

# DIZA-Est

Post-programme evaluation:  
sustainability of impacts on food security  
and livelihoods three years on

CONCERN  
worldwide

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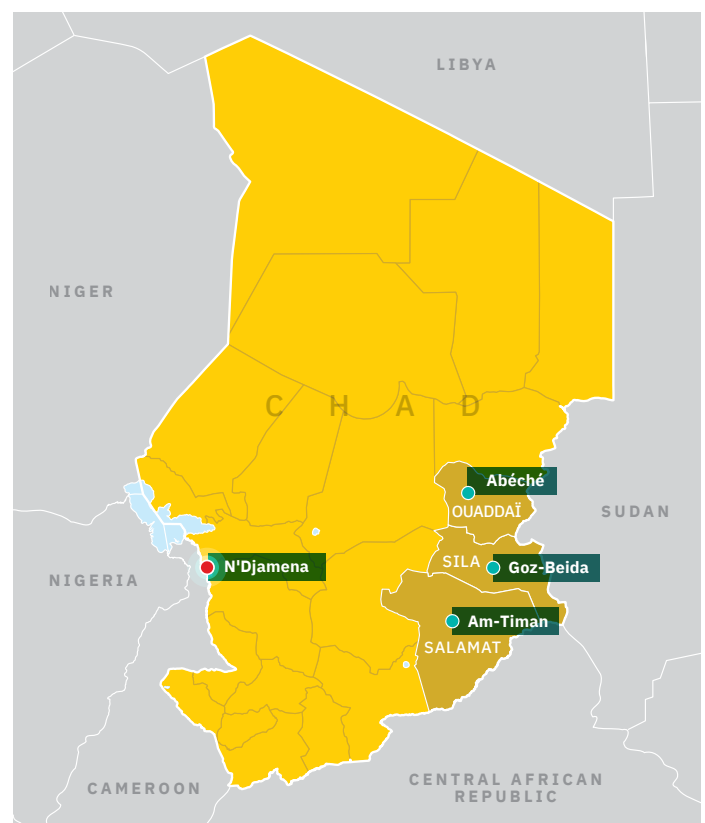
Members of a VSLA supported through DIZA-Est during their weekly savings meeting in Koutoufou, Sila Province (2022). Photo credit: Concern Worldwide.

## Programme Background

The **DIZA-Est programme** was implemented from October 2018 to January 2023 by a consortium of three international NGOs and three national NGOs. It aimed to **sustainably improve the living conditions and resilience of 100,811** host communities, refugees, and returnees in the provinces of Ouaddaï, Sila, and Salamat.

The programme adopted a **progressive integrated Nexus approach** that combines emergency cash assistance, economic recovery through income-generating activities (IGAs), and community financial strengthening via village savings and loan associations (VSLA), to facilitate a structured transition toward sustainable and resilient livelihoods.

This survey, conducted in November 2025, analyses the evolution of food security and economic development outcomes among former participants **three years after the end of the programme.**



## Methodology

- 123 households surveyed by Concern in November 2025 in seven villages in Sila province
- Key informant interviews and focus group discussions
- Analysis of indicators relative to the endline (2022) and baseline (2020): food consumption score (FCS), food diversity score, reduced coping strategies index
- Qualitative insights from the external mid-term evaluation of the RESPECCT programme, including former DIZA participants in Sila and Ouaddaï

Although the sample size is limited, the survey identifies clear trends regarding the sustainability of the gains.

### What is the impact of DIZA-Est three years later?

- **Sustainable gains in food security:** in 2025, 76% of households have an acceptable FCS, a level higher than the baseline (54% in 2020)
- **Maintained dietary diversity:** the average score remains stable with a slight increase compared to the endline (7.4 in 2025 vs. 7.2 in 2022) and significantly higher than the baseline value (5.9 in 2020)
- **Sustainable economic activities:** 89% of agricultural IGAs and 78% of non-agricultural IGAs are still operational in 2025
- **VSLAs as a key driver of resilience:** in 2025, 85% of VSLAs are still active and 88% of households are members; membership in a VSLA is strongly associated with greater food security
- **Resilience under pressure:** the use of negative coping strategies has increased significantly (average rCSI of 18.6 in 2025 vs. 10.9 at endline in 2022 and 12 at baseline in 2020) amid repeated climate and economic shocks

Despite frequent **climate and economic shocks**, households manage to maintain a **generally acceptable** level of **food security**. However, this stability is accompanied by increased reliance on **negative coping strategies**, revealing a still-limited capacity to absorb repeated crises.

## Food security: sustained gains under pressure

### Sustaining Gains

In 2025, the food consumption score remains acceptable for 76% of households three years after the programme ended, and the average score remains 28% higher than the baseline, despite a 4% decline compared to the endline. Dietary diversity is acceptable for 78% of households, a 6% improvement compared to the endline.

### Growing pressure

At the same time, the use of negative coping strategies has risen sharply: the average rCSI has increased by 71% since the endline, and the proportion of households at the “very severe” level has risen by 26%. In 2025, 83% of households with an acceptable FCS still have a severe or very severe rCSI, indicating that food consumption is maintained at the cost of significant adjustments. The 2024 floods, drought, inflation, and insecurity are identified as the main contributing factors.

### “Floods and drought have affected crop yields, which has impacted our food consumption.” (Participant, Kerfi)

According to qualitative data, participants feel better equipped than before to cope with shocks. However, households remain vulnerable to shocks that force them to resort to negative coping strategies. Disparities persist between villages, with some demonstrating greater resilience to shocks than others. This could be explained by greater diversification of livelihoods, better community mechanisms for coping with shocks, or by the magnitude of the shock affecting each community.

### Income-generating activities: sustainability but limited shock absorption capacity

DIZA supported 2,119 households in establishing income-generating activities (IGAs). A large majority of IGAs in the villages covered by this survey remain operational in 2025 (89% of agricultural IGAs and 78% of non-agricultural IGAs). Focus group discussions indicate that the skills acquired continue to influence economic practices, particularly regarding income diversification and stockpiling. 92% of households with an IGA report that it allows them to cover basic needs, even if this is insufficient given the high cost of living.

However, the link between having an IGA and the level of food security appears limited: the difference in acceptable FCS between households with an IGA (78%) and the average (76%) remains small. Furthermore, households with an IGA rely more heavily on negative coping strategies compared to the average (90% at the severe/very severe level vs. 82%), suggesting that these activities contribute to livelihoods but are not sufficient to fully absorb repeated shocks.

**“Agricultural IGAs help us meet certain needs, but we can’t cover everything; it depends on the season.” (Focus group)**

### VSLAs: a key driver of resilience

DIZA established 258 VSLAs involving 5,179 participants. The majority of VSLAs in the villages covered by this survey remained active in 2025 (85%) and continued to hold regular meetings. Among surveyed households in villages where VSLAs remained active, 88% reported being members. Membership of a VSLA is strongly associated with improved food security: 82% of members have an acceptable FCS, compared to 61% of non-members.

VSLAs also play a key role in sustaining IGAs: 91% of households with an operational agricultural IGA are members of a VSLA. Households report regular access to credit to finance IGAs and food expenses. VSLAs also serve as lasting spaces for solidarity and community organisation.

**“What we learned with DIZA helped us keep going together. Even now, we meet, discuss, and look for solutions.” (Focus group, Ouaddai)**

### Social dynamics: positive but mixed developments

Discussions highlight positive changes regarding gender equality in certain villages, particularly regarding the sharing of responsibilities within households. However, these developments remain uneven depending on the village. Participants also emphasise the absence of tensions related to the presence of refugees and highlight the programme’s inclusive implementation approach.

**“We’ve noticed a big change in our husbands’ behavior; they now help us with household chores.” (Women’s focus group, Dir-Birmiskine)**

### Conclusion

The post-programme survey shows that gains have largely been sustained, particularly in terms of food security, livelihood diversification, and community organization through the VSLAs. Qualitative data confirm the added value of the combination of cash transfers, IGAs, and VSLAs in sustainably improving living conditions.

However, the sharp increase in the use of negative coping strategies indicates that these gains are vulnerable to repeated climate, economic, and security shocks. While households maintain their food consumption, this comes at the cost of significant adjustments. These results underscore the importance of:

- **Strengthening shock absorption mechanisms:** early warning systems, community-based crisis management mechanisms (contingency stocks, VSLA solidarity funds, etc.)
- **Strengthening economic diversification:** IGAs less sensitive to climate hazards and well integrated into markets, crop diversification
- **Developing VSLAs** as a central driver of resilience: productive savings, group reinvestment, informal insurance, formalisation of structures, links with microfinance institutions
- **Deepening gender-sensitive approaches** in a context-specific manner: in-depth analysis of gender-related constraints and relevant activities



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