



LAKE CHAD BASIN REGIONAL CRISIS RESPONSE

LAKE CHAD **CRISIS** OVERVIEW

The Lake Chad Basin (LCB) is facing **one of the largest humanitarian crises** in the world today; approximately **17 million people** are affected by the conflict in the region¹. Since 2009, an area spanning four countries in Central and West Africa has been affected by the violence perpetrated by the Nigerian extremist group Boko Haram. In the ensuing years, the insurgency group has turned to violent attacks against local populations, causing an unprecedented **protection crisis**. Furthermore, **chronic factors** related to decades of underinvestment and marginalization of communities by the government fuel local grievances and the cycle of violence and poverty.

Today, **7 million people are at risk of hunger**, 2.1 million people have fled their homes and are currently living under immensely difficult

conditions. The humanitarian community is now scaling up the response, thanks to newly gained access to populations in the region. But the humanitarian sector remains under threat by military and political objectives in the fight against Boko Haram.

Despite numerous alerts raised by the UN and NGOs in the field and a concrete **risk of famine** for hundreds of thousands trapped by the conflict, the magnitude of the crisis has been overlooked by the international community and is consistently **under-funded**². The Oslo Conference raised attention to the LCB crisis, but financial commitments from donors will be fundamental to fill the funding gap and ensure a timely response to the crisis. If not, the humanitarian community will fail to scale-up the response and millions of people will remain unassisted.

COOPI REGIONAL RESPONSE

COOPI has been responding to this complex crisis since 2014 through a regional program covering the four countries of the LCB. **COOPI supports the most basic and urgent needs of communities affected by the violence while promoting the self-reliance of the most vulnerable communities**. Despite the challenges of this complex environment, COOPI is expanding its LCB operations with a **multi-sectoral program** focused on food security, nutrition, protection and education.

COOPI has developed an **integrated approach** of intervention covering more than **300,000 people**

including host communities, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. In 2017 a greater emphasis is being placed on this effort with the aim to better link relief and recovery objectives. COOPI adopts a direct management method of intervention in coordination with local stakeholders and in partnership with NGOs and the UN system.

In this volatile context, it is necessary to expand the coverage of humanitarian services and reach the communities in newly accessible areas in **Yobe and Borno States** (Nigeria), **Lake Region** (Chad), **Diffa Region** (Niger) and the **Far North Region** of Cameroon.

¹ Lake Chad Basin Humanitarian Needs and Requirements Overview (2017).

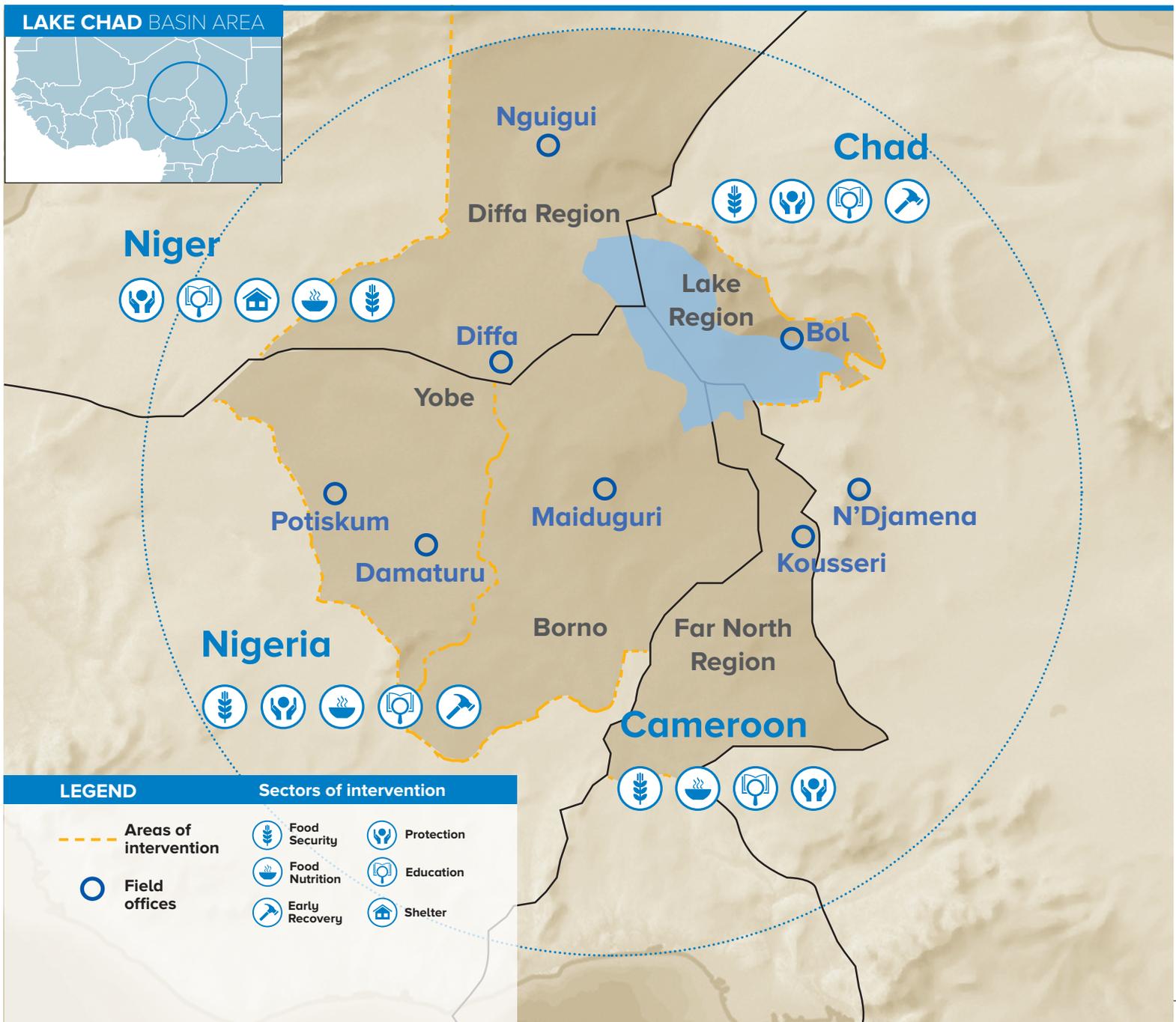
² The HRP 2016 has been funded at 49% while the HRP 2017 is still at 7.2%.

³ Senegal, Mali, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon.

Throughout 2014-15, COOPI set up field offices in the main areas of operation: Potiskum and Damaturu (Yobe State, Nigeria), Diffa (Diffa Region, Niger), and Bol (Lake Region, Chad). The organization is establishing news offices in **Maiduguri** and **Kousseri** to ensure adequate proximity of senior management to the new areas of intervention. In order to guarantee a stronger level of coordination with the humanitarian community at the regional level, COOPI has a presence in **Dakar** (Senegal) with a **regional office** to support operations in

West Africa, now covering seven countries³.

Among COOPI's main **partners** in the response to the LCB Crisis are the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO), the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), UNICEF, UNHCR, FAO, the Swiss Cooperation and USAID (OFDA and FFP). COOPI intends to continue to explore new partnerships in LCB in order to maximize the reach and the impact of its programs.





FOCUS ON NIGERIA

Since the declaration of a state of emergency in the Nigerian Federated States of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa, the escalation of the Boko Haram insurgency has led to **multiple displacement crises**, with communities fleeing their homes to take refuge in camps or host communities. Boko Haram related violence and counter insurgency operations increased substantially in 2014, consequently creating acute and largely unmet humanitarian needs, as IDPs are cut off from their homes and livelihoods, basic services, kinship and social ties.

In September 2014, COOPI began operating in north-eastern Nigeria establishing its operation in Bauchi State and later expanded to Yobe State considering the heightened presence of IDPs in the Local Government Areas of Fika, Damaturu, Potiskum, Geidam and Yunusari. Recently, COOPI conducted an assessment mission in Borno State in order to launch new operations in the most affected area of the Lake Chad crisis. COOPI is currently operating in 3 LGAs in Yobe State and 2 LGAs in Borno State, reaching about 15,000 individuals among IDPs and host communities with a multi-sectoral intervention covering nutrition, food security and child protection.

COOPI has developed a **cash & voucher based** response system in Nigeria to address food insecure communities while integrating this approach with a **nutrition component** - community outreach, referral system, Infant and Young Child Feeding campaign and appropriate therapeutic services addressed to malnourished children and pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Given the unfolding large scale emergency in northeastern Nigeria, COOPI plans to **scale up** its current operations in Yobe state (Jakusco, Yunusari, Bade, Geidam LGAs) and reach newly accessible areas, in addition to areas receiving Nigerian returnees from Niger. Furthermore, COOPI set up operations to extend its humanitarian services to affected populations in Borno state especially in **Kaga LGA** and in the capital **Maiduguri**, where the most vulnerable populations are stuck

with insufficient basic services to respond to their immediate needs in a dignified manner. In Maiduguri, the multi-sectoral approach will include education as complementary intervention with protection targeting children living in a specific area of the city.



Photo: Antonio Piccoli

Expected Results for Nigeria at the end of 2017:



154,000

people received life-saving food, agricultural inputs and/or other basic Non Food Items through cash assistance



35,000

children treated for malnutrition or received adequate food to prevent it through Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme



3,500

children involved in formal and informal education and received direct psychosocial support



800

UASC identified, received psychosocial support and supported through foster families and referral for reunification or other services available



FOCUS ON NIGER

The situation in the Diffa Region, located in eastern Niger, continues to be characterized by a massive, forced displacement of the population, which has settled primarily in non-formal sites or within host communities. COOPI's intervention in the region covering 5 departments is based on a multisectoral strategy aiming to respond to the emergency needs of affected populations, while adopting a community rehabilitation perspective.

In terms of protection, the action has been focused on the provision of psychosocial care services through the support and strengthening of community-based mechanisms, prevention and response to protection risks, with particular focus on **child protection**. To this extent, COOPI has set up 87 Psychosocial Support structures in spontaneous sites and in host communities addressed to children and adolescents, proposing an activities package adapted to the specific needs of the targeted groups.

In line with IASC guidelines, and in order to ensure that services at the top of the psychosocial intervention pyramid are available for the growing number of people suffering from Mental, Neurological and Substance Use (MNS) disorders,

COOPI complements psychosocial support efforts with a more specialized mental health intervention. In terms of education, the support has focused on both access and quality of education services according to INEE standards. Improved access to primary education has been achieved through the **construction and equipment of temporary learning spaces** as well as schools in the formal camps. Finally, COOPI is implementing a distance education program for Nigerian refugees based on an innovative e-learning platform, enabling students to complete the educational path started in Nigeria. In 2017, COOPI Niger will continue to scale its protection and education activities throughout the Diffa Region while increasing the coverage of mental health services and the establishment of effective community-based identification and referral services through cooperation with community leaders and other important community figures. COOPI is going to broaden the scope of protection activities through the strengthening of identification mechanisms of victims of exploitation and abuses within targeted communities.



Photo: Yves Jamoneau

Expected Results for Niger at the end of 2017:



16,874

children enrolled in quality formal and non-formal education



26,942

children and adults benefited from a multilayered psychosocial services package according to their needs



200

SGBV cases benefited from access to appropriate services through direct support and referral to other service providers

200

UASC identified and documented benefited from a protective environment in alternative care arrangements or in their biological family



FOCUS ON CHAD



Photo: COOPI archive

Chad is one of the world's least developed countries and continues to face a complex emergency as a result of chronic food insecurity, malnutrition, natural hazard and conflict. COOPI has supported drought and conflict affected communities in Chad over the last 25 years, with a focus on development initiatives and humanitarian assistance⁴.

Since 2015, COOPI has been operating in the **Lake Region**. The organization has been providing food security support to vulnerable households in the area of Bol, targeting host and displaced communities with livelihood support, cash for work, village saving and loans association (VSLA), activities promoting rural development and the resilience of the targeted populations.

COOPI then started to intervene in the sector of **education in emergency**, both formal and informal: main activities include the construction of classes in villages and temporary rooms in sites for IDPs, the provision of kits and materials, teachers' recruitment and training and parents' sensitization. COOPI intervention includes also a **protection program** focused on community outreach, psychosocial support of children and unaccompanied minors and separated children reunification.

COOPI program in **Lake Region** is now focused on a multi-sectoral approach integrating emergency services in protection and education with early

recovery initiatives of livelihood support. COOPI wants to strengthen its presence in the area mainly focusing on Bagasola, Bol, Kangalom and Ngouri Districts. The organization is currently expanding its food security and resilience interventions by launching two projects aiming at alleviating the sufferings of refugees, IDP and host populations in the departments of Mamdi and Kaya.

Expected Results for Chad at the end of 2017:



20

schools rehabilitated with additional classes and sports activities



1,845

children, including children with disabilities, received quality education



2,100

children participated in psychosocial and recreational activities



5,500

households received agricultural and livelihood support

⁴ Main areas of intervention have been the two Logones, Mandoul, Moyen Chari, Dar Sila, Hadjer Lamis.

FOCUS ON CAMEROON



Cameroon has been largely affected by Boko Haram's actions in the cross-border area of Far North, an arid region with chronic food insecurity and epidemics. During the last 2 years, violence against civilians escalated, causing massive displacements and deprivation of communities in the region. Since 2015, the number of IPDs has more than doubled reaching 200,000, while 86,000 Nigerians have sought refuge in the country, deteriorating the already fragile co-existence among communities. Moreover, access to basic services, such as health and education, has been severely limited⁵.

COOPI established its presence in the country during the 1970's with development intervention mainly focused on education, health, water and sanitation and agriculture. In 2016, the organization conducted initiatives in the Far North region aimed at evaluating needs, coordination with relevant stakeholders and setting up the capacities for emergency operation. A pilot project on Mental Health and Psicho-Social activities was executed in a specific area of the Far Northern Region with the aim to reinforce capacities of local partners for non-specialized focused services.

COOPI has recently designed a new program in Logone and Chari Department in partnership with Codas Caritas, a local NGO with a long standing presence in this remote area. Specifically, the operation planned for 2017 will cover 4 districts⁶ of the department with more than 100,000 people targeted among host communities, IDPs and refugees. The intervention, funded by Italian Cooperation (AICS) will guarantee relief and recovery activities in favor of the most distressed communities affected by violence through a multi-sectoral approach focused on **food and nutrition security, water and sanitation and education**.

A field office in **Kousseri** has been set up in order to provide operational support to the new intervention while coordination with the

humanitarian system in Maroua and Yaounde will be systematically pursued by senior management in the country.



Photo: Daniela Capoferri

Expected Results for Cameroon at the end of 2017:



55,000

children, including children with disabilities, received quality education



10 schools rehabilitated and furnished

50 temporary spaces for education built



1,000

households received agricultural support



3,500

children received food to prevent malnutrition through Blanket Supplementary Feeding Programme



56

wells rehabilitated/constructed for human consumption in targeted villages and schools

⁵ Since 2015, 144 schools and 21 health centers have been closed due to security reasons.
⁶ Makary, Fotokol, Hilla Alifa e Blangua.

COOPI WEST AFRICA

COOPI has **decades of expertise in West Africa and the Sahel belt.**

During the 1970's the organization began operations in Sierra Leone, Cameroon and Chad in response to complex emergencies, and later expanded to Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Morocco and Ivory Coast.

Since 2013, COOPI has reinforced its presence in the region by launching new emergency operations in Mali, Niger, Nigeria and recently Cameroon in response to the Sahel nutrition crisis and conflict-related displacements.

COOPI is now establishing a **regional strategy of intervention** pursuing an **integrated approach** in emergency response combined with recovery initiatives aimed at reinforcing resilience at the household and community level.

The operations in West Africa are supported by a **regional office in Dakar.**

COOPI AROUND THE WORLD

COOPI - Cooperazione Internazionale

is a humanitarian organization, nonreligious and independent, that works for a world without poverty. It assists populations in need and contributes to the development of local communities.

It is currently present in **24 countries** in the Global South with **179 projects, 100 expatriates** and **3,000 local workers.**

The 2015 financial report totaled around 36 million Euro, 94% of which was employed in the interventions in the Global South and 6% to fund the organization.

The funds come mainly from institutional donors, above all from the European Commission. The financial statement is certified by an audit company.

From 1965 to 2015, COOPI has **helped 100 million people** in 63 countries and employed 4,500 expatriates and 55,000 local workers in 1,600 projects.

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COOPI - COOPERAZIONE INTERNAZIONALE NGO

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