5th August, 2014

INITIAL RAPID NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

(Nutrition & Health)

Longochuk County

Upper Nile State South Sudan

Relief International Mathiang Base

Malnourished children screened and received treatment in Mathiang Payam

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Executive Summary

Objective

The objectives of this assessment were to determine the nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months. The secondary objectives include: determining the state of health, water and sanitation and the food security situation.

Assessment Itinerary

- The Program Coordinator flew from Juba to Pagak on date 22nd July by UNHAS flight.
- On date 22nd July, 14 the program coordinator, field officer and nutrition officer for Longchuk had a meeting with Pagak RRC representative and Payam administrator about the planned mission of RI in Longochuk and the comprehensive assessment exercise by RI and ADRA in Longochuk, Maiwuit, Ulang and Nasir counties.
- On date 22nd July, RI team contacted Save the children, NPA, ADRA and GOAL team in Pagak explained about the planned mission in Longochuk and the comprehensive assessment exercise by RI and ADRA in Longochuk, Maiwuit, Ulang and Nasir counties and shared the relevant information with all partners.
- On date 23rd July, training given for the assessment team
- On date 24th and 25th final preparation for Longochuk trip including arranging tractor to transport the team and nutrition supplies
- On date 26th afternoon the teams went to Maiwut with the supplies and proceed to Longochuk on 27th July.
- On 28th July (upon arrival) the teams mate the county commissioner; Payam administrators and elders explain their mission and has got permission to conduct the assessment
- From date 29th July to August 3rd 2014 the team conducted the assessment
- Return flight scheduled for 5th of August

Methodology

Sample survey was applied in the study areas. The sampling techniques used were purposive and simple random sampling. Children aged 6-59 month within the selected households were all measured. Transect walk and focus group discussion conducted to get more qualitative information's. Triangulation was applied by collecting data from different sources and methods.

Findings

A total of 236 children aged 6-59 months were screened during the assessment. Among the 236 children, 74(31.35%) were MUAC <11.5 cm (severely malnourished), 46(19.49%) were MUAC 11.5cm to 12.4cm (moderately malnourished), 49(19.9%) were MUAC 12.5cm to 13.4cm (at risk of malnutrition) and 69(29%) were MUAC>13.4cm(Adequate nutritional status).

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

Longochuk County is one of the counties in eastern side of Upper Nile State of South Sudan. It is administratively comprised of 6 Payams, namely: Dajo,Guelguk, Mathiang, Malual, Pamach and Wudier. It borders Maiwut County to the East and South, Nasir County to the West and Maban County to the North. The county is predominantly populated by Nuer ethnic groups who are traditionally agro-pastoralists, but that the majority of the community depends on subsistence crop farming for their livelihood activity.

The county lies in the eastern flood plain zone normally characterized by sandy loom soil and flat low-lying terrain which predisposes the county for flooding during the rainy season from higher ground. The rainy season is normally from June to the end of September, whereas October and November are harvesting periods. Based on the 2008 census, the projected population of the county estimated to be 80,571, however the estimated figure received from the commissioner office including IDPs from Nasir, Adar and Guelguk equal 151,818.

Population figure per payam

S/n	Name of Payam	Population No	Returnees/ IDPs	Total	Male	Female	No of households
1	Dajo	8,314	0	8,314	4739	3575	1386
2	Guelguk	13,186	0	13,186	7516	5670	2198
3	Mathiang	11,635	15,800	27,435	15638	11797	1939
4	Malual	17,456	0	17,456	9950	7506	2909
5	Pamach	18,720	16,600	35,320	20134	15188	3120
6	Wudier	11,260	0	11,260	6418	4842	1878
TOTAL		**80,571**	**32,400**	**112,971**	**64,395**	**48,578**	**13,430**

Note: The number of IDPs is not verified, but estimated by the county RRC Coordinator

Context

Longochuk County is flood-affected, and inaccessible except in a few months of the year, which also has a negative impact on crop production and getting basic health and nutrition services. The recurrence of floods as a result of heavy rains and overflow from high level grounds has resulted in decreased access to food and hence increased malnutrition related diseases at the household level in the county.

Though there was no standard nutrition survey conducted in the county the report from the county health department and our team indicates that the area is heavily affected by severe acute malnutrition which demands an urgent humanitarian response. Nonetheless, the basic nutrition service that is nonexistent in Longochuk and the situation get worse after the violence erupted in mid-December, displaced high number of populations, disrupted the seasonal cultivation practice this puts high proportion of the population in risk.

Access constraints

Since the violence erupted in December, 2013, it was not possible to access Longochuk County from Maban by road or by air, on top of that the rainy season exacerbate the situation in the area, currently the most top challenge for humanitarian response in the area is access challenges by air or road. Pagak corridor considered as a best alternative to access the county by road still have challenges due to the area is flooded by water. Longochuk county head quarter Mathiang located with an estimated distance of 100km from Pagak. The road from Pagak to Maiwut is well paved road with a distance of 22km, from Maiwut to Mathiang estimated to be 78km and only dry weather road, currently the road is very muddy using big tractors is the only option to access Mathiang. At a distance of 80 km from Pagak, there is a place called Kokdeng Boma, an estimated 4km distance covered by water and, only big tractors can cross the area, the other alternative is offloading supplies at this place and transporting it by human labor to Mathiang. Big tractors are found in the Ethiopian side, they are very expensive usually considered as a last option. The commissioner mobilized the community to clear the air strip in Jangok Boma(10 km from Mathiang), on date 4th August CMA chartered flight managed to land with medical supplies, this can be considered as an option if there is a possibility in the future.

Preparation for movement

The team crossing the difficult terrain by footing **Group of mothers who carried PPnut from Kokdeng to Mathiang(20km)**

Objectives of Assessment

Primary Objectives

1) To determine the nutritional status of children aged 6-59 months and the magnitude of the crisis within the area.

Secondary Objectives

1) To determine the state of health, water and sanitation and food security situation

Methodology

Geographic area and population

The Rapid assessment was conducted in Mathiang and Pamach Payams of Longochuk County, Upper Nile States. Three bomas namely Palang A, Palang B and Pelkach covered under Mathiang Payam and Wetber and Malowu Boma covered under Pamach Payam. The assessment was specifically targeting children aged 6-59 months.

Type of survey

Sample survey was applied. The survey followed transects walk and focus group discussions designed for getting qualitative information collection in the villages. Observational studies considered to understand the severity and magnitude of the humanitarian crises in the area.

Sampling methodology

Two sampling methods were adapted. Purposive sampling technique was administered for the selection of Bomas and simple random sampling for both the villages and households during the assessment. A total of 236 children were screened in both Payams with reference to the South Sudan rapid assessment guideline of minimum of 100 children per a study area. 127 children were from Mathiang and 109 from Pamach Payam.

Data Collection and Survey team

The assessment team consisted of 10 members, 5 RI nutrition staff, 1 CHD M&E officer, 1 County RRC coordinator and 3 agriculture and education staff assigned by the commissioner. Each team has 5 members comprise of 2 measurers and at least 1 supervisor during the anthropometric measurement. To ensure data quality one day training was conducted to the 7 members of the assessment team on MUAC screening criteria. Anthropometric measurements (MUAC and oedema), transect walk, key informant interview, observation and focus group discussion.

Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) Screening Criterion

MUAC guideline	Interpretation
MUAC < 114.9mm and /or bilateral pitting oedema	SAM with high risk of malnutrition
MUAC =115mm and < 124.9mm	MAM with high risk of mortality
MUAC=125mm and < 134.9 mm	At risk of malnutrition
MUAC >= 135 mm	Adequate nutritional status/normal

Oedema	**application of normal thumb pressure for at least 3 seconds to both feet**

Assessment findings (Results)

In response to nutritional situations in Longochuk County Relief International carried out rapid assessments in Mathiang and Pamach Payams of Longochuk County. During the assessment three bomas namely Palang A, Palang B and Pelkach covered under Mathiang Payam and Wetber and Malowu Boma covered under Pamach Payam. The assessment was conducted from date 29th to 31st July, 2014. This assessment was as a result of alarming situation evident in the area and to get base line information before we start the actual CMAM intervention in the county as assigned by the nutrition cluster. The inhabitants in the two Payams are from the Nuer ethnic group. They are of agro-pastoralist background. The main staple food crops are Maize, Pumpkins, fish and sorghum. They rear cattle and are mainly kept for marital purposes. The soil is sandy loom soil in nature with flat terrain. The areas are low lands in which during the rainy periods, are flooded throughout the season. MUAC screening, Transect walk and Focus group discussion used for the assessment exercises.

Demographic characteristics

Payam house hold statuses cross tabulation

Payam	Frequency	Percent
Mathiang	127	53.8%
Pamach	109	46.18%

Distribution of age and sex of sample

	Boys		Girls		Total		Ratio
Age(Months)	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**No**	**%**	**Boy: Girl**
6-17	47	37.6	33	29.7	80	33.9	1.4
18-29	42	33.6	37	33.3	79	33.5	1.1
30-41	23	16.9	21	18.9	44	18.6	1.1
42-53	8	6.4	15	13.5	23	9.7	0.53
54-59	6	4.8	4	3.6	10	4.3	1.5
Total	**125**	**53**	**111**	**47**	**236**	**100**	**1.13**

MUAC screening result

A total of 236 children aged 6-59 months were screened during the assessment. Among the 236 children screened, 74(31.35%) were MUAC <11.5 cm (severely malnourished), 46(19.49%) were MUAC 11.5cm to 12.4cm (moderately malnourished), 49(19.9%) were MUAC 12.5cm to 13.4cm (at risk of malnutrition) and 69(29%) were MUAC> =13.5cm (at good condition).

Summary of MUAC screening: - Children 6 months to 5years

MUAC (cm)	Nutritional status	N= (%)
≥13.5cm	At good condition	69(29%)
12.5cm to 13.4cm	At risk of Malnutrition	49(19.9%)
11.5cm to 12.4cm	Moderate Malnutrition	46(19.5%)
< 11.5 cm	Severe Malnutrition	74(31.6%)
Oedema	Severe Malnutrition	3(1.3%)

Note: All 74 cases of SAM admitted and received the treatment

Summary of transect walk and focus group discussion findings

- In most places within the payams the road is too muddy accessibility is a challenge specially towards Pamach Payam
- Jack, Mangok and Mayen Bomas under Guelguk Payam all houses were burnt during the fighting; still some bodies are seen in the area. There are still a significant number of people living in the area, there is high needs for support including NFI items
- Malaria, eye and skin infection and diarrhea are the commonest cases observed by the team in the visited households towards Guelguk Payam
- Malaria, measles, pneumonia and Diarrhoea cases mostly children seen by the team towards Pamach Payam, the situation in this area more serious they found high number of sick children at least in every 3 house holds
- Most of the households visited stayed with their livestocks
- Most households from Mathiang complained they found their cereals looted when they return back from Torch(a place where they stayed during fighting in Mathiang)
- A number of households found with elders without care some family members are went to Ethiopia and others engaged in military activities
- The two WFP rub halls with full stock in Mathiang completely destroyed, the food reported looted and burnt.
- In most places the team observed the community uses water from the stream, even in areas where there is hand pump in a close distance
- The health service was interrupted since the crises, in the recent (May, 2014) fighting in Mathiang Payam, Mathiang PHCC drugs and medical equipment's looted and destroyed. The county drug store completely destroyed and all drugs were burnt.

- According to the county health department there are high number of Trachoma, measles, diarrhea and Malaria cases including not confirmed meningitis and brucellosis cases
- The county commissioner appeal for support especially in Health. CMA is a lead agency in the county but was not there since January, the health staff are scattered looking for jobs in different places as they do not paid salary, while we compile this report we received updates from our team that the CMA chartered flight landed in Mathiang with their team and drug supplies, we hope things will be improve soon

Transect walk and focus group discussion

County drug store &burnt drugs WFP rub halls

Meeting with the commissioner Access challenge Patient seen visited households

Discussions

Nutrition

There is no CMAM service such as OTP, SC and TSFP in the county. The findings of the rapid assessment revealed that there is a high risk of severe malnutrition which needs an immediate intervention to avert the consequences of the problem. In the absence of immediate intervention those cases that were found moderately malnourished or at risk of malnutrition will likely to be severely malnourished. The existing aggravating factors(no reserve stock in quantity and type, disrupted livelihood, displacement, the cultivated maize is not ready for harvest or some damaged by water, no active general food distribution, no available food stock for distribution, flooding) may exacerbate the situation.

The RI nutrition team managed to transport some stock of plumpynut to our Mathiang base, from the total screened 74 cases of SAM admitted in the program, in addition to the Mathiang center RI will open soon at least 5 additional OTP sites in Jangok, Malow, Warweng, Majok and Pelgak in Mathiang and Pamach where high number of population resides, additionally mobile outreach program will be conducted in remote areas as far as security and access permit to reach those locations. RI has a plan to open stabilization center in Mathiang PHCC in collaboration with CMA and to integrate the nutrition service with the existing health facilities in the county. RI is in the process to amend the existing PCA with UNICEF and submitting new proposal for WFP for TSFP intervention.

Health

The health service were interrupted since mid-December violence, however more damaged were seen after the May, 2014 fighting in the county. The Mathiang PHCC drug store, medical equipment's and furniture's and the county medical store damaged. According to the county health department there are high number of Trachoma, measles, diarrhea and Malaria cases including not confirmed meningitis and brucellosis cases. The RI team received two anti-malaria drug kits from Maiwut county health department; manage to treat some cases in a village accessed during the assessment. The CMA team touch base recently with medical supplies we hope there will be improvement in health situation.

Mathiang PHCC

Treated Malaria case

Supplies Container

Water

The communities in the county obtain their drinking water from sources of water such as rivers, streams, wells and hand pumps. However, the hand pumps are insufficient as compared to the other three water sources. As result, some of the communities do rely on wells and rivers. During the rainy season the team has observed that most of the households including those who have hand pump in a close distance using water from the stream. This is an indicator to the level at which the communities drink quality water. It clearly shows that some communities are at risk to water borne diseases. On the other hand, they are vulnerable to water washed diseases which they mentioned such as the eye and skin infections.

Sanitation

According to the county health department and field observation, in the county most of the households do not possess latrines. Most of the existing household latrines in Mathiang Payam were collapsed during the rainy season only few households have it. In Pamach Payam no single latrine was observed. The communities were practicing open defecation which is a threat to public health. Given the fact that many of them use streams for obtaining their drinking water, and then there is high possibility of microbiological contamination of such water sources. Eventually the communities suffer from water borne diseases.

Food Security

There was slight variation in the types of food normally accessed and consumed by the populations of the county. The staple foods that cut across the county are maize, pumpkins, sorghum, fish, meats etc. Among these food types, maize and pumpkins are the most. Accessibility to and utilization of all food groups is a determinant to the quantity and quality of food eaten in terms nutrient intake. The current livelihood strategies adapted by the populations include; practice agriculture, rearing livestock, small scale trade, casual wage labor, and fishery. Despite the alarming food security situation in the area the team has observed that the planted maize is in good condition expected to provide significant amount of yield, however in few places the planted maize is flooded and in poor condition.

Flooded maize plant

Maize plant in good condition

Trader Mathiang market

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the followings Intervention strategies are highlighted:

- Given the existing alarming health and nutrition situation full component of CMAM program need to be implemented, for this the support of UNICEF, WFP and cluster needed
- High number of cases need to be addressed as soon as possible, immediate intervention of RRM is highly recommended in collaboration with RI and CMA, this will also boost to improve the coverage, RI and CMA will maintain post RRM intervention activities
- Accessibility is the main challenge, there is urgent need to transport supplies; cluster, UNICEF and WFP support is highly needed to get logistic support from Log cluster
- The available option to transport supplies from Pagak corridor is tractors, this can be seen by the cluster as an alternative
- Child care is also poor. IYCF strategies should be strengthened on the importance of exclusive breastfeeding and early initiation which RI will focus during implementation
- The office and office supplies including VSAT of both CMA and RI destroyed during the recent fighting as this is the only means of communication, it needs special attention of the IT cluster
- Communities residing in bomas towards Guelguk, IDPs in Mathiang and Torch need NFI support.
- Maintenance of existing boreholes especially in Pamach payam and educating on the benefits of water treatment to the community.
- Low sanitary facilities and open defecation is a risk to human health. There is a need of promoting use of latrines.
- GFD and BSFP is recommended to mitigate aggravating factors until the situation is full control
- Standard nutrition survey should be carried out to give overall severity of the crisis; RI will take the lead to organize the survey.
- Regular assessments should be carried out to monitor the nutrition situation of children aged 6-59