEF | Program Officer – Health and Nutrition. |
| 9. | Michael Babu | CARE | Program Manager |
| 10. | Shadrack Lopeyok | CARE | Program Officer |
| 11. | John Ndiku | OCHA-Kenya | Humanitarian Affairs Officer |
| 12. | Anastasia Some | OCHA-Kenya | Humanitarian Affairs Assistant |
| 13. | Elias Mabaso | OCHA-Zimbabwe | Humanitarian Affairs Officer |
| 14. | Muhyadin Hassan | MSF-Spain | Office-in-Charge of Medical Centre |
| 15. | Bernard Ole Kipury | GoK | District Officer - Dadaab |
| 16. | Ahmed Farah | ALRMP | Drought Monitoring Officer - Garissa |
| 17. | Mahat Abdikarim | ALRMP | Community Development Officer -Garissa |