Hazards (Shocks) between Wau countryside and Wau town and because of the town’s reduced overall access to key markets. The decrease of agricultural production in the Greater Baggari area, one of Wau County’s least accessible and underdeveloped regions, has been a critical issue. Those villagers whose crops were not destroyed have often remained dependent on their livestock, which provide milk, meat, and manure for the crop production. However, in March and April 2017, a prolonged dry spell reduced the availability of browse and water, leading to significant livestock losses. Cattle was traditionally not valued as a source of income as much as it was for subsistence in Wau County.

Apart from agriculture, fishing, and livestock, sources of income for communities in Wau County have traditionally included the production of charcoal and the trade in products such as sugar, salt, clothes, oil, flour, soap, and tea leaves, which were bought and sold at the main market of Wau town. Some of the products sold at Wau’s market were imported from Sudan, Uganda, and neighboring states of South Sudan. These market interactions were possible thanks to a stable access between Wau countryside and Wau town and because of the town’s traditionally secure and well-connected location within South Sudan.

Hazards (Shocks)

Armed conflict broke out in and around Wau town in June 2016 and briefly again in April 2017, leading to the internal displacement within Wau County of approximately 62,000-77,000 people following the conflict in June 2016, and a second wave of 22,000–25,000 people following the violence of April 2017. These episodes of violence and the subsequent infrastructural damage to villages increased tensions and insecurity in Wau County which resulted in large-scale displacement and in a severe restriction of movement for civilians in the area. Furthermore, insecurity in 2017 resulted in the temporary suspension of General Food Distributions (GFDs) outside the Wau Protection of Civilians (PoC) site. The suspension persisted from April through July.

In 2017, the rainy season began in the month of May, which is said to be one month late compared to previous years. Apart from a late beginning of the rainy season, a general reduction of the rainfall during the rainy season was reported.
outputs and the impossibility of conducting trade between Wau town and countryside led to an increase in prices for the available products on the markets and to a greater dependency on importing goods from neighbouring states within South Sudan or from Sudan and Uganda.

**Coping strategies**

Conflict and the resulting insecurity and destruction of property forced households to adopt strategies to cope with the disruption of livelihood sources. As a result of the impossibility to cultivate due to the conflict, households in 22% of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food in Wau County have been relying on gathering wild foods, such as cassava leaves and roots. Other coping strategies that were reported during REACH assessments over the months of May, June and July included borrowing food from neighbours and relatives (in an average of 16% of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food), buying less expensive food (in an average of 16% of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food) and borrowing money in order to buy food (in an average of 14% of assessed settlements reporting inadequate access to food), demonstrating the deterioration of normal livelihoods in Wau County.

**Food Security Overview**

**Food Availability and Access**

In Wau County, the reported access to food has been consistently low, with only 11%, 9% and 6% of assessed settlements reportedly having adequate access to food in the months of May, June and July, respectively. The percentage of assessed settlements reporting only eating once a day increased from 33% in May to 50% in June and 73% in July, which suggests a general decrease in food consumption all over Wau County.

Similarly to the skipping of meals, consuming smaller meals is perceived as a highly unsustainable coping strategy. The reduction of the size of meals as a coping strategy was reported in an average of 30% of the settlements reporting inadequate access to food that were assessed from May to July 2017. During FGDs conducted in Wau town and countryside, it was reported that when cultivation was possible communities all over Wau County were consuming crops prematurely to fill short term food consumption gaps.

Wild foods were reported as the main type of food consumed, mainly cassava leaves and roots, which are less nutritious than the crops that had traditionally been consumed. Data throughout Wau County indicates that an average of 22% of assessed settlements reporting adequate access to food relied on cassava from May to July. During the rapid assessment in Greater Baggari in August physical observations indicated that the majority of the IDP population as well the local community survive on an entirely cassava plant based diet due to the lack of access to more nutritious food sources.

According to KIs interviewed during the rapid assessment, fish, usually a common substitute for crops, was not consumed. This is primarily due to the overall lack of fishing equipment available.

Overall, an average of 95% of settlements assessed from May throughout July reported access to clean drinking water. While travelling time to access clean drinking water slightly increased due to the deterioration of roads during the rainy season, 81% of assessed settlements in May and June and 73% of those assessed in July reported a travel time of less than one hour, suggesting regular access to clean drinking water. Regular access to clean drinking water limits the risk of water-borne diseases such as cholera and diarrhoea, which negatively affect the body’s absorption of key nutrients and therefore exacerbate the humanitarian situation.

**Stability of Food Access**

In spite of the shocks experienced in 2016 and 2017, the rainy season has the potential to temporarily increase the county wide access to food in August and September. In Greater Baggari however, thousands of IDPs cannot benefit from the rainy season due to the loss of tools and seeds as a result of their displacement and because of the general insecurity that persists in the area. The inability to engage in traditional livelihoods will likely continue to lead to a deficit in general food availability compared to previous years and the prices of the available food at the markets will likely further increase.

If insecurity persists, food access will remain low and villages in the most shock affected areas in Wau County will continue to rely on unsustainable coping mechanisms, reflective of limited available livelihoods and minimal access to food.

1 IOM. Village Assessment Survey, 2013.