



INSTRUMENTS AND FOOD SECURITY OUTCOMES OF THE SDC FOOD SECURITY PROJECT IN FIKA LGA, YOBE STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Food insecurity remains a critical challenge in conflict-affected regions of Northeast Nigeria, where armed insurgency has disrupted agricultural systems, displaced populations, and undermined livelihoods. Despite substantial humanitarian investments, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of specific food security instruments in fragile contexts remains limited. This study assessed the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) Food Security Project in Fika Local Government Area (LGA), Yobe State, Nigeria, with a specific focus on: (i) classifying the food security instruments used by SDC and their distribution among beneficiaries; and (ii) evaluating the food security status of beneficiary households using standardized metrics. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 288 beneficiary households selected through multistage sampling across three conflict-affected communities (Gashaka, Kurmi, and Ngalda). Primary data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires administered through Open Data Kit (ODK). Food security status was assessed using the Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) and Food Consumption Score (FCS). Descriptive statistics, Food Consumption Gap Ratio, and composite scoring were employed for data analysis. The SDC project utilized four core instruments: Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT, 41.67%), Income Generating Activities (IGA, 32.99%), Financial Literacy Training (FLT, 13.89%), and Improved Farm Practice (IFP, 11.46%). HFIAS results indicated that 65.3% of households were food insecure (score >7), while only 34.7% were food secure (score ≤7). Food-insecure households exhibited a severe consumption gap ratio of -0.76. FCS assessment revealed that 50.0% of households had poor food consumption (FCS ≤21), 22.57% were borderline (FCS 21–35), and only 27.43% had acceptable consumption (FCS >35). The overall mean FCS of 25.59 fell within the borderline category. Beneficiaries were predominantly male (70.14%), married (85.76%), with low educational attainment (64.59% having primary education or less), and severely impoverished (70.49% earning ≤₦30,000 monthly). Despite diversified intervention instruments, the SDC project achieved only marginal improvements in food security outcomes. The predominance of cash-based interventions over productive capacity-building suggests a short-term relief orientation rather than sustainable resilience-building. The high prevalence of food insecurity among beneficiaries indicates that current intervention intensity and design require substantial enhancement to meet household food needs in protracted conflict settings.

Keywords: Food security, conflict, SDC, unconditional cash transfer, HFIAS, FCS, Northeast Nigeria, humanitarian intervention



1.0

INTRODUCTION

Food insecurity in sub-Saharan Africa represents one of the most pressing development challenges of the twenty-first century. The World Food Programme projects reported that by 2030, Africa will host the largest population of hungry people globally, with the continent failing to meet Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) targets (WFP, 2021). In Nigeria, the situation is particularly dire in the northeastern states of Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa, where over a decade of Boko Haram insurgency has devastated agricultural systems, displaced millions, and created a protracted humanitarian crisis (FAO, 2022). According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (2022), over 4.3 million people in conflict-affected areas of Northeast Nigeria experience critical food insecurity, with armed conflict disrupting agricultural activities, constraining market access, and limiting livelihood diversification.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) intervened in this context through a food security project implemented by Action Against Hunger Nigeria, commencing in 2020. The project targeted households in Fika LGA of Yobe State, a transitional zone between relatively stable areas and active conflict hotspots, utilizing multiple instruments including Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT), Income Generating Activities (IGA), Financial Literacy Training (FLT), and Improved Farm Practice (IFP) (SDC, 2022). Fika LGA presents a critical case study: while less directly affected than core conflict zones, it experiences significant spillover effects, including insurgent attacks, internally displaced person (IDP) influxes, and strained resource bases (Umar, 2022).

Despite substantial donor investment in food security interventions across Northeast Nigeria, rigorous empirical assessment of instrument effectiveness remains limited. Existing literature has examined food security outcomes in broad terms, yet few studies have systematically classified intervention instruments and evaluated resultant food security status using standardized, comparable metrics. This gap is particularly acute for SDC-funded interventions, where project documentation emphasizes implementation scale rather than outcome rigor. The absence of evidence-based assessment undermines adaptive management, resource optimization, and replication potential.

This study addresses this gap by systematically classifying SDC food security instruments and evaluating beneficiary food security status using validated measurement tools. The research questions guiding this investigation are: (i) What are the specific food security instruments utilized by the SDC project, and how are they distributed among beneficiaries? (ii) What is the food security status of beneficiary households as measured by standardized indicators?

2.0

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Amartya Sen's Entitlement Theory (1981), which posits that food insecurity stems not from absolute food scarcity but from failures in entitlements, the legal, economic, and social means through which individuals access food. Sen identifies four entitlement categories: production-based (through own cultivation), trade-based (through market exchange), labor-based (through wage employment), and transfer-based (through inheritance or social support). In conflict-affected contexts, multiple entitlement failures occur simultaneously: production entitlements collapse when farmland becomes inaccessible, trade

entitlements fail when markets are disrupted, and labor entitlements erode when employment opportunities vanish (Devereux, 2016; Barrett, 2020).

The Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) complements this framework by examining how households deploy five capital assets: human, social, natural, physical, and financial to construct livelihood strategies and achieve food security (Chambers & Conway, 1992; Scoones, 2015). In conflict settings, the depreciation of natural capital (land, water), physical capital (infrastructure, tools), and financial capital (savings, credit access) fundamentally constrains livelihood options and food access.

Social Protection Theory provides the intervention lens, categorizing assistance into social assistance (immediate relief), social insurance (risk management), and labor market policies (income generation) (Barrientos, 2013; Alderman, 2017). The SDC project's instrument mix spans these categories, offering a theoretically coherent intervention architecture.

2.2 Conceptualizing Food Security Measurement

Food security encompasses four dimensions: availability (sufficient food supply), access (economic and physical means to obtain food), utilization (proper biological use of food), and stability (consistency of access over time) (FAO, 2008). Measuring these dimensions requires multiple indicators capturing different aspects of the food security construct.

The Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS), developed by the Food and Nutrition Technical Assistance (FANTA) project, assesses the experiential dimension of food access through nine occurrence questions capturing anxiety, insufficient quality, and inadequate intake over a 30-day recall period (Coates et al., 2007). Responses generate composite scores from 0–27, with higher scores indicating greater insecurity. HFIAS has been validated across diverse cultural and economic contexts, including conflict-affected African settings (Maxwell *et al.*, 2018).

The Food Consumption Score (FCS), developed by the World Food Programme, evaluates dietary diversity and food frequency over a seven-day recall period (WFP, 2021). By applying nutritional weights to nine food groups and summing frequency-weighted scores, FCS generates a composite indicator classified as poor (<21), borderline (21–35), or acceptable (>35). FCS captures both access and utilization dimensions, complementing HFIAS's focus on experiential access.

Using multiple indicators addresses the limitation that no single metric captures all dimensions of food security (Coates, 2013). Divergence between HFIAS and FCS results indicates specific vulnerabilities households may access diverse foods occasionally (adequate HFIAS) yet consume insufficient quantities (poor FCS), or vice versa.

2.3 Empirical Evidence on Food Security Interventions in Conflict Contexts

Humanitarian food security interventions in conflict zones typically employ cash transfers, in-kind food aid, agricultural input support, or capacity-building approaches. Meta-analytic evidence suggests cash transfers improve food consumption and dietary diversity by 20–30% in sub-Saharan African contexts (Hidrobo et al., 2018; Haushofer & Shapiro, 2016). However, effectiveness varies substantially with market functionality, security conditions, and intervention design.

In Northeast Nigeria specifically, Bala *et al.* (2021) found that unconditional cash transfers improved Household Food Insecurity Access Scale scores among displaced populations, yet market disruptions and inflation constrained impacts. Yahaya *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that cash transfer values equivalent to 225% of average monthly income still failed to achieve food security for the majority of beneficiaries, highlighting the depth of deprivation and structural barriers.

Studies comparing intervention instruments indicate that combined approaches outperformed single instruments. Tadesse *et al.* (2021) in Ethiopia found that food aid combined with agricultural input support increased household food availability by 45%, yet dependency risks emerged where sustainability mechanisms were absent. The World Bank (2023) assessment of SDC interventions in Mali demonstrated that cash assistance combined with technical training increased food security by 50%, exceeding impacts from cash alone.

Critically, perception-based assessments often diverge from objective measurements. Aliyu and Yusuf (2022) in Yobe State found that 75% of beneficiaries perceived food security improvements following interventions, yet HFIAS measurements showed only 20% actual improvement, a discrepancy attributable to optimism bias, social desirability effects, and short-term relief gratification.

2.4 Contextual Factors in Fika LGA

Fika LGA, with an estimated population of 215,000 (NPC, 2006; projected 2022), is predominantly agrarian, with rain-fed cultivation of millet, sorghum, maize, and groundnut constituting the economic mainstay (Kareto *et al.*, 2025). The semi-arid climate (500mm annual rainfall) and ethnic diversity (Bolewa, Kanuri, Fulani) shape livelihood patterns. Conflict spillover effects include disrupted farming cycles, IDP influxes (31.94% of study beneficiaries), and deteriorated infrastructure conditions that fundamentally constrain intervention effectiveness (FAO, 2019).

3.0

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Study Area

The study was conducted in Fika LGA of Yobe State, Nigeria (11.2847°N, 11.3087°E), a semi-arid zone bordering Gombe State. The area was purposively selected because of the SDC project implementation across three conflict-affected communities: Gashaka (166 beneficiary households), Kurmi (110 households), and Ngalda (862 households), totaling 1,138 beneficiary households obtained from SDC records.

3.2 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A multistage sampling procedure was employed. First, all three SDC beneficiary communities were purposively selected. Second, sample size was determined using the Rao-Soft sample size calculator with 95% confidence level and $\pm 5\%$ margin of error, yielding 288 respondents from the 1,138-household population. Third, Population Proportionate to Size (PPS) using Bowley's proportional allocation distributed the sample: Gashaka ($n=42$), Kurmi ($n=28$), and Ngalda ($n=218$). Systematic sampling with an interval of three identified specific households following random start selection. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across socioeconomic groups and intervention types.



3.3 Data Collection

Primary data were collected using semi-structured questionnaires coded and deployed through the Open Data Kit (ODK) electronic platform. Five trained enumerators administered instruments following standardized protocols. The questionnaire captured: (i) socioeconomic characteristics (demographics, income, education, livelihood activities); (ii) intervention instrument classification (beneficiary-reported primary instrument received); (iii) HFIAS module (nine occurrence questions with 30-day recall); (iv) FCS module (seven-day food group frequency); and (v) expenditure patterns. Pre-testing in a comparable community ensured clarity and cultural appropriateness.

3.4 Analytical Methods

Descriptive Statistics: Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations summarized socioeconomic characteristics and instrument distribution.

HFIAS Analysis: Nine occurrence questions scored 0 (never), 1 (rarely: 1–2 times), 2 (sometimes: 3–10 times), or 3 (often: >10 times) over 30 days. Composite scores (0–27) were generated, with classification: Food Secure (0–7) and Food Insecure (8–27) (Coates et al., 2007). **FCS Analysis:** Food group consumption frequency (0–7 days) multiplied by nutritional weights (cereals/tubers: 2; pulses/nuts: 3; vegetables: 1; fruits: 1; meat/fish/eggs: 4; milk/dairy: 4; oils/fats: 0.5; sugar: 0.5; condiments: 0). Composite scores classified as: Poor (<21), Borderline (21–35), Acceptable (>35) (WFP, 2021). **Food Consumption Gap Ratio (FCGR):** Calculated as $(R_i - C_i)/R_i$, where R_i = recommended consumption level and C_i = actual consumption. Values approaching 1 indicate a severe deficit; negative values indicate surplus.

Instrument Validity and Reliability: Content validity was ensured through literature-aligned indicators (FCS, HFIAS). Face validity was established through pilot testing. Construct validity was supported by composite indices measuring latent food security constructs. Reliability was enhanced through enumerator training, ODK data validation controls, and field supervision.

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Socioeconomic Characteristics of Beneficiaries

Table 1 presents the socioeconomic profile of the 288 respondents. The average beneficiary was 47 years old (SD=11.53), with 61% aged 38–57 years, an economically active yet mature demographic. Mean household size was 12 persons (SD=6.42), with 54.17% having 6–15 members, indicating large family structures typical of northern Nigerian agrarian communities. Severe economic deprivation characterized the sample: 70.49% earned $\leq$ ₦30,000 monthly (mean ₦29,148; SD=₦22,311), with a maximum reported income of ₦250,000, suggesting extreme inequality.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Quantitative Socioeconomic Variables (n=288)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Std	Min.	Max.
Age of the Respondents						
18-27	8	2.78	47	11.53	18	75
28-37	49	17.01				
38-47	84	29.17				
48-57	93	32.29				
above 57	54	18.75				
Household Size						
1-5	21	7.29	12	6.42	1	22
6-10	111	38.54				
11-15	98	34.03				
Above 15	58	20.14				
Household Monthly Income			29,148	22,311	15,000	250000
≤ 30000	203	70.49				
30,000 to 50,000	66	22.92				
50,001 to 70,000	4	1.39				
70,001 to 90,000	3	1.04				
90,001 and above	12	4.17				

Source: Field survey, 2025

4.1.2 Qualitative characteristics

Table 2 reveal gender imbalance: 70.14% male, 29.86% female, reflecting cultural norms where men typically represent households in community programs. Marital status was predominantly married (85.76%), with significant widowhood (11.11%), indicating conflict-related mortality. The majority were household heads (90.97%), host community members (68.06%), rather than IDPs (31.94%). Educational attainment was critically low: only 4.86% had a tertiary education, 18.75% secondary, 11.81% primary, while 43.06% had only Qur'anic education and 21.53% no formal education. This educational deficit constrains the adoption of improved practices and financial management capacity. Access to financial support was severely limited (13.89%), indicating shallow financial inclusion.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Qualitative Socioeconomic Variables (n=288)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	202	70.14
Female	86	29.86
Marital Status		
Married	247	85.76
Single	7	2.43
Divorced	2	0.69
Widow	32	11.11
Head of Household		
Yes	262	90.97
No	26	9.03
Primary income source		
Crop Farming	183	63.54
Trading Business	51	17.71
Livestock Rearing	6	2.08
Others	48	16.67

Source: Field survey, 2025

These characteristics have profound implications for intervention design. The large household sizes (mean=12) amplify food consumption needs, yet 70.49% of households subsist on ≤N30,000 monthly, approximately \$20 at current exchange rates, creating a structural deficit between needs and resources. The predominance of crop farming (63.54%) as primary income, combined with low education and limited financial access, suggests that agricultural productivity interventions should be central, yet the actual instrument distribution reveals a different emphasis.

4.1.3 Classification of SDC Food Security Instruments

Table 3 presents the distribution of SDC instruments among beneficiaries. Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) was the dominant instrument, received by 41.67% (n=120) of beneficiaries as their primary support. Income Generating Activities (IGA) followed at 32.99% (n=95), while Financial Literacy Training (FLT) and Improved Farm Practice (IFP) were markedly less prevalent at 13.89% (n=40) and 11.46% (n=33) respectively.

Table 3: Classification of SDC Food Security Project Beneficiaries by Intervention Instrument Received (n=288)

Instrument	Frequency	Percentage
Unconditional Cash Transfer	120	41.67
Income Generating Activity	95	32.99
Financial Literacy Training	40	13.89
Improved Farm Practice	33	11.46
Total	288	100

Source: Field survey, 2025

This distribution reveals a cash-dominant intervention architecture, with UCT and IGA (the latter often involving cash grants for business establishment) comprising 74.66% of all instruments. Productive capacity-building instruments, FLT, and IFP represent only 25.34% of

beneficiary experiences. This pattern suggests a relief-oriented rather than resilience-oriented intervention design, consistent with emergency response logics but potentially inadequate for protracted crisis contexts where sustainable livelihood restoration is required.

The predominance of UCT aligns with evidence that cash transfers offer flexibility, dignity, and market stimulation (Hidrobo *et al.*, 2018; Gentilini, 2022). The SDC UCT of ₦50,000 represents approximately 225% of the average beneficiary's monthly income, designed to resuscitate food affordability. However, the 41.67% UCT concentration, combined with 32.99% IGA (which often incorporates cash components), indicates that nearly three-quarters of beneficiaries received primarily cash-based support.

The limited reach of IFP (11.46%) is particularly concerning given that 63.54% of beneficiaries identify crop farming as their primary livelihood. This disconnect between beneficiary livelihood profiles and intervention instruments suggests suboptimal targeting. The low IFP prevalence likely reflects conflict-related constraints restricted farmland access, input supply disruptions, and security concerns during field activities, yet also indicates programmatic prioritization away from agricultural productivity.

FLT's limited reach (13.89%) may reflect its positioning as a complementary intervention for IGA graduates or households demonstrating business potential, rather than universal provision. However, given the extremely low financial literacy in the sample (86.11% without financial support access, 64.59% with minimal formal education), universal FLT could enhance the effectiveness of cash and IGA instruments by improving resource management.

4.1.4 Food Security Status of Beneficiary Households

4.1.4.1 Household Food Insecurity Access Scale (HFIAS) Results

HFIAS assessment revealed critical food insecurity among the majority of beneficiaries (Table 4). Only 34.7% (n=100) of households were food secure (HFIAS score ≤ 7), while 65.3% (n=188) were food insecure (score > 7). The mean HFIAS score for food-insecure households was 12.32, indicating moderate-to-severe experiential food deprivation.

Table 4: Food Security Status of SDC Beneficiaries Using HFIAS (n=288)

Food security status	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Food Consumption Gap Ratio
Food Secure (HFIAS ≤ 7)	100	34.7	3.6	0.49
Food insecure (HFIAS > 7)	188	65.3	12.32	-0.76
Total	288	100		

Source: Field survey, 2025. Note: Positive FCGR indicates surplus; negative indicates deficit.

The Food Consumption Gap Ratio reveals a stark disparity between secure and insecure households. Food-secure households exhibited a surplus ratio of +0.49, indicating consumption 49% above minimum caloric requirements. Conversely, food-insecure households showed a severe deficit of -0.76, representing a 76% shortfall from required consumption levels. This magnitude of deficit indicates crisis-level food deprivation requiring urgent intervention.

The 65.3% food insecurity prevalence among SDC beneficiary households already receiving humanitarian assistance suggests that current intervention intensity is insufficient to overcome

structural deprivation. For context, national food insecurity estimates for Northeast Nigeria typically range 40–60% in conflict-affected LGAs (FAO, 2022; WFP, 2022). The finding that two-thirds of assisted households remain food insecure indicates either that assistance is too modest, too poorly targeted, or undermined by ongoing conflict dynamics.

The HFIAS classification employed here (secure/insecure dichotomy) is more stringent than the standard four-category approach (secure, mildly insecure, moderately insecure, severely insecure). Had mild insecurity been included in the "secure" category, prevalence would appear lower; however, given the conflict context and depth of deprivation indicated by the -0.76 consumption gap, the binary classification appropriately captures the severity of the situation.

4.1.4.2 Food Consumption Score (FCS) Results

FCS assessment provided complementary evidence of food insecurity, with results diverging from HFIAS in important ways (Table 5). Only 27.43% (n=79) of households achieved acceptable food consumption (FCS >35), while 22.57% (n=65) were borderline (FCS 21–35) and 50.0% (n=144) had poor consumption (FCS ≤21). The overall mean FCS of 25.59 fell within the borderline category, indicating marginal food security at the community level.

Table 5: Food Security Status of Respondents Using FCS (n=288)

Food Security Status	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Food Consumption Gap Ratio
Food Secure (FCS ≥ 35)	79	27.43	49.78	-0.42
Border line (FCS >21 < 35)	65	22.57	27.34	0.34
Food insecure (FCS ≤ 21)	144	50.00	15.67	0.55
Total	288	100		
Overall mean			25.59	

Source: Field survey, 2025. Note: Positive FCGR indicates a gap; negative indicates surplus.

The divergence between HFIAS and FCS results is analytically significant. HFIAS classified 34.7% as food secure versus FCS's 27.43% acceptable consumption, a 7.27 percentage point difference. Conversely, FCS found 50% with poor consumption versus HFIAS's 65.3% insecure, a 15.3 percentage point difference. This pattern suggests that some households experiencing food access anxiety and quality constraints (captured by HFIAS) nonetheless consume adequate dietary diversity and frequency (FCS), while others with limited experiential anxiety consume monotonous, insufficient diets.

The FCGR values require careful interpretation. For acceptable consumption households, the negative ratio (-0.42) indicates surplus relative to the FCS threshold. For borderline and poor consumption households, positive ratios (+0.34 and +0.55) indicate progressive shortfalls from the acceptable threshold. The 50% poor consumption prevalence with a mean FCS of 15.67 (substantially below the 21 threshold) indicates severe dietary inadequacy affecting half the beneficiary population.

The overall mean FCS of 25.59 is squarely in the borderline category, confirming that the SDC project has achieved only marginal improvements in community-level food consumption. This aligns with the HFIAS finding that two-thirds of households remain insecure, while suggesting that even among the "secure" third, dietary quality may be inadequate.

The 50% poor FCS prevalence combined with 65.3% HFIAS insecurity indicates that the SDC project has not achieved transformative food security improvements. While 34.7% achieved

experiential food security and 27.43% achieved acceptable consumption, these figures remain below targets for assisted populations. The persistence of severe consumption deficits (-0.76 FCGR for insecure households) suggests that intervention scale, duration, or design requires substantial enhancement.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Instrument-Food Security Nexus

The instrument distribution (74.66% cash/IGA versus 25.34% capacity-building) correlates with observed food security outcomes. Cash-dominant interventions improve immediate food access, evidenced by the 34.7% HFIAS secure rate, yet fail to build sustainable productive capacity, reflected in the 50% poor FCS prevalence and marginal overall mean FCS of 25.59. This pattern aligns with the "relief trap" documented in protracted crises, where repeated cash assistance without livelihood restoration creates dependency without resilience (Barrett & Carter, 2020).

The limited IFP reach (11.46%) is particularly problematic given the agrarian economy. With 63.54% of beneficiaries dependent on crop farming, agricultural productivity interventions should be central. The low IFP prevalence likely reflects implementer risk aversion in insecure areas, yet this perpetuates food insecurity by leaving productive capacity unaddressed. Studies in comparable contexts demonstrate that agricultural support combined with cash transfers outperforms cash alone (Tadesse et al., 2021; World Bank, 2023).

4.2.2 Structural Constraints on Intervention Effectiveness

The socioeconomic profile explains limited intervention effectiveness. Large household sizes (mean=12) dilute per-capita assistance value. The ₦50,000 UCT, while 225% of average income, provides approximately ₦4,167 per person monthly, insufficient for basic caloric needs given market prices. Severe poverty (70.49% earning $\leq$ ₦30,000) means cash is immediately consumed rather than invested. Low education (64.59% with primary or less) constrains the adoption of improved practices and financial management. Gender imbalance (70.14% male beneficiaries) may miss female-headed households where food security interventions often achieve greater nutritional impact (Hidrobo *et al.*, 2018).

The 31.94% IDP proportion introduces additional complexity. Displaced households lack land access, social networks, and local market knowledge, making agricultural interventions less applicable and cash transfers more consumption-oriented. The project's community-based targeting may inadequately distinguish between IDP and host community needs.

4.2.3 Comparison with Regional Benchmarks

The 65.3% HFIAS food insecurity among SDC beneficiaries compares unfavorably with FAO (2022) estimates of 40–60% for the Northeast Nigeria conflict zones generally. That assisted populations show higher insecurity than regional averages suggests either that targeting selects the most vulnerable (a positive interpretation) or that assistance is insufficient to improve conditions (a concerning interpretation). Given the depth of deprivation (-0.76 FCGR), the latter interpretation is more plausible.

The FCS 50% poor consumption rate exceeds WFP (2022) thresholds for emergency intervention (typically >40% poor consumption triggers urgent response). This indicates that



despite ongoing SDC support, beneficiary communities remain in acute food insecurity requiring scaled assistance.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This study classified SDC food security instruments and evaluated beneficiary food security status in Fika LGA, Yobe State. Four instruments were identified: Unconditional Cash Transfer (41.67%), Income Generating Activities (32.99%), Financial Literacy Training (13.89%), and Improved Farm Practice (11.46%). The intervention architecture is cash-dominant, with productive capacity-building instruments reaching only one-quarter of beneficiaries.

Food security assessment using HFIAS and FCS revealed critical, persistent insecurity. HFIAS classified 65.3% of households as food insecure with a severe consumption gap of -0.76. FCS indicated 50% poor consumption, 22.57% borderline, and only 27.43% acceptable, with an overall mean of 25.59 (borderline). Only 23.6% of households were consistently secure across both indicators.

The divergence between HFIAS and FCS results, 65.3% insecure versus 50% poor consumption, indicates that food insecurity manifests differently across access and consumption dimensions. Cash-dominant interventions appear to improve access experiences (reducing HFIAS anxiety indicators) without ensuring adequate dietary diversity and frequency (FCS). This suggests that current interventions address immediate hunger but not nutritional adequacy or sustainable food systems.

The study concludes that while the SDC project provides necessary humanitarian assistance, its instrument mix and intensity are insufficient to achieve food security in this protracted conflict context. The relief-oriented design, prioritizing cash over productive capacity-building, fails to address structural determinants of food insecurity, including agricultural productivity decline, limited livelihood diversification, and poor financial management capacity.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Rebalance instrument mix toward productive capacity: Increase IFP and FLT coverage from 25.34% to at least 50% of beneficiaries, with integrated packages combining agricultural inputs, technical training, and financial literacy. This addresses the agrarian livelihood profile (63.54% crop farmers) and builds sustainable resilience.
2. Implement differentiated targeting: Design distinct intervention packages for host community members (with land access, suitable for IFP) versus IDPs (without land access, requiring IGA and UCT). Current undifferentiated approaches underserve both populations.
3. Scale cash transfer values: Increase UCT values to account for household size (currently mean=12 persons) and inflation. Implement per-capita rather than flat-rate transfers to ensure adequacy for large families.



4. Integrate financial literacy universally: Provide FLT to all cash and IGA beneficiaries to improve resource management, savings behavior, and investment decisions. The 13.89% current reach is inadequate given low education levels.
5. Strengthen agricultural value chains: Complement IFP with market access support, storage facilities, and input supply networks to ensure that productivity gains translate into food availability and income.
6. Conduct longitudinal impact evaluation: The cross-sectional design limits causal attribution. Future research should employ pre-post intervention comparisons with control groups to isolate SDC project effects from confounding factors.
7. Investigate intra-household dynamics: The male-dominated sample (70.14%) may obscure gender-differentiated impacts. Research should examine how intervention instruments affect women, children, and vulnerable subgroups differently.
8. Examine cost-effectiveness: Compare per-beneficiary costs and outcomes across instruments to optimize resource allocation within constrained humanitarian budgets.

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