

WFP Uganda

Mobile Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (mVAM)

Karamoja Region Early Warning Bulletin—March 2018

Key Highlights

- ◆ In March, 41% of the overall households had food stocks, portraying a decline by 19%, compared to January. Similar trends were noted across districts, significantly in Abim and Kotido by 40% and 34%, respectively. Compared to 2017, the food stock levels have remained higher, following a better harvest during the September-to-October harvest season;
- ◆ There was a slight improvement in the food security situation, with 58% of the households having acceptable FCS compared to 51% in January, and this is attributed to a combination of livelihood activities applied by households. In Kaabong, Amudat, and Napak, the proportion of households with acceptable FCS increased by 36%, 33% and 21%, respectively;
- ◆ Results in March revealed that the overall rCSI was higher than January by 25%, markedly in Amudat, Kotido and Kaabong, indicating households are increasingly stressed in meeting their food needs;
- ◆ The average retail price for maize grain in March was slightly above February levels by 7%, while the price for sorghum fell by 3%. Prices for maize grain and sorghum remained significantly below 2017 levels.

Overview

The mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (mVAM) was initiated in 2016 by WFP Uganda Country Office to provide real-time analysis of the performance of food security indicators and serve as a core pillar of WFP's Food Security and Nutrition Early Warning System.

This mVAM bulletin is based on the data collected between 19th-26th March 2018.

- ◆ 988 households were interviewed in March across Karamoja, of which 16 percent were female headed.
- ◆ The average age of the household head is 39, while the household membership is 9;
- ◆ 13 percent of the households reportedly receive assistance from WFP;
- ◆ 26 percent of the households heads are either disabled and/or chronically ill.

Outlook for April to May 2018

With the increasingly depleting food stocks, majority of the households are likely to experience stress while meeting their food needs, resulting from high prices for staple foods, due to the anticipated high demand. The food security situation in April, through May will deteriorate, and adoption of negative food consumption coping strategies will steadily increase.

Recommendations

- ◆ There is need to continue monitoring the food security situation across Karamoja, with more focus on Moroto and Kotido;
- ◆ Despite reduced massive sale of food, there is need for continuous awareness creation on food management, particularly in Amudat and Nakapiriprit;
- ◆ While supply on the market is expected to continue decreasing, there is need to keep monitoring market prices for staple foods.

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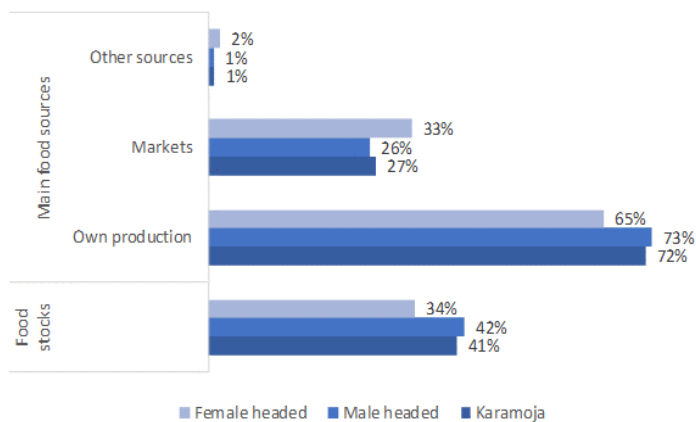
Food stocks

Two in five households (41%) reportedly had food stocks in March, with Kaabong (62%) and Abim (60%) having the highest share of households (Fig 1). Compared to January, results show systematic depletion of food stocks in March across all districts. The overall proportion fell by 19%, with significant declines observed in Abim (40%) and Kotido (34%). However, the share of households reporting food stocks remain significantly above 2017 levels, and this is attributed to a better harvest during the September-to-October 2017 harvest. From a gender perspective, the proportion of households reporting food stocks was high among male headed (42%), compared to female headed (34%) (Fig 1).

Available stocks are expected to last for 44 days (about a month and half), implying stocks are likely to get depleted in the second week of May. Among the male headed households, available stocks will last for 46 days, compared to 35 days for the female headed.

Majority (72%) of the households derived their stocks from own production, followed by markets (27%) (Fig 1). In Moroto 85% of the households reported markets as the main source of their food stocks.

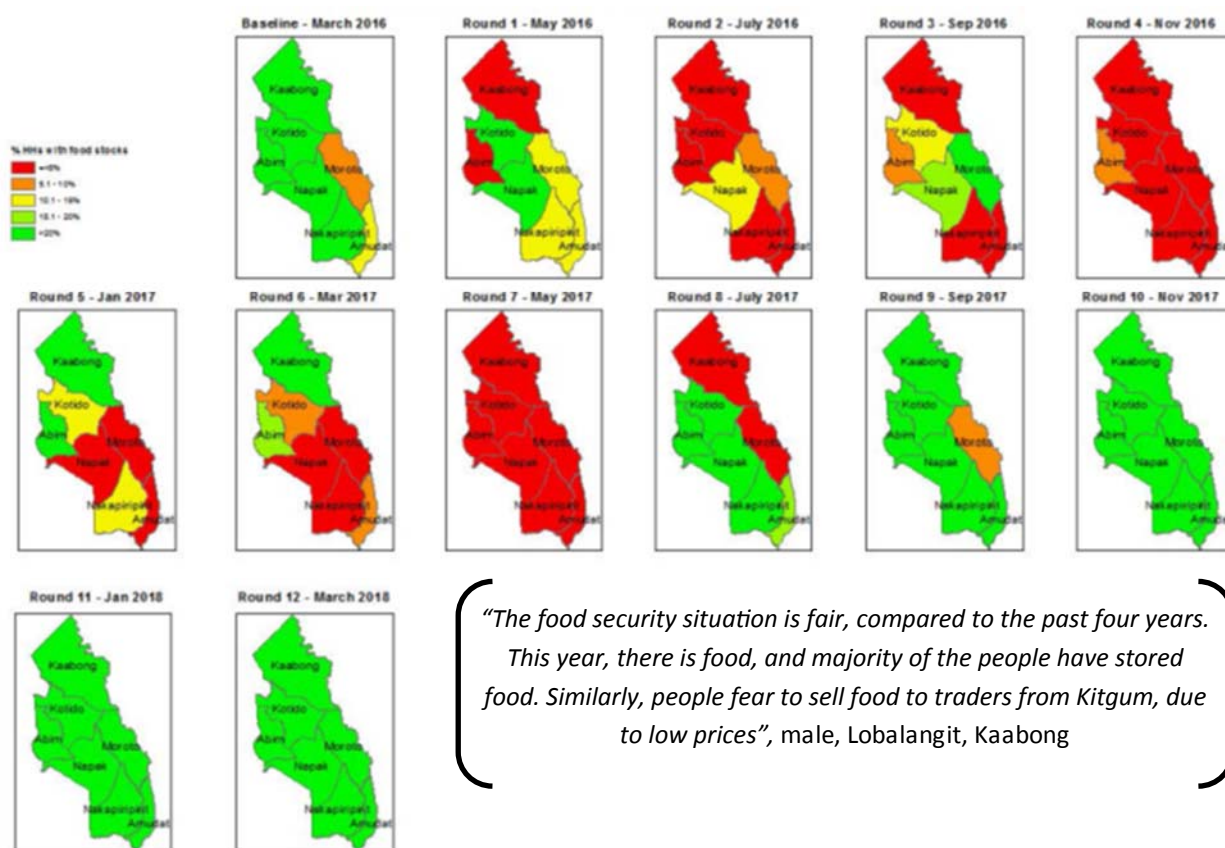
Figure 1: Food stock levels and sources by gender



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

“The biggest challenge is distance to markets, we walk long distances to buy food, particularly for those depending on markets. Others are selling food to acquire items such as soap”, a Male respondent in Nyakwae, Abim

Figure 2: Trends on households with food stocks (March 2016-March 2018)



“The food security situation is fair, compared to the past four years. This year, there is food, and majority of the people have stored food. Similarly, people fear to sell food to traders from Kitgum, due to low prices”, male, Lobalangit, Kaabong

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Food Consumption Score (FCS)

In March, more than half (58%) of the overall households had acceptable FCS (**Fig 3**), revealing a minimal increase by 7% compared to January, with a similar trend seen in Kaabong (36%), Amudat (33%), and Napak (21%). This could be attributed to the fairly stable prices for staple foods, coupled with increasing labor opportunities in the agricultural sector following the start of the planting season. On the contrary, the food security situation is deteriorating in Kotido and Moroto, due to the increasingly depleting food stocks and high dependence on markets, respectively.

Furthermore, the proportion of households with acceptable FCS were similar, among male (58%) and female (59%) headed households (**Fig 3**).

Cereals and vegetables were the highly consumed food groups in March (**Fig 4**). Household consumption of animal proteins and fruits remained low, possibly due to low supplies as animals had migrated following the onset of the dry season in December.

Compared to the same period in 2017, the overall food security situation is fairly stable, but with significant deterioration in Moroto, Amudat and Nakapiripirit (**Fig 5**). The proportion of food insecure households was above 2017 levels by 31%, 20% and 18% in Moroto, Amudat and Nakapiripirit, respectively, possibly due to the reduced humanitarian assistance in the region.

Figure 3: Food Consumption Score by gender

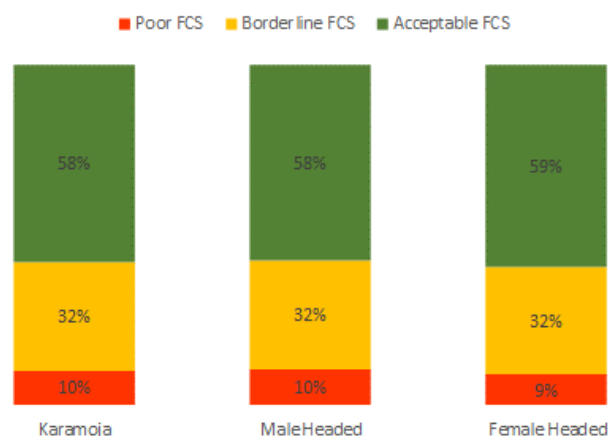
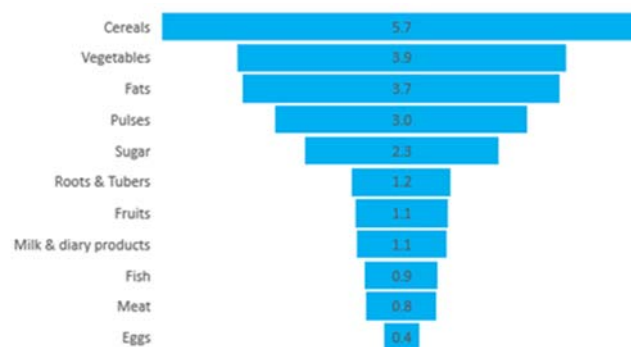
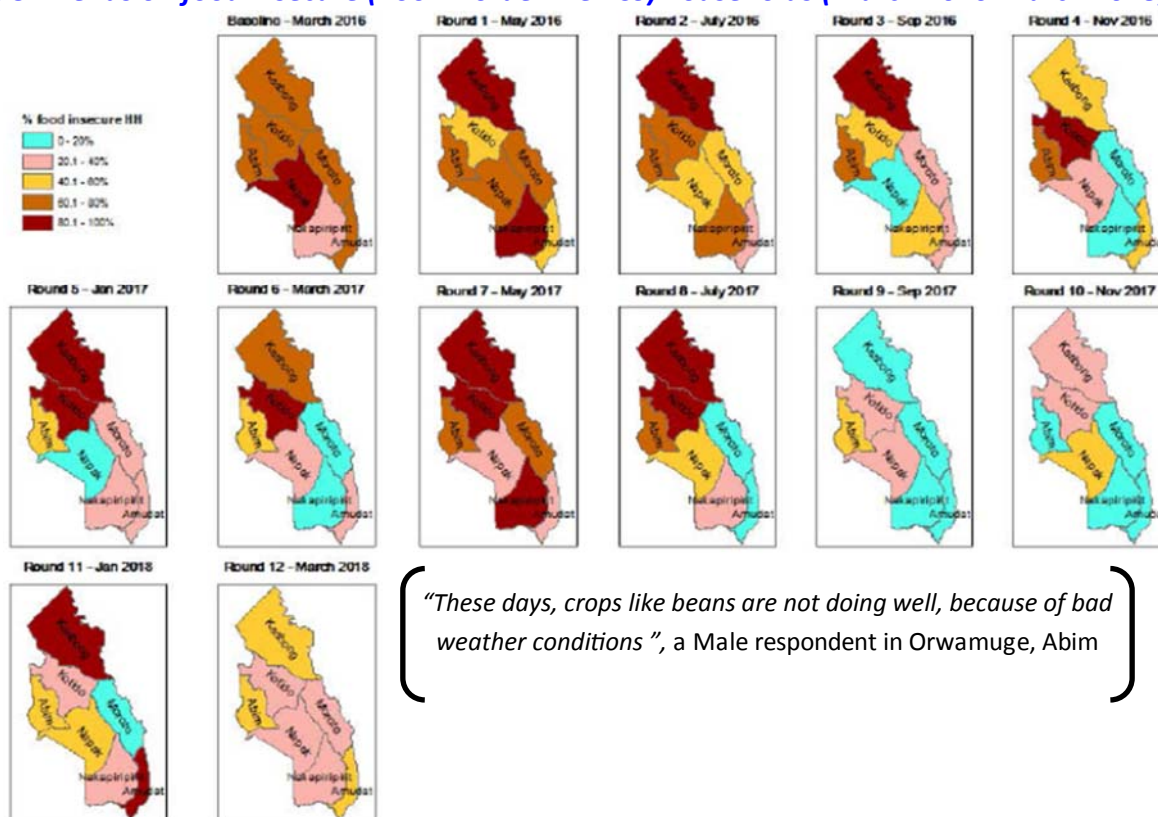


Figure 4: Household Dietary Diversity



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

Figure 5: Trends on food insecure (Poor+Borderline FCS) households (March 2016-March 2018)



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Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

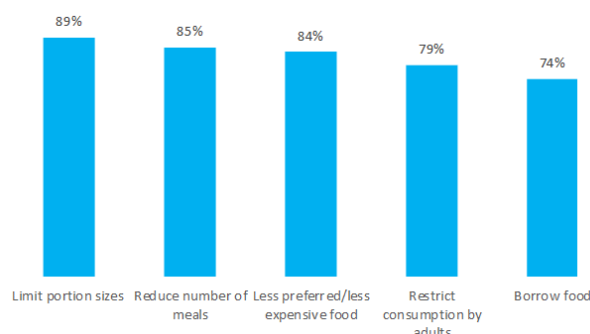
The overall mean rCSI increased in March, compared to January, similarly across all districts (**Fig 7**), portraying households are experiencing stress in meeting their food needs. Results revealed the overall rCSI was above by 25%, significantly in Amudat (59%), Kotido (28%) and Kaabong (26%), possibly due to the depleting food stocks. Male headed (20) and female headed (19) households had similar mean rCSI during the month.

Comparing food consumption groups, the mean rCSI was high for households with poor FCS (27), while for borderline FCS and acceptable FCS was 21 and 18, respectively.

Similarly, the overall mean rCSI in March was high by 11%, compared to the same period in 2017, markedly in Amudat, Kaabong and Kotido, and this could be due to a drop in the humanitarian assistance in Karamoja. In Napak and Nakapiripirit, the rCSI fell by 45% and 43%, respectively, revealing improvement in the food security situation following a better harvest in 2017.

Limiting portion sizes (89%) and reducing number of meals (85%) were the main food consumption coping strategies adopted by households (**Fig 6**). The proportion of households relying on less preferred foods and reducing the number of meals was high among male headed, compared to female headed households.

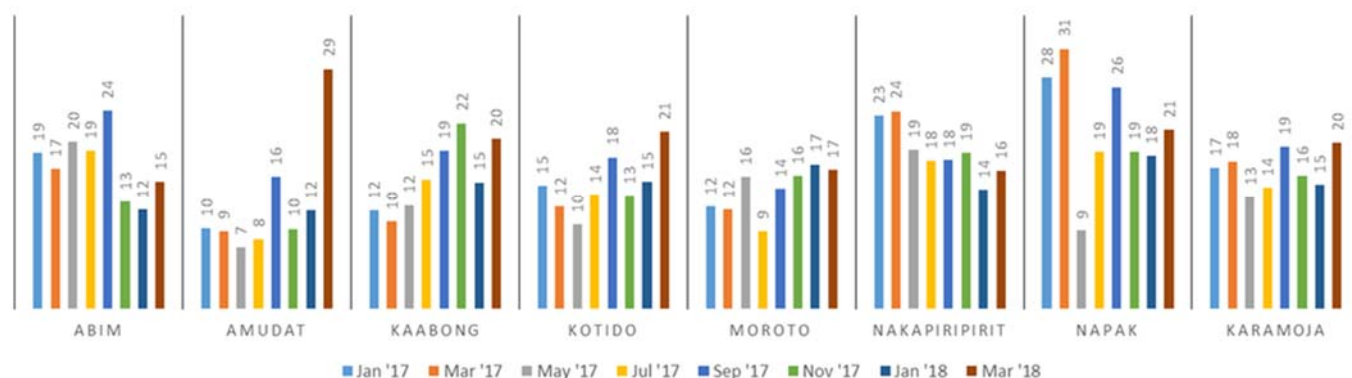
Figure 6: Applied coping strategies



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

"We rely on only one meal per day, even this meal is through selling firewood and/or charcoal, without this, you seek for help or else you go hungry", a Male respondent in Sidok, Kaabong

Figure 7: Trends on the mean rCSI (Jan 2017-March 2018)



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

The Reduced Coping Strategy Index (RCSI) measures food insecurity by considering the activities undertaken by households to manage food shortages. More information on rCSI can be found at <http://resources.vam.wfp.org/node/6>.

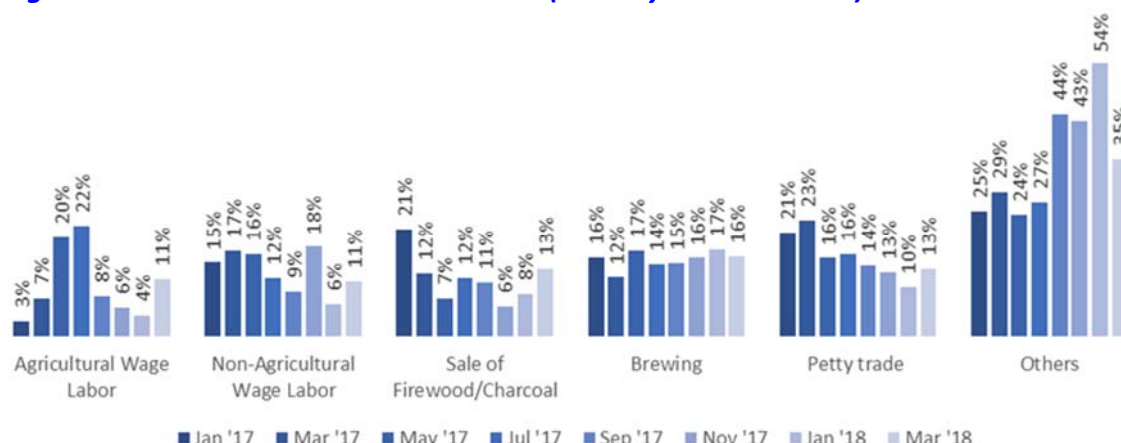
Household income

Households mainly earned incomes from brewing (16%), and sale of firewood/charcoal (13%) in March (**Fig 7**). While sale of firewood/charcoal was a predominant income source in Kotido (25%) and Kaabong (19%), brewing was reportedly a main income source for households in Moroto (25%), Napak (22%) and Nakapiripirit (19%). Results revealed that, both male and female headed households earned from brewing, although markedly among females.

In March, the share of households selling food fell to 11%, from 36% in January (**Fig 8**), with similar trends seen across all districts. The reduction in the sale of food was significant in Abim (48%) and Kotido (42%), possibly due to the continued awareness creation on food management and also limited stocks. In Amudat, 30% of the households earned incomes through selling food.

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Figure 7: Trends on main income sources (January '17-March '18)



"People lack business ideas to start small business, majority of them are farmers who mainly rely on rain-fed agriculture", a Males respondent from Nakapelimoru, Kotido

Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

Other income sources encompass; Fishing/Hunting; Food Assistance; Salary; Income derived from sale of Livestock and/or animal products; Remittances; Food crop production/Sale; Pensions, Government allowances; Gifts/begging; Cash crop production/Sales and Handicrafts

Figure 8: Trends on selling food (September '17-March '18)



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

"Generally, the food security situation is good, except people are selling food to the rich people from South Sudan. So, if there is a mechanism to curb the rampant sale of food, I will be glad", Male, Karenga, Kaabong

Debt prevalence

In March, 73% of the households reportedly had debt, revealing a marked increase by 37% from January. The increase in the debt prevalence was significant across all districts, more so in Kaabong, Moroto and Kotido (**Fig 9**). The prevalence was slightly higher among female headed, compared to male led households. Compared to 2017, the proportion of households with debt remained higher in Moroto, Napak and Nakapiripirit, while Kaabong, Kotido and Abim observed declines.

The main reason for borrowing were: buying food (37%); paying for school, education costs (25%); and investing in other business (18%). The share of households borrowing to buy food was above January levels by 7%, more so in Abim and Kotido. However, Kaabong observed a decline by 53%.

The main sources for debt and/or credit were banks/credit institution/micro-credit project (35%), traders (17%), relatives (13%) and other sources taking 35% (**Fig 11**). Interestingly female headed households (40%) accessed credit through banks/credit institutions/micro-credit projects as compared to their counterparts (34%).

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Figure 9: Trends on the debt prevalence (Mar '16-Mar '18)

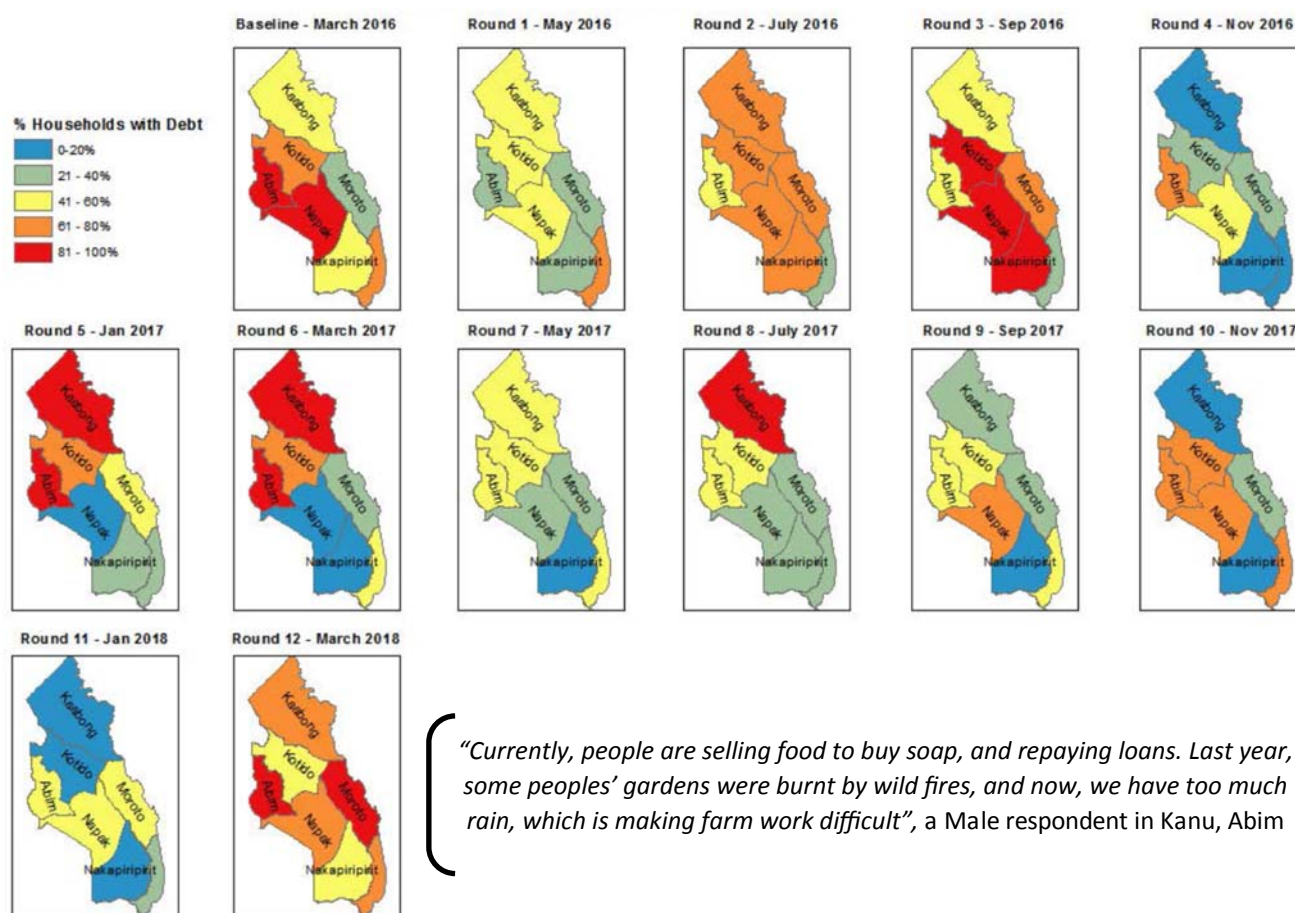
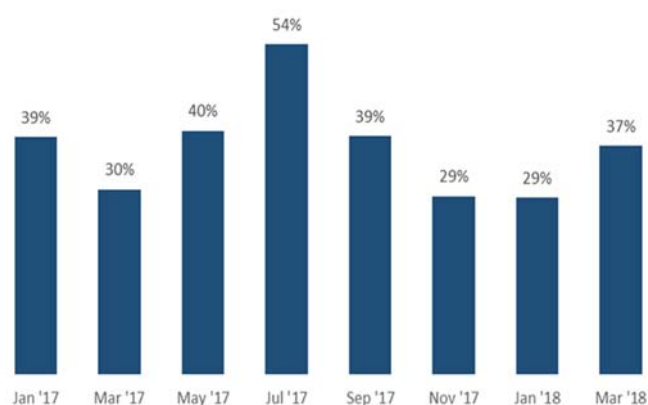
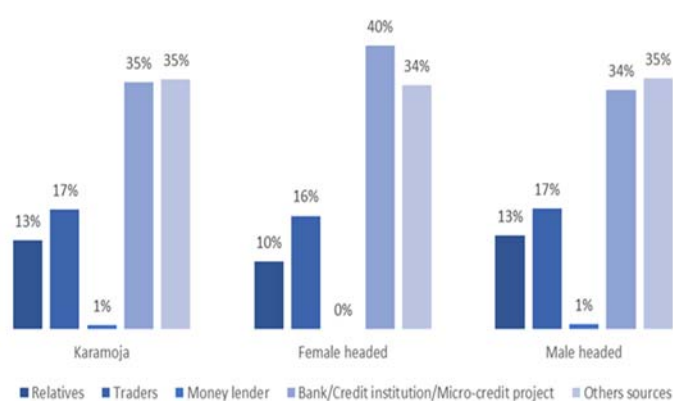


Figure 10: Trends on borrowing to buy food (Jan 2017 to Mar 2018)



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

Figure 11: Sources of debt by gender



Source: WFP mVAM, March 2018

Other sources for credit encompassed: Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs); and friends/workmates/neighbors

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Karamoja Market prices for staple food

In March, the overall average price for maize grain was minimally higher than February average by 7%, with a surge in Abim (29%) and Amudat (25%), due to reduced supplies on the market. Average retail price for sorghum was slightly below by 3% in March.

Generally, the prices for maize grain and sorghum remained significantly below 2017 levels by 34% and 33%, respectively due to a better harvest at the end of 2017.

In April through May, prices are expected to follow seasonal trends, with a likelihood of marginally going up, due to the increasingly depleting household food stocks. Results revealed that available food stocks will last for 44 days on average, an indication that more households will most likely resort to markets in the second week of May.

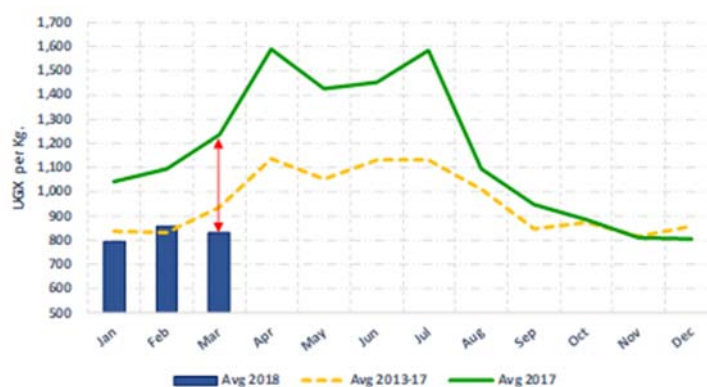
"The problem is money, when you don't have money you cannot get food. you know from our village people don't eat lunch, its only supper", a female respondent in Sidok, Kaabong

Trends on food prices in Karamoja

Maize Grain



Sorghum Grain



Source: WFP's ProMIS

Supplementary Feeding Admissions

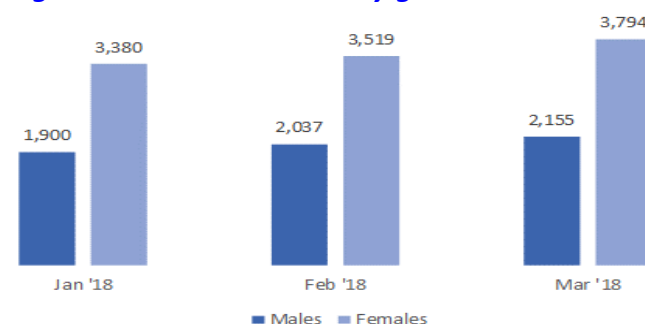
WFP implements a supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) at Health Facilities. Village Health Teams (VHTs) identify Moderately Malnourished individuals whom they refer to Health Centers for both treatment and enrolment to SFP. These individuals receive nutritious foods. Admissions to SFP provide an indication of the levels of malnutrition in the region.

Figure 13: SFP admissions in Karamoja



Source: WFP's ProMIS

Figure 14: SFP admissions by gender



Total admissions of moderately malnourished individuals to SFP increased to 5,949, from 5,280 in January (Fig 13). Furthermore, admissions to SFP continued to be lower than 2017, due to a favorable harvest last year. Since January, more females, are being admitted (Fig 14).

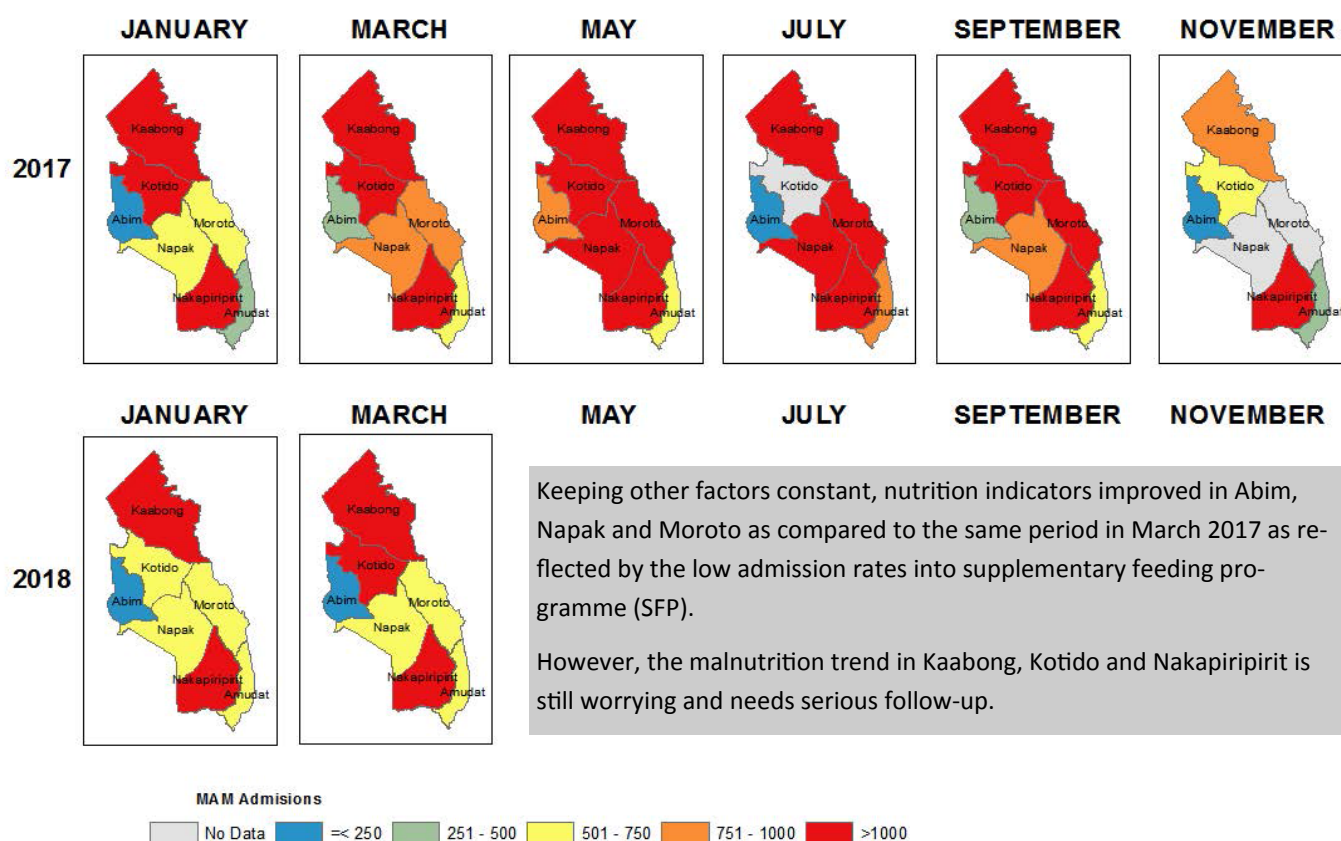
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Admission Trends by District January 2017-January 2018

Figure 15 shows Total admissions to SFP remained high in Nakapiripirit (1,309), Kotido (1,300) and Kaabong (1,286). Since January, admissions in Abim, Amudat, Moroto and Napak have continued to be lower.

Total admissions to SFP are likely to increase in April through May, as food stocks are increasingly depleting. While food stocks deplete, households will resort to markets as a main source. Vulnerable households will get stressed in meeting their food needs in case prices increase.

Figure 15: Trends on admissions to SFP by district



"In Rupa Sub-county, where I stay, food production is not favorable, people sell charcoal and firewood. Rupa Sub-county experiences dry spells every year, and I don't know why, may be rain does not like this place because we have never had a good harvest for the last 3 years", a male respondent in Rupa, Moroto



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For further information please contact the AME unit, WFP Uganda.

Siddharth KRISHNASWAMY

Analysis Monitoring & Evaluation, Head.
siddharth.krishnaswamy@wfp.org

Nathan LOWANYANG

Program Assistant (AME)
nathan.lowanyang@wfp.org

Hamidu TUSIIME

Food Security & Market Analyst
hamidu.tusiime@wfp.org