



WFP Ukraine

Food Security Assessment

November 2015

Civilians queue during a World Food Programme voucher distribution in Svetlodarsk, Ukraine (c) WFP/EU/Pete Kiehart



World Food Programme

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

BZ	Buffer Zone
CATI	Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing
CPI	Consumer Price Index
DL GCA	Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts Government Controlled Areas
DKZ GCA	Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhia oblasts
FCG	Food Consumption Group
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FCS-N	Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis
FSA	Food Security Assessment
GCA	Government Controlled Areas
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KIIS	Kiev International Institute of Sociology
MSNA	Multi-Sector Needs Assessment
NGCA	Non-Government Controlled Area
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
rCSI	Reduced Coping Strategy Index
RDD	Random Digit Dialling
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WFP	World Food Programme

Executive Summary

During September – November 2015, WFP Ukraine through its partner, the Kiev International Institute of Sociology (KIIS), carried out a food security and vulnerability assessment (FSA) in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, in the government controlled areas (GCA), non-government controlled areas (NGCA) and the buffer zone (BZ)¹. No major differences were found between NGCA and BZ. Therefore, for the purpose of this assessment report, these two areas will be considered as one common geographical area.

Initial analysis shows that the overall food insecurity levels are comparable to those found in the previous assessment conducted in March 2015 in eastern Ukraine². It is worth noting that the severity of food insecurity has moderated in NGCA, which may be attributed to the humanitarian assistance provided by various agencies, including WFP, and the relatively calm security situation. **Around 1.5 million people were found to be food insecure, including 290,000 people who were severely food insecure and in need of immediate food assistance.** Luhansk NGCA and the BZ seem to be the most affected by food insecurity, and are in need of further food security assistance.

Assessment results indicate that around **65 percent of people** in both GCA and NGCA **experienced a complete loss or a significant reduction of income** during the September – November 2015 period. Moreover, on average, only 2.5 percent of the households in both GCA and NGCA expected the general situation to improve. Lack of employment opportunities and high prices of food continue to significantly affect households' ability to access food, more so in NGCA. Pensions (62 percent of households) and benefits related to children³ (7 percent) represent the biggest share of social benefits and safety nets that households have access to.

Prices⁴ increased by 43.3 percent in December 2015 compared to the beginning of year. Food inflation remains one of the highest in the world. Food prices peaked in March 2015, increasing by 53 percent year over year. Higher food inflation rates, coupled with significant income losses, significantly affect households' ability to access food in the markets. This finding is quite important as this assessment found that the majority of households in both GCA and NGCA rely significantly on markets for their food purchases. Around 80 percent of the interviewed households stated that they use markets to access food.

[WFP Market Updates](#)⁵ estimate that the value of the [food basket](#)⁶ increased by 46 percent year over year in November 2015 in GCA. The value of the food basket in NGCA saw a decrease in the last months of 2015, however, it still remains around 22 percent higher when compared to national levels. There are significant differences in food prices observed in different areas in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in both GCA and NGCA.

¹ The buffer zone is an area encompassing 15km of distance from both sides of the frontline.

² The MSNA is a product of the NGO Forum, and ACAPS provided technical support. The assessment contained a food security component, for which WFP contributed technically and carried out the data analysis

³ Social benefits related to children (benefit at childbirth, child benefit to single mothers, etc.)

⁴ State Statistics Service of Ukraine

⁵ Ukraine WFP Market Update 7

⁶ Government Resolution on approval of Ukraine sets of food basket, non-food items and sets services for major social and demographic groups

[The State Statistics Services of Ukraine](#) reports that an average of 51.9 percent⁷ of the total **income of the household was spent on food in 2014**. Qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions and key informant interviews estimate this figure to be even higher; **up to 70 percent in GCA and up to 80 percent NGCA** of total income to be used for purchasing food.

Women-headed households and single women living alone (particularly those adopting negative coping mechanisms such as selling productive assets), elderly people, large families with children and people with disabilities are among the most vulnerable in NGCA. In GCA, IDPs living in "[Collective Centres](#)"⁸ are among the most affected by food insecurity. Around 35 percent of IDPs were found to have either poor or borderline food consumption scores. Some of the characteristics of vulnerability may be transitory such as unemployment, while others are static as in the cases of women-headed household and people with disabilities.

Food insecurity levels appear more severe in Luhansk NGCA compared to Donetsk NGCA. The BZ remains another area with high levels of food insecurity.

This assessment found low levels of consumption of iron-rich food items among the population assessed. Among the households with poor diets, almost 100 percent of the respondents were found to have insufficient intake of protein and iron rich food items. The quality of nutritious food consumed is highly dependent on the level of financial security, place of residence and access to humanitarian assistance.

1 Introduction

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Ukraine is a lower middle income country with a population of 45.6 million, ranked 81st of 188 countries in the 2015 Human Development Index. With regards to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Ukraine has managed to achieve certain progress in reducing absolute poverty, ensuring access to primary and secondary education, improving maternal health and reducing child mortality. Despite the progress achieved, poverty persists; education quality causes discontent in society; the scale of HIV and AIDS and Tuberculosis spread has grown substantially; and environmental problems have become acute. No progress in gender disparity reduction has been achieved and a significant income gender gap remains.

As a food surplus nation, food availability is not a concern in most of the country. Ukraine has a strong agricultural sector and is one of the world's largest grain exporters. Its diversified economy includes a large industrial sector producing heavy duty and aerospace equipment. However, underdeveloped infrastructure and transportation have hampered economic growth in recent years. In addition, recent political and economic constraints continue to threaten food security in affected areas. The Ukrainian economy is currently undergoing a crisis with the decline of GDP growth rates, decrease of foreign investments, increase of government debt, and the significant devaluation of its national currency.

It is against this background that unrest in Ukraine began in late 2013, when civil protests brought about the dismissal of the former leadership. In April 2014, tensions escalated with non-state armed groups in

⁷ State Statistics Service of Ukraine

⁸ These are areas where existing buildings are used as temporary living accommodations, or so-called Collective Centres, for hosting displaced populations.

the Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively called the Donbas) of eastern Ukraine. Fighting between the Ukrainian authorities and anti-government entities in the eastern part of the country has affected an estimated five million people in the conflict areas.

Social services in the conflict areas are severely weakened and the much needed rehabilitation of infrastructure, human capacity and economic, social and legal resources remain unaddressed. The government does not have the capacity to carry the burden of hundreds of thousands of displaced people – families, children, those with special needs and specific vulnerabilities. The service delivery and economic stability of residential communities hosting displaced people is severely strained, and is leading to additional tensions.

The principal drivers of vulnerability to food insecurity in eastern Ukraine remains the high levels of insecurity in densely-populated urban areas of Donbas, heavy damage to critical infrastructure, disruption of key supply routes of essential commodities and services as well as inaccessibility to financial transfers and services and social benefits. Combined, these factors are negatively impacting physical and economic access to food. The need for external support is evident as local capacities are reaching a breaking point.

ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

In October 2014, WFP carried out a food security assessment in eastern Ukraine identifying who and where the most food insecure were. In March 2015, the NGO forum carried out a Multi-Sector Needs Assessment (MSNA) which included food security indicators and showed that households in NGCA faced a deteriorating situation in terms of food security. Market price monitoring indicated that food basket prices nationally had progressively increased since the first assessment was carried out, indicating that the food basket cost in the NGCA was, on the whole, about 30 percent higher than in GCA. This was attributed to significant increases in the prices of fresh produce such as meat and milk products rather than staples and processed foods.

Since the last household assessment in March 2015, concerns remain regarding the continued deterioration of household coping mechanisms and access to income, which worsened household food consumption, particularly in NGCA. Additionally, IDPs and host communities also face difficulties in accessing regular and adequate income. With food prices continuing to rise, this population is at risk of increased food insecurity, with access to food being limited by the lowered purchasing power.

MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The overall objective of this assessment is to update the understanding of household food security among the conflict-affected population, specifically for NGCA, households within the BZ and IDPs in GCA.

The specific objectives of this assessment are to:

- Identify who and where the most food insecure households are.
- Determine which IDPs are more vulnerable people and require assistance within the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.
- Assess the food security situation of IDPs in Luhansk and Donetsk GCA.
- Identify the characteristics of those who are most food insecure.
- Estimate the numbers of food insecure households in the BZ and NGCA, and indicate approximately how many IDPs are food insecure in GCA.

2 Methodology

For the purpose of this assessment, the main areas of concern were the BZ and the remaining areas within NGCA. Furthermore, IDPs who are in GCA constituted a third zone of concern for the humanitarian community.

Thus, there are three population groups assessed:

- The population in NGCA
- The population within the BZ
- IDPs that reside in GCA of the two Oblasts (Luhansk and Donetsk) in close proximity to NGCA

In order to collect data, the assessment was conducted through a combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews.

The main stages of the survey included the questionnaire and accompanying tooling design, conducting pre-tests, selecting and training interviewers, conducting interviews with households), monitoring of interviews, coding, data input and logical control. A total of 2,377 interviews were conducted in both GCA and NGCA/BZ.

The following indicators, calculated in accordance with the WFP methodology, were used to assess food security in this assessment:

- Food Consumption Score (FCS) which defines ranges classifying households into three Food Consumption Groups
- Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis (FCS-N)
- Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)
- Food Access (a combination of household expenditures and market food prices)

Global experience of food security research and studies with the use of this methodology in Ukraine confirms the correctness and effectiveness of the use of these indices for food security and vulnerability assessment.

2.1 Sampling

Based on the objectives of the assessment, awareness and interest of the situation in the areas of concern, as well as the prevalent accessibility and security issues, WFP used different sampling approaches in GCA and NGCA/BZ.

2.1.1 Sampling in GCA

In GCA of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the survey was carried out during September – October 2015. The assessment was focused on two main types of categories of population:

1. IDPs living in collective centres
2. IDPs living outside of collective centres

508 households were interviewed during the field stage. The survey was carried out in nine settlements in Donetsk GCA and three settlements in Luhansk GCA. IDPs living in 17 collective centres were covered by the survey. In this survey, 20 percent of interviews had quality controls.

Coding was conducted by two specialists, and included checking that questionnaires were filled out correctly. Data input was carried out by five operators.

The achieved sample for this FSA included 501 households of IDPs in Donetsk and Luhansk GCA:

- 203 households residing in collective centres
- 298 households accommodating outside collective centres

The sampling developed for the study is representative for IDP households living in Donetsk and Luhansk GCA on the whole. The sampling procedure included the following steps:

- 1) The stratification by oblast (Donetsk/Luhansk) and settlement size (village or town with a population up to 20,000/town or city with a population over 20,000) was applied.
- 2) Settlements were then randomly selected from each stratum with a probability proportional to their size.
- 3) Collective centres were randomly selected with a probability proportional to their size within settlements selected in the previous stage.
- 4) The selection of respondents in the last stage (inside and outside collective centres). There was no possibility to ensure a random selection. The available households were chosen and interviews were conducted with a person who was responsible for food supply in the household.
- 5) Collecting contacts of IDPs living outside collective centres from various sources (IDPs in centres, local authorities, volunteers, other IDPs).

2.1.2 Sampling in NGCA and BZ

The achieved sample for this FSA includes 1,876 general population households in Donetsk and Luhansk NGCA as well as the BZ. The sampling developed for the study is representative of general population households living in Donetsk and Luhansk NGCA and BZ on the whole and for six separate defined areas:

- rural and urban areas of NGCA of Luhansk Oblast (excluding Luhansk city) – 392 interviews
- rural and urban areas of NGCA of Donetsk Oblast (excluding Donetsk city) – 417 interviews
- rural and urban areas of Luhansk Oblast BZ (excluding Luhansk city) – 268 interviews
- rural and urban areas of Donetsk Oblast BZ (excluding Donetsk city) – 482 interviews
- Luhansk City – 157 interviews
- Donetsk City – 160 interviews

It is estimated that sampling error does not exceed 2.3 percent. Computer-assisted telephone interviews were used as a data collection method in this survey.

A stratified sample was used in this survey. The sampling procedure included the following steps:

- The stratification by settlement size (village, urban settlements and towns with a population up to 5,000, towns 5,000 – 19,999, towns 20,000 – 49,999, cities 50,000 – 99,999, cities with a population over 100,000) for each of the NGCA and BZ areas (except for Donetsk and Luhansk cities) was applied. In Donetsk and Luhansk cities, stratification by city district was used.
- Random selection of primary sampling units (towns) using the PPS method⁹.
- Random generation of landline phone numbers using the RDD method.
- Selection of a household member who is responsible for food supply.

⁹Initially it was planned to cover all towns and cities with a population over 5,000 inhabitants. Towns with population less than 5,000 were randomly selected. Towns and cities were substituted by similar size settlements from the same area if the landline telephone connection was absent for them.

2.2 Limitations and Assumptions

2.2.1 Limitations and Assumptions in GCA

The estimated statistical error for the whole sample is 4.5 percent and for the individual subgroups can reach 10 percent. Therefore, it should be that figures presented in this report, are rather indicative than exact and the report on the whole intends to provide a general framework for understanding the profiles of food-insecure and vulnerable households.

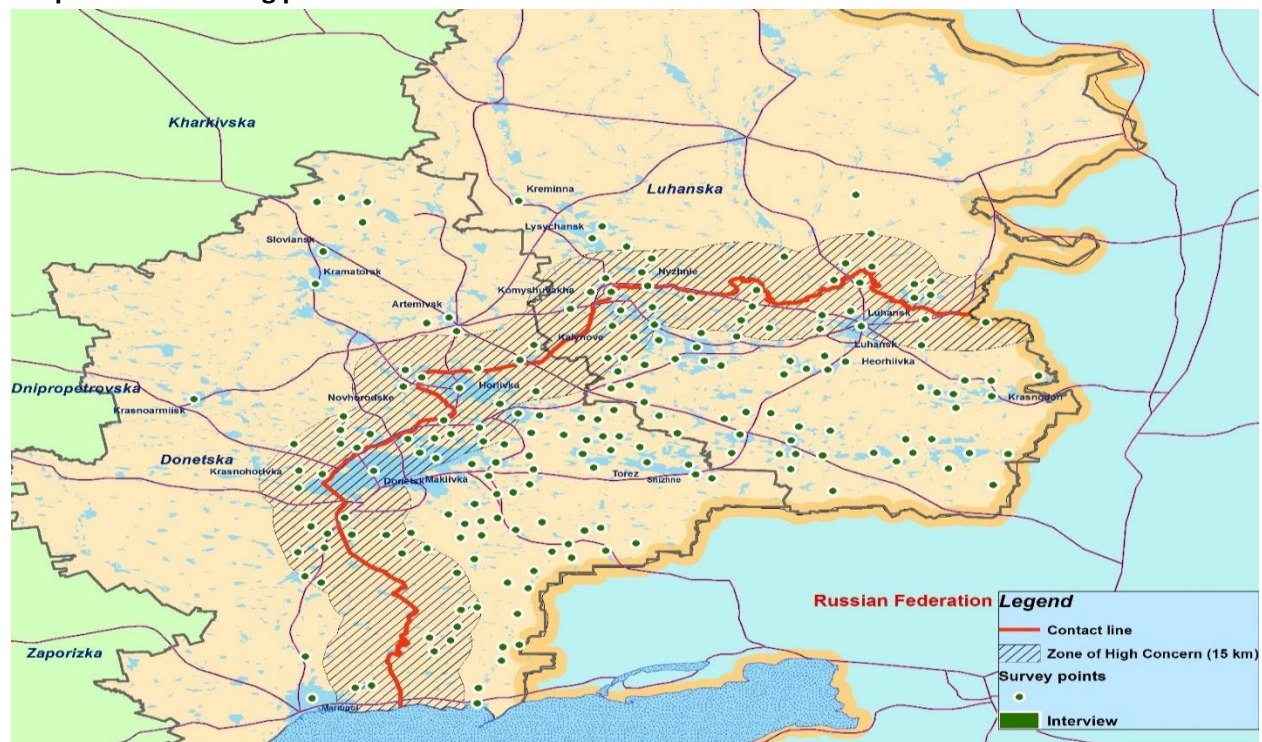
Random probability sampling was challenging to implement due mainly to the:

- Absence of commonly-accepted, reliable population statistics in GCA, BZ and NGCA
- Ongoing migration process which constantly changes the population but is not caught by statistics
- Unavailability of updated statistics, especially regarding IDPs residing in collective centres

2.2.2 Limitations and Assumptions in NGCA and BZ

The main limitation was the usage of the [CATI](#)¹⁰ approach in situations with low access and availability rates of landline phones among target populations (20-30 percent) which means that this survey faced challenges to cover those who do not have such phones. However, KIIS' internal comparative analysis between face-to-face surveys and telephone interviews showed that the difference among such households is to a great extent negligible. That is why an additional error caused by low penetration rates is not considered significant and does not distort main survey results. Findings from the obtained data could still be generalized to the general population.

Graph 1: Interviewing points

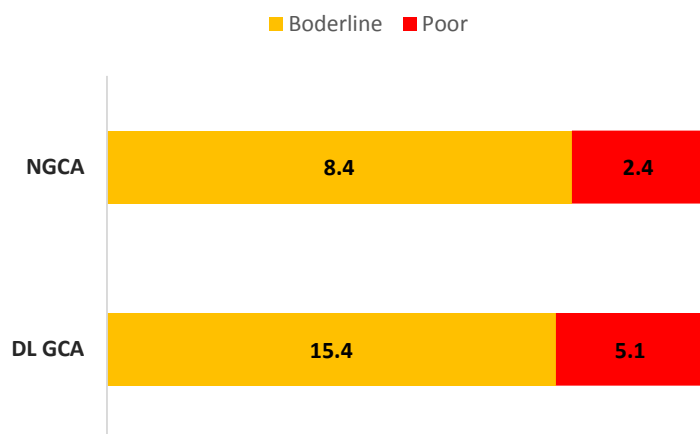


¹⁰ Computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) is a telephone surveying technique in which the interviewer follows a script provided by a software application.

3. Assessment Findings

3.1 Food Consumption

Graph 2: Food Consumption Score Groups, %



The food consumption score (FCS) is one of WFP’s corporate indicators used for measuring food security levels. It is a measure by which food consumption (both diversity and frequency over a 7-day recall period, with more nutrient dense foods being given a higher weight in the analysis) is analysed, and the score being used to categorize the consumption into three food consumption groups (FCG) – poor (FCS of ≤28), boderline (FCS of 28.5 - 42), and acceptable (FCS of >42).

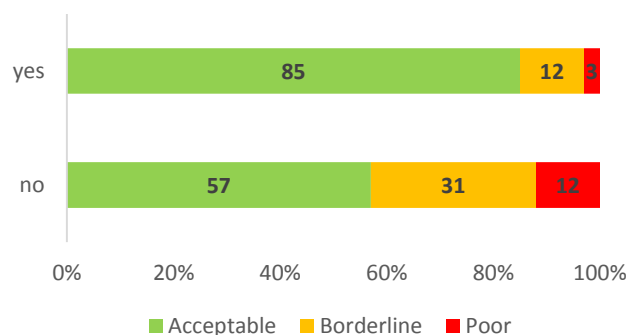
Among the surveyed IDPs, around 5 percent of households had poor FCS and 15 percent had boderline FCS. On the other hand, among the surveyed population in NGCA, 2.4 percent of households had poor FCS and 8 percent had boderline FCS (Graph 2).

Assistance from UN agencies, NGOs and other humanitarian organizations significantly improved the food consumption and nutritional levels of the affected population in GCA.

The households that received such assistance more often demonstrate an acceptable level of food consumption than households uncovered by any humanitarian aid.

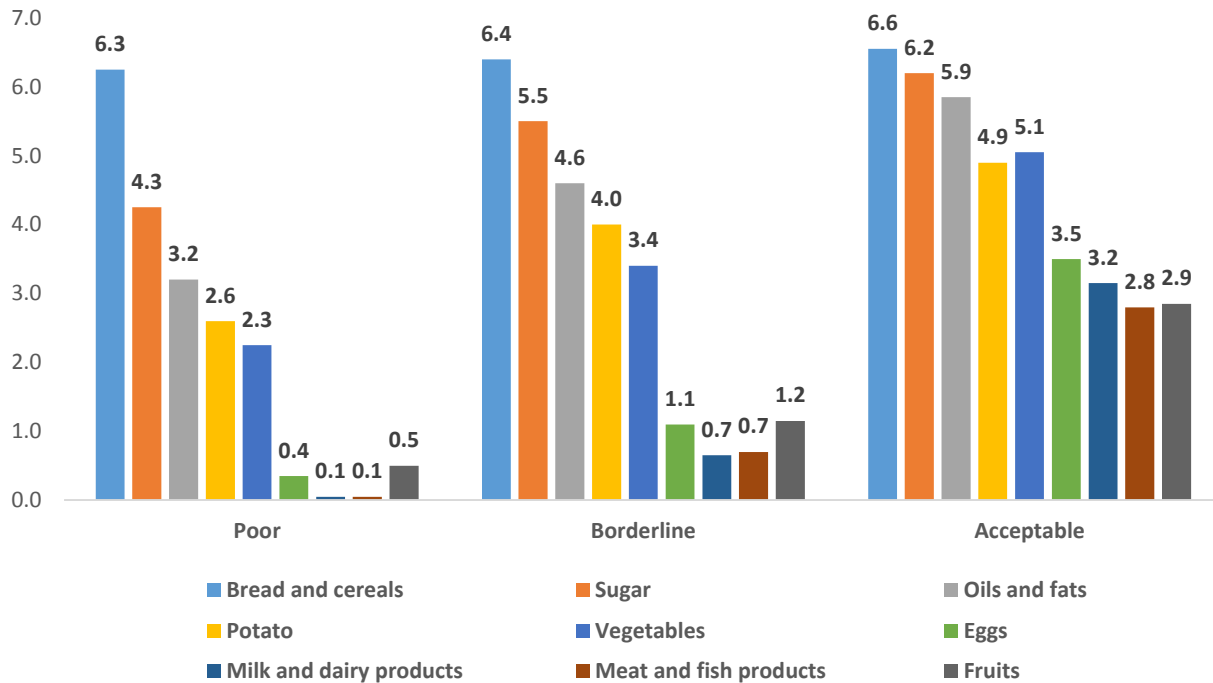
Almost half of the households who did not receive any humanitarian assistance were found to have poor (12 percent) or boderline (31 percent) FCS.

Graph 3: Did your household receive any assistance from NGOs, humanitarian or charity organizations?



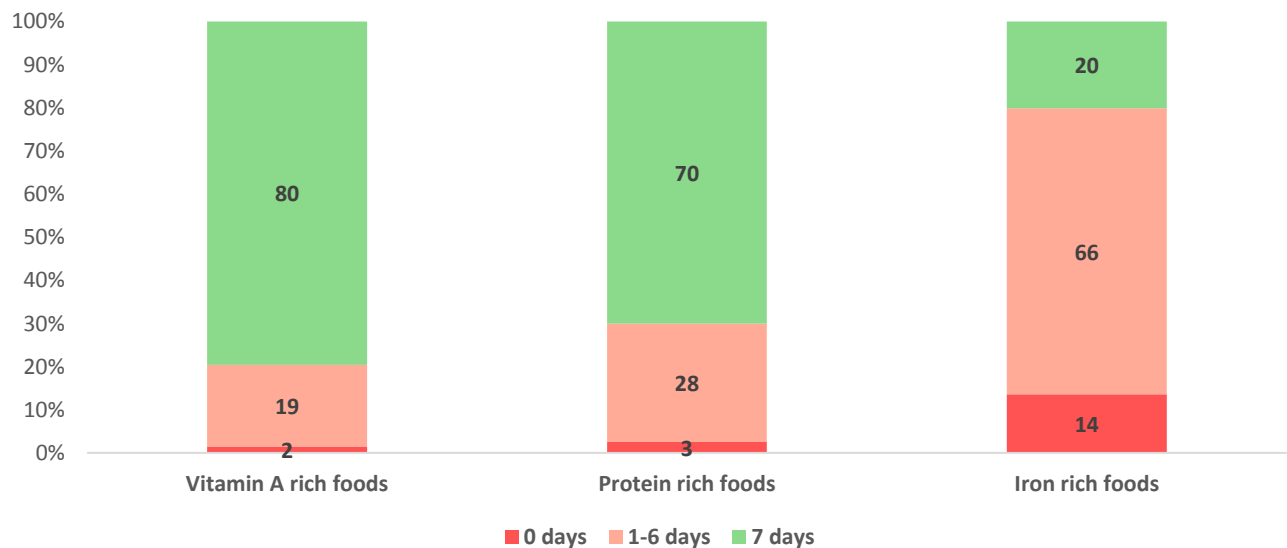
Households with poor and boderline FCS consume much less of almost all food groups compared to households having acceptable levels of FCS in both GCA and NGCA. These households’ diet consists of mainly bread and cereals. On average, these products are consumed almost every day. Consumption of sugar is also very high in observed households, especially among IDPs in GCA.

Graph 4: Food Consumption Patterns (number of days consumed per week) of Main Food Groups by Food Consumption Groups



On the other hand, fresh produce such as meat and milk products, eggs and fruits are consumed less than once a week in both areas especially for those with poor FCS. Consumption of oils is also very low in the poor consumption group. Vegetables are also consumed but with low frequency among people with poor and borderline FCS. Particularly for those with poor FCS, this means an average of only two days per week.

Graph 5: Consumption of Protein, Vit A and Hem Iron rich foods by FCS groups (average mean)



The nutritional quality of food consumed is highly dependent on the level of financial security, as well as access to assistance. The poorest families often feel the shortage of all nutrient rich groups in both areas.

The information gathered to develop the FCS additionally provides a wealth of unexploited data that can be used to inform on nutrient rich groups consumed by the household and which are essential for nutritional health and well-being: protein, iron and vitamin A.

Those calculations were done according to the [Food Consumption Score Nutritional Quality Analysis Guidelines](#) (FCS-N). The purpose of the analysis is to assess nutrient inadequacy by looking at the frequencies of consumption of food groups rich in the nutrients of interest. This is done by simply summing up the consumption frequency of the food sub-groups belonging to each nutrient rich food group:

1. **Vitamin A rich foods:** Dairy, Organ meat, Eggs, Orange veg, Green veg and Orange fruits
2. **Protein rich foods:** Pulses, Dairy, Flesh meat, Organ meat, Fish and Eggs
3. **Hem iron rich foods:** Flesh meat, Organ meat and Fish

Graph 5 shows a significant consumption deficiency of foods rich in micronutrients more so for iron. Around 80 percent never or rarely consume foods high in iron. Around 14 percent of people in both GCA and NGCA did not consume any in iron rich foods the previous seven days.

About a third of households in GCA consumed high-protein foods, but not frequently enough (3 percent of households did not consume any in the previous seven days, and 35 percent consumed it some days).

3.2 Food Access

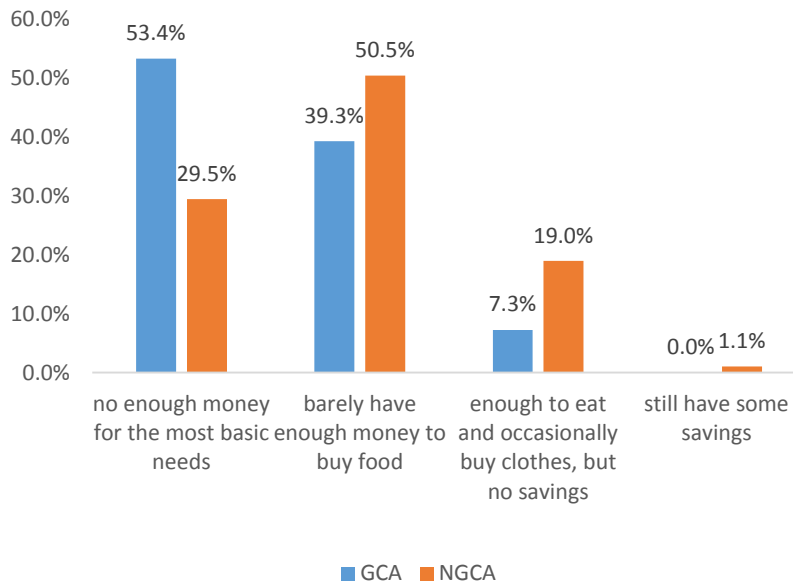
Around 65 percent of the respondents in both GCA and NGCA indicated a complete loss or a significant reduction of income. On average, only 2.5 percent of the households in both GCA and NGCA expected the situation to improve. Lack of employment opportunities and high prices of food continue to significantly affect households' ability to access food.

High prices are also confirmed through the WFP regular [market and food prices reports](#)¹¹. Ukraine remains in the top five countries with the [highest food inflation](#)¹². Food Inflation in Ukraine averaged 13.8 percent from 2007 until 2015, reaching an all-time high of 53.7 percent in April 2015 and a record low of -5 percent in June 2012 (see more in Market Price Analysis Chapter).

¹¹ Ukraine WFP Market Update reports

¹² IECONOMICS Information Recourse Centre

Graph 6: Households' statement on the current financial situation



[The State Statistics Services of Ukraine](#)¹³ reports an average of 51.9 percent of the total income of the household was spent on food in 2014. Qualitative information gathered through focus group discussions and key informant interviews estimate this figure to be even higher in GCA (up to 70 percent) and NGCA (up to 80 percent).

These figures represent very poor accessibility to food for households in eastern Ukraine. In general, the financial situation of the majority of the general population in NGCA and IDPs in GCA of Donbas remains

difficult.

According to results from this assessment, 29.5 percent of households in NGCA do not have enough money for basic needs, 50.5 percent have barely enough to buy food, and only 19 percent have enough to eat but have depleted savings (**Graph 6**). Over the previous three months, 59 percent of households saw their income decrease, and 6 percent had no income.

A similar financial situation is prescribed for IDP households in GCA; 53.4 percent declared that they do not have enough money for basic needs, 39.3 percent barely have enough to buy food, and only 7.3 percent have enough to eat but had depleted their savings.

At the same time, more than 65 percent of households are facing a significant income decrease during the previous three months. The [average salary for vacancies offered](#) shown on DPR Labor Centre website¹⁴ is around 4,400 RUB (around 1,600 UAH) compared to a [national average](#) of 4500 UAH¹⁵.

Information gathered through focus group discussions in NGCA indicate that access to social benefits has improved when compared to the June - July 2015 period.

Focus Group Discussions indicate that many of the people in GCA and NGCA have lost their jobs and are unable to find new jobs even with the help of official “job centres”, where they are mostly offered only low-qualification and poorly-paid jobs.

It is particularly difficult to find a job for women and people over 40 (because of age discrimination) in both GCA and NGCA. Some female respondents also mentioned that they have been denied jobs, when the employer learned that they have children.

¹³ State Statistics Service of Ukraine

¹⁴ DPR Labour Centre, as of 7.12.2015

¹⁵ State Statistics Service of Ukraine, as of November 2015

3.3 Food Security Analysis

Food security in this assessment is established through a cross tabulation of the FCS and a share of expenditure on food. Shares of household expenditure spent on food were divided into four groups with thresholds: less than 50, 50-65 percent, 65-75 percent and more than 75 percent.

The below tables (1 and 2) show how this combination resulted in three food security groups for IDPs in GCA and the general population in NGCA.

Table 1: Food Security Analysis in GCA

GCA IDPs		Food Consumption Score		
		Poor	Borderline	Acceptable
Share of expenditure spent on food	< 50%	0.0%	0.0%	7.6%
	50 - 65%	0.6%	4.7%	33.9%
	65 - 75%	4.5%	11.1%	37.6%
	> 75%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

Table 2: Food Security Analysis in NGCA

NGCA & BZ		Food Consumption Score		
		Poor	Borderline	Acceptable
Share of expenditure spent on food	< 50%	0.0%	0.0%	1.1%
	50 - 65%	0.2%	0.4%	18.4%
	65 - 75%	0.7%	4.0%	45.7%
	> 75%	1.6%	4.1%	23.7%

Table 3: Food Security Index

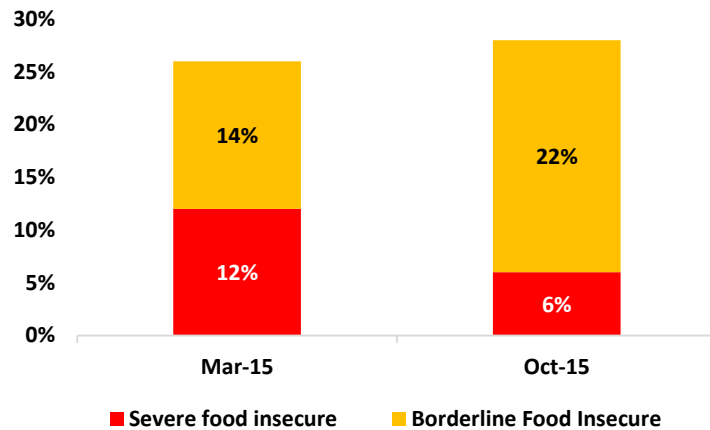
Food Security Level	NGCA & BZ	GCA
Severely Food insecure	6.6%	5.1%
Moderately Food insecure	28.1%	15.8%
Food Secure	65.3%	79.1%

Graph 7 represents a general overview of food security levels in both GCA and NGCA/BZ.

As shown in Graph 7, overall severe food insecurity levels have moderated when compared to the latest food security update in March 2015.

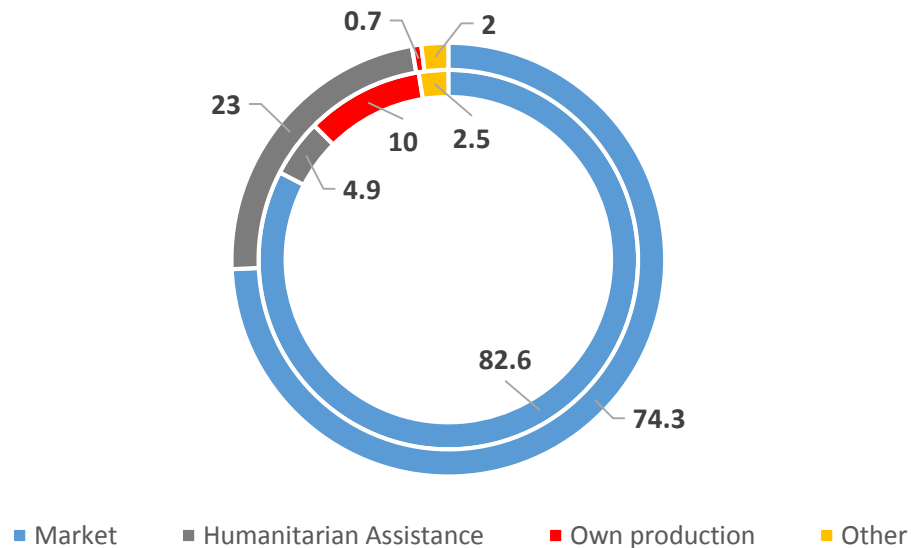
This improvement may be partially attributed to the humanitarian assistance provided by various agencies including WFP and the relatively calmer security situation, among other factors.

Graph 7: Food Insecurity levels in eastern Ukraine



4 Food Sources

Graph 8: Main Food Sources



Graph 8 represents the food sources households used to access food. The inner circle represents NGCA and the external one represents GCA.

The main food source for households in both GCA and NGCA remains markets. Compared to March 2015 there is generally an increased reliance on markets. This figure for NGCA might be higher as humanitarian aid at the time of the assessment was hampered by the lack of accessibility to NGCA.

Data coming from focus group discussions shows a major change since the beginning of the conflict, which is the more active cultivation of small garden plots in the private sector in order to grow food, even by those who have never tried such activities before.

In NGCA, products most accessed through markets were milk, oils, eggs and meat products. Household production, which accounted for 10 percent of the food sources, provided access to mainly fruits, vegetables and potatoes.

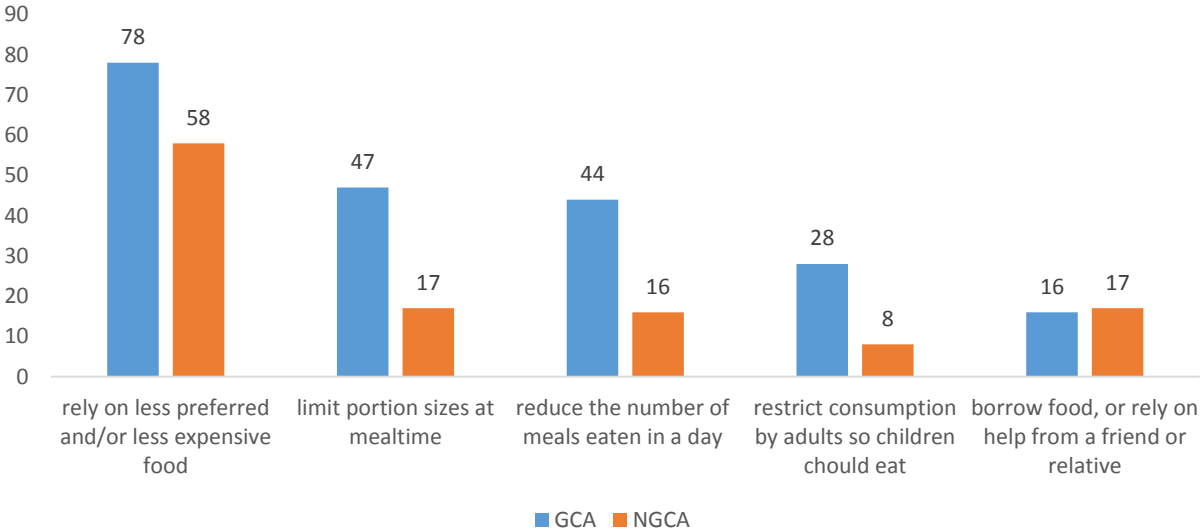
In GCA, products most accessed through markets were eggs, milk and fruits. Humanitarian assistance in GCA is the second largest source of food, accounting for 23 percent. Lack of household-level production capacity among IDPs in GCA could be linked to the lack of access to land.

Reliance of households on markets could also have negative implications. Increasing food prices in GCA and NGCA, coupled with the loss of income of those most vulnerable, are resulting in a reduced purchasing power of households in accessing food through markets.

5 Reduced Coping Strategy Index

The reduced coping strategy index (rCSI) is based on the frequency and severity of coping strategies for households reporting food consumption challenges. The outcome is a weighted score based on the severity of the coping mechanism used and the frequency (seven-day recall).

Graph 9: % of households that have used the coping strategies



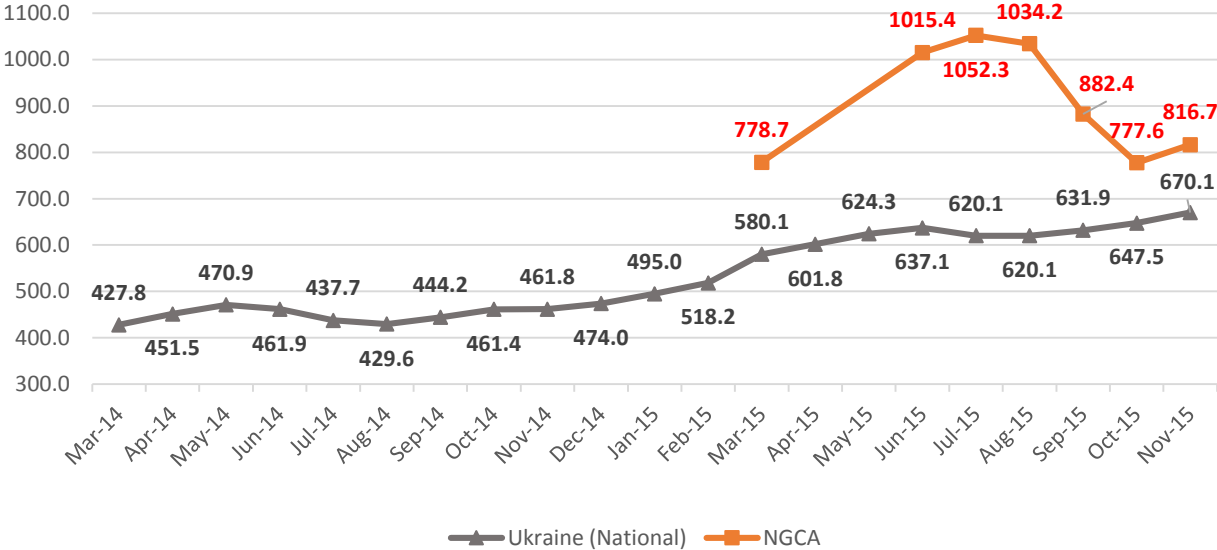
The most typical coping strategies of people in both GCA and NGCA include reliance on less preferred and/or less expensive food due to lack of food or money to buy food (applied by 64 percent of households), limiting portion sizes (applied by 28 percent), and reducing the number of meals eaten in a day (applied by 27.5 percent). Other common coping strategies are restricted consumption by adults so children could eat (applied 16.5 percent) and borrowing food, or relying on help from a friend or a relative (applied by 10.5 percent). Most of the respondents in focus group discussions stated they regularly borrow money from friends, some also sell their valuables to pawnshops.

Receiving humanitarian aid reduces the use of many of the negative strategies listed in the survey, including the transition to cheaper foods, reducing portion size or quantity of meals, as well as borrowing or receiving food from friends or relatives.

6 Market Prices Analysis

Graph 10 below represents the price development of a full food basket for national and NGCA regions.

Graph 10: Food Basket Value in GCA and NGCA



The value of the full food basket at the national level started to rise again in September after a seasonal decrease during the summer months. In October, the value increase accelerated to 2.5 percent month-to-month and in November to 3.5 percent compared to a slight increment (2 percent) in September. As seen in Graph 4 above, the value of the full food basket at the national level has registered regular seasonal changes. The summer harvest season in local agriculture pushes prices down, especially for fresh produce. Therefore, further increments are to be expected in food prices for the winter season in 2016.

During October and November, the value of the food basket at the national level reached its highest historical value. The food basket value grew primarily by seasonal increases in prices for vegetables, which rose by 30-80 percent since the beginning of autumn, eggs for about 40 percent and sugar 30 percent. Significant price increases were observed within the staple group, and particularly for some of the most preferred items such as potatoes (23 percent) and buckwheat (19 percent). Prices of bread, meat and dairy products remained stable in recent months.

The value of the food basket in Donetsk GCA as of November 2015 reached 722.2 UAH or 7.8 percent higher compared to the national level. In Luhansk GCA, the value of food basket reached 640.4 UAH, or 4.4 percent lower than the national level and 12.8 percent lower than in Donetsk GCA.

In November, the value of the food basket in NGCA continued its downward trend for a third month in a row. The value of the food basket in NGCA reached 818 UAH in November. Food prices remain around 22 percent higher compared to national levels.

WFP market monitoring shows stable availability of almost all commodities on the NGCA market. However, there is still a lack of fresh produce such as meat products as well as vegetables and fruits.

7 Who are the food-insecure people?

In **GCA**, food security levels are more common among IDPs living in collective centres where 11 percent of households were found severely food insecure. Households living in a separate accommodations in GCA have higher FCS than those who share a house or an apartment with host families. Hospitals and social institutions are also facing a very challenging situation. Their budgets did not take into account the flow of IDPs in GCA hospitals and other social institutions.

In **NGCA**, it is fairly noticeable that people living alone (especially single women) are characterized by poor or borderline consumption. Households not having any working-age members are also among the most food insecure.

Elderly people and women-headed households are among the most food insecure in all the above mentioned areas.

According to the data collected, the most food insecure and in need of humanitarian food assistance are:

1. Women-headed households and single women living alone, particularly those adopting negative copying mechanism. Luhansk NGCA region seems to be much more affected in this regard.
2. IDPs living in collective centres.
3. IDP households who share a house or an apartment with host families in GCA.
4. Elderly people among the IDP population in GCA
5. Elderly people among the general population in NGCA.
6. Households with damaged houses in BZ.
7. Households without any working-age members in NGCA.

8 Where are the food-insecure people?

Among the IDPs in GCA, food security is affected by both the place of residence and household composition. IDPs living in collective centres are among the most food insecure.

Furthermore food insecurity levels are rather characteristic among IDPs living in medium-sized settlements (20,000-100,000 inhabitants) and in villages compared to IDPs living in big cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants).

In NGCA, food insecurity levels appear more severe in Luhansk NGCA (9 percent severely food insecure) compared to Donetsk NGCA (6 percent severely food insecure).

Focus group discussions and qualitative information collected through WFP field staff show that the population remaining in the BZ does not have access to regular food, hygienic and medical items. Most are unemployed and do not receive regular income or humanitarian assistance. Information gathered through focus group discussions shows that many IDPs are willing to return home. On the other hand, the main concerns about returning to their places of origin are:

- The security situation
- Lack of work and job opportunities
- Unclear future of NGCA oblasts
- Those who have children of school age worry that diplomas in NGCA are not recognized outside.

10 Conclusions and Recommendations

The overall food insecurity levels are comparable to the previous assessment conducted in March 2015 in eastern Ukraine. Based on the assessment findings, recommendations for WFP food assistance programming are the followings:

- There is an urgent need to provide **food assistance to 289,321 severely food insecure people** across the affected area among the IDPs in the GCA and the affected population in NGCA and BZ.

Table 4: Estimation of needs

Geographical Area	Affected population ¹⁶	Severely food Insecure	Moderately Food Insecure	Totals
DL GCA	798,462	40,722	126,154	166,876
DKZ GCA	365,784	15,363	46,089	61,452
NGCA & BZ	3,533,881	233,236	993,021	1,226,257
GRAND TOTAL	4,698,127	289,321	1165264	1,454,585

- **Targeting criteria:** Some of the characteristics may be transitory (e.g. unemployed), while others are static (e.g. women-headed household). There can be different response options such as: provide regular food assistance to the severely food insecure while for others (e.g. returnees/newly displaced) assist the population until their food security situation changes (e.g. start to receive the government social safety-nets, find job, etc.).
- **Support to undernutrition among children:** Priority should be given to support families with more children aged 0 – 24 months. This is to be understood as a preventive measure avoiding a possible deterioration of nutrition levels among children aged 0 – 24 months, pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- **Geographical Coverage:** Luhansk NGCA and BZ remain more affected by food insecurity and are less covered by humanitarian food assistance.
- **Choice of Modality:** In NGCA, markets and food prices have seen signs of stabilization during the latest part of 2015 (mainly semi and urban settlements). Additional analysis on markets and financial institutions will be needed in order access feasibility of cash and/or voucher modalities in NGCA.
- **Value of voucher/cash:** Take into consideration increased prices of food and utilities in GCA and NGCA especially during the winter period.
- Conduct an **in-depth food and nutrition security assessment** in the earlier part of 2016. Whenever possible, this should include UN, NGO partners and local authorities.

¹⁶ Population figures for GCA were extracted by official data from the Ministry of Social Policy and reports of UNOCHA and UNHCR. For NGCA and BZ population data came as a result of KIIS estimations based on....

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