*Fighting Hunger Worldwide*

# WFP Uganda

## Mobile Vulnerability Analysis & Mapping (mVAM)

## Karamoja Region Early Warning Bulletin—May 2018

## Key Highlights

♦ Since January, the food stock levels have been gradually depleting, with 30% of the households reportedly having stocks, compared to 41% in March. Food stock levels were higher by 29%, compared to the same period in 2017;

♦ In May, the proportion of households with acceptable FCS increased to 65%, from 58% in March. However, this could be due to the application of negative coping strategies since results indicate that 33% of the households with acceptable FCS had borrowed money to buy food;

♦ While the overall mean rCSI remained stable, it fell by 14% and 11% in Abim and Amudat, respectively, compared to March, portraying reduced stress in meeting food needs. The main food coping strategies used were limiting portion sizes and consuming less preferred foods;

♦ The average retail prices for staple foods have remained below 2017 and the long term (2013-2017) average, due to a favorable harvest towards the end of 2017. Prices are likely to remain and/or slightly increase in June through July.

## 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 15th-22nd May 2018.

♦ Overall, 875 households were interviewed in March. 15 percent of these were female headed households;

♦ 11 percent reportedly received assistance from WFP;

♦ 21 percent of the households are extremely vulnerable households (EVHs), while 22% of the household heads were either disabled and/or chronically ill;

♦ The average age of the household head and household membership remained at 39 and 9, respectively.

## Outlook for June to July 2018

The food security situation is likely to marginally deteriorate in June through July due to the continued depletion of food stock levels. Adoption of negative food coping strategies will increase, as households are highly stressed in meeting their food needs. Despite an anticipated high dependency on markets, prices for staple foods will remain relatively stable due to the June-to-August first season harvest in the bi-modal rainfall areas of the country.

Recommendations

♦ There is need to monitor crop performance following the ongoing floods and water logging across the region, due to heavy rains;

♦ In Abim, there is need for continued awareness on food management, with the share of households selling food increasing from 12% in March to 33% in May;

♦ With the gradual decline in the food stock levels, there is need to continue monitoring retail prices for staple foods due to the anticipate high demand.

## Food stocks

The overall food stock levels have gradually declined since January, with only 30% reportedly having food stocks in May (**Fig 1**), compared to 41% in March. The reduction in stock levels was noted across districts.

However, the levels of food stocks have remained above the 2017 levels in all districts, following a better harvest last year (**Fig 3**).

The proportion of those with food stocks was marginally higher among male headed households (**Fig 1**).

Available stocks are expected to last for 35 days (about a month), implying they will get depleted towards the end of June.

Despite declines in stock levels, households continue to derive their stocks from own production (60%), followed by markets (38%) (**Fig 1**).
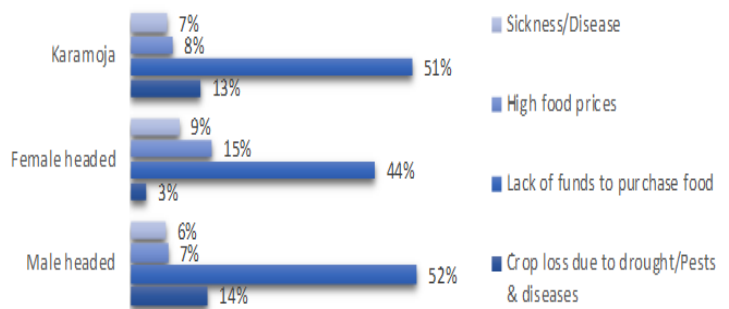
**Figure 2** reveals that, the main difficulties faced by households in accessing food were: *lack of funds to purchase food* (51%) and *crop loss due to drought and/or pest and diseases* (13%).

> *"There is no money to purchase food, even the value of animals sold is very low", a Male in Karita, Amudat*
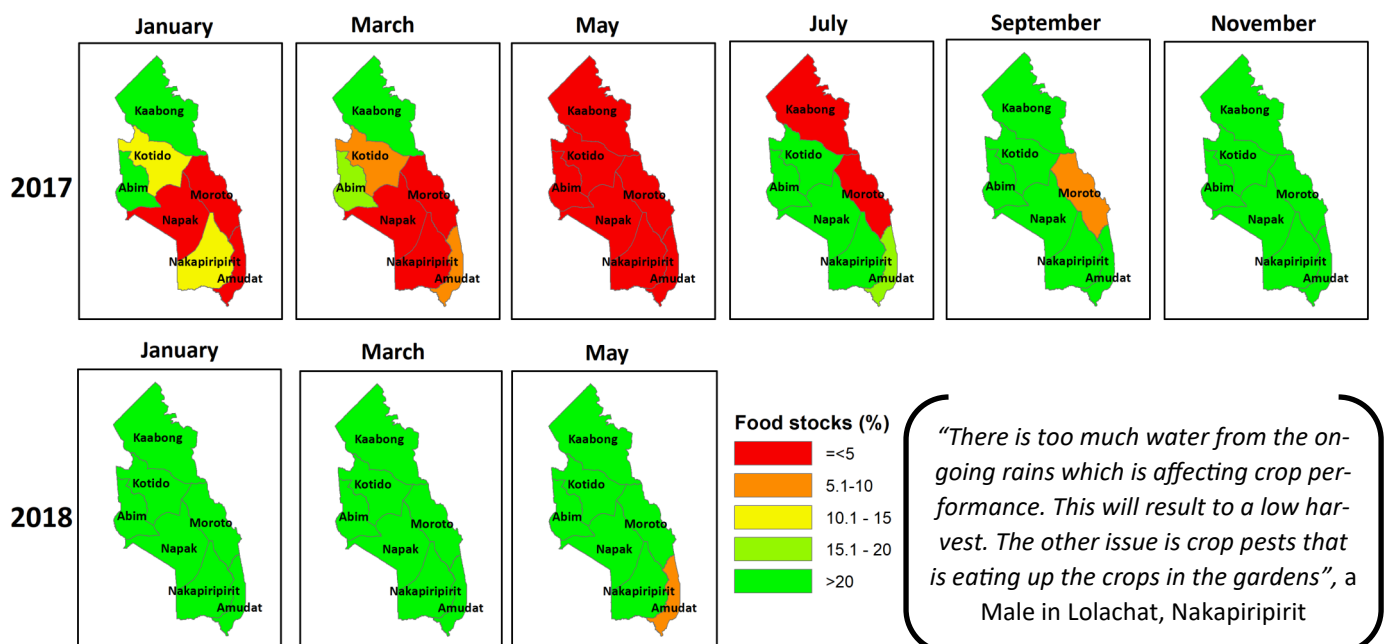
### Figure 1: Food stock levels and sources by gender, May 2018
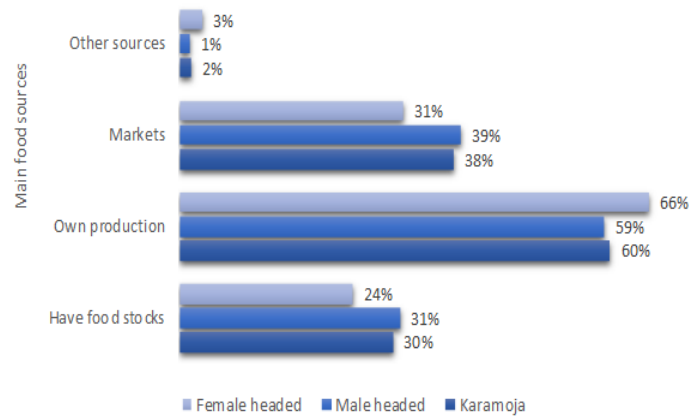


### Figure 2: Main difficulties in accessing food by gender, May 2018



### Figure 3: Trends on households with food stocks (2017-2018)



> *"There is too much water from the ongoing rains which is affecting crop performance. This will result to a low harvest. The other issue is crop pests that is eating up the crops in the gardens", a Male in Lolachat, Nakapiripirit*

## Food Consumption Score (FCS)

65 percent of the overall households had acceptable FCS (**Fig 4**), with Moroto (85%), Nakapiripirit (79%) and Napak (70%) having the highest proportion.

The share of households with acceptable FCS was slightly lower among female headed households (**Fig 4**).

Compared to the same period in 2017, the food security situation was generally better. Households having acceptable FCS was high by 31% in May, with a similar trend seen across all districts, more so in Nakapiripirit, Moroto and Kotido. This is attributed to a favorable harvest during the September-to-October 2017 harvest season, coupled with the fairly stable food prices.

In May, cereals, vegetables and fats were the main consumed food groups (**Fig 5**). Compared to March, there was a marked improvement in the consumption of vegetables, fruits and milk/diary product, possibly due to the ongoing rains which have resulted into fast sprouting of early maturing crops like vegetables. Usually, during the rainy season, households heavily rely on wild leafy vegetables, and animal products since animals return home.

> *"What I am seeing is that among the youth, there is unemployment where by when there is no money, they cannot get food. Also, the weather last year was favorable in that food prices have come down, so everyone can get some vegetables cheaply"*, a Male in Kakoliye, Moroto
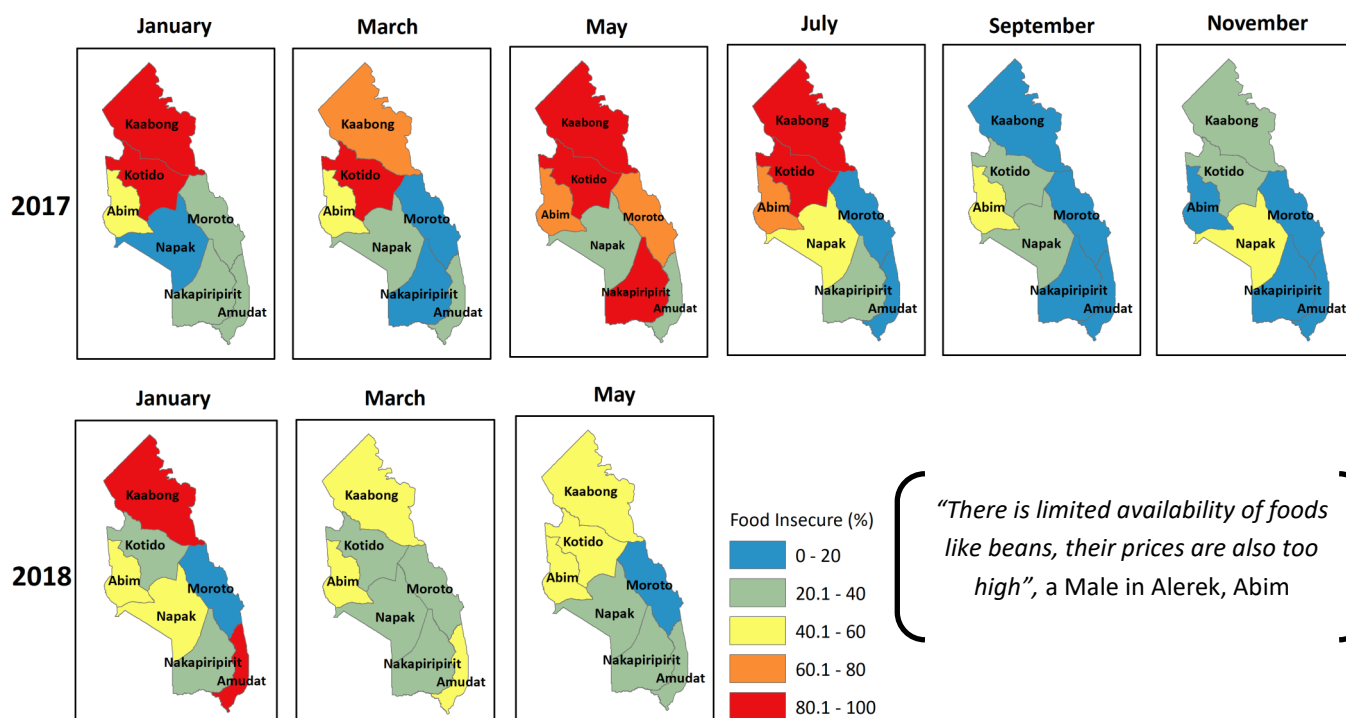
*Figure 4: Food Consumption Score by gender, May 2018*
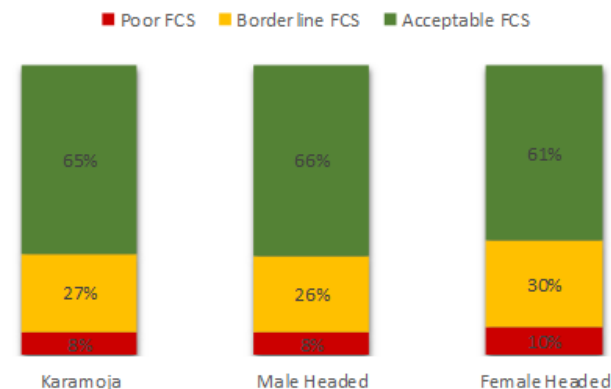


*Figure 5: Household Dietary Diversity, May 2018*
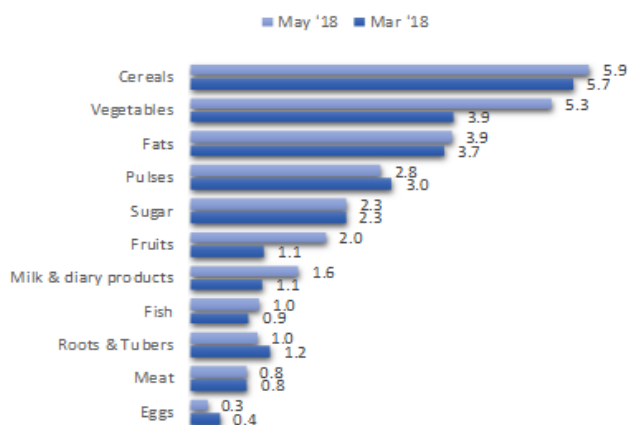


*Figure 6: Trends on food insecure (Poor+Borderline FCS) households (2017-2018)*



> *"There is limited availability of foods like beans, their prices are also too high"*, a Male in Alerek, Abim
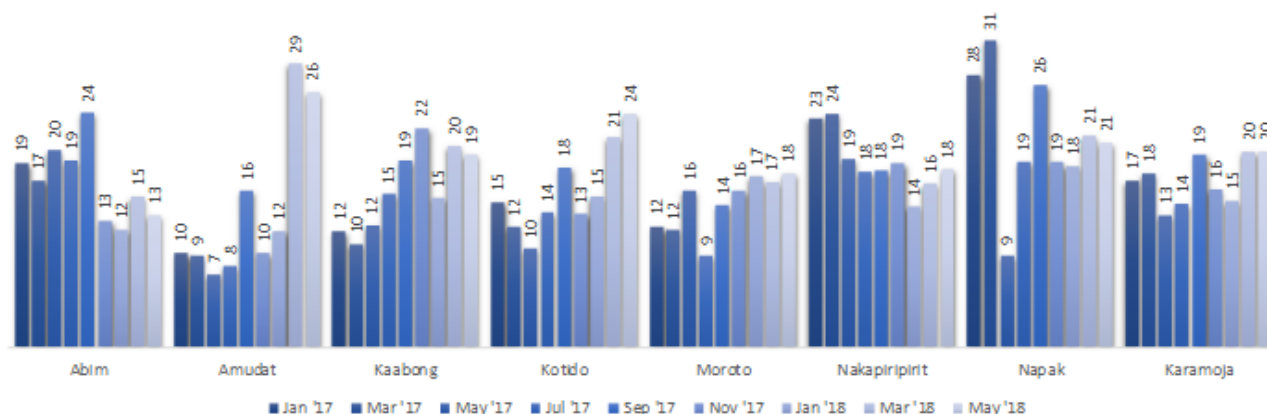
## Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

Compared to March, there were changes in the mean rCSI across districts (**Fig 9**). Abim, Amudat and Kaabong observed declines by 14%, 11% and 5%, respectively, revealing reduced stress in meeting food requirements. The rCSI was above March levels by 10% and 8% in Kotido and Nakapiripirit, respectively, due to reduced food stock levels.

In May, results revealed households are highly coping compared to the same period in 2017, with the overall mean rCSI being above by 32% (**Fig 9**), this could be due to reduced humanitarian assistance as households are increasingly depending on own production.

**Figure 7** shows *limiting portion sizes*, *consuming less preferred foods* and *restricting consumption by adults* were the main food consumption coping strategies applied by households in May.

Similarly, 34% of the overall households reportedly sold productive assets to earn money to purchase food (**Fig 8**), with half of the households doing so in Abim and Amudat. The share of households that sold productive assets was high among male (36%), compared to 26% among female headed households, which is inline with the fact that ownership and control over productive assets is usually lower among females.

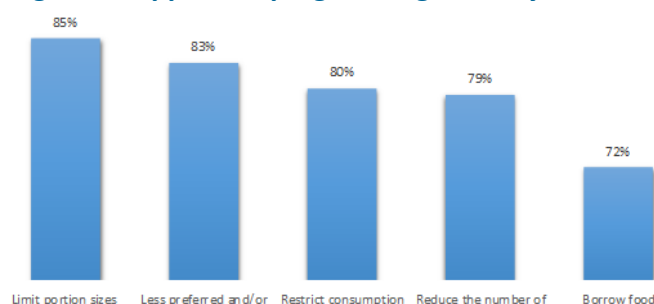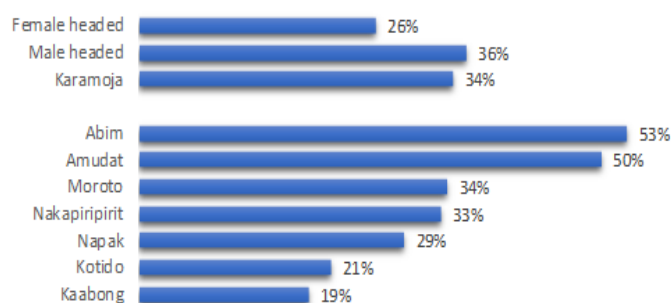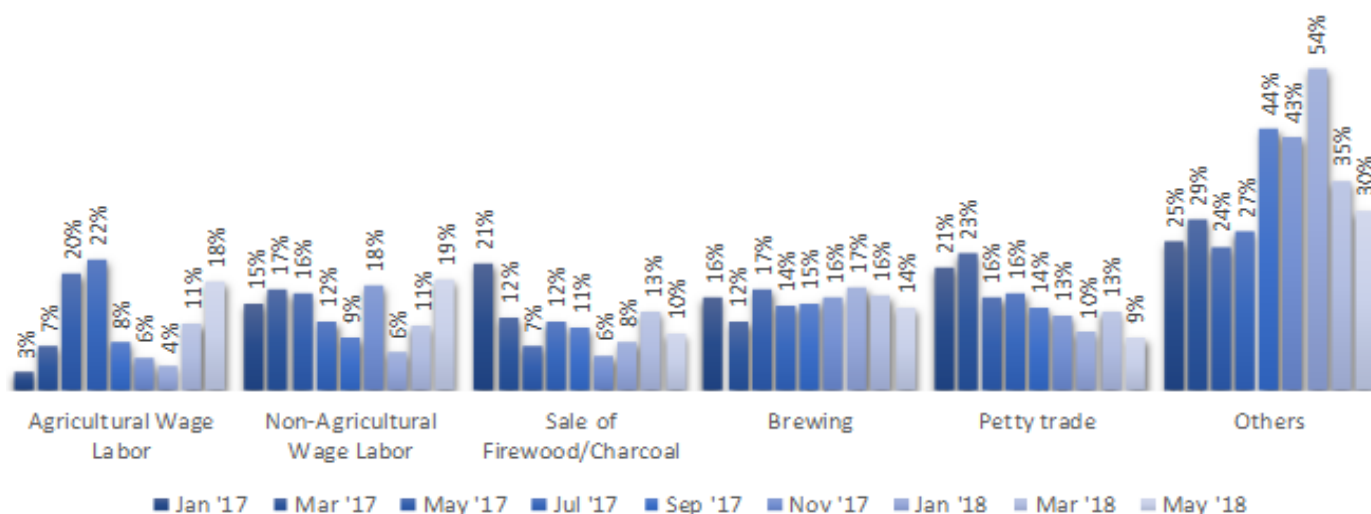### Figure 7: Applied coping strategies, May 2018



### Figure 8: Sold productive assets to buy food, May 2018



> *"The situation is really poor in my community, we are now really relying on wild leafy vegetables. Besides, there is no employment for us despite being educated"*,
> a Male in Loyoro, Kaabong

### Figure 9: Trends on the mean rCSI (Jan 2017-May 2018)



*Source: WFP mVAM, May 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

In May, household main income sources were non-agricultural wage labor (19%), agricultural wage labor (18%) and brewing (14%) (**Fig 11**). While female headed households mainly earned from brewing and agricultural wage labor, male led households derived their incomes primarily from non-agricultural and agricultural wage labor.

Compared to March, the share of households earning from agricultural wage labor increased by 7% following an increase in the labor opportunities in the sector.

## Figure 10: Trends on main income sources (January '17-May '18)

> *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*

Overall, 13% of the households reportedly sold food, revealing a minimal increase from 11% in March. A marked increase in the proportion of households selling food was seen in Abim and Kotido, with an increase by 21% and 8%, respectively. This could be due to the opening of schools as parents endeavor to send children back to school. However, in Amudat, those selling food reduced by 20%.

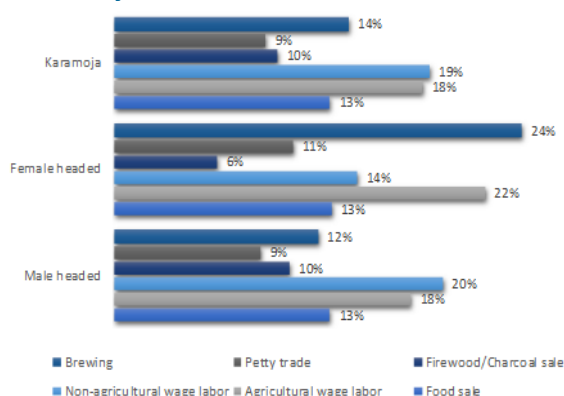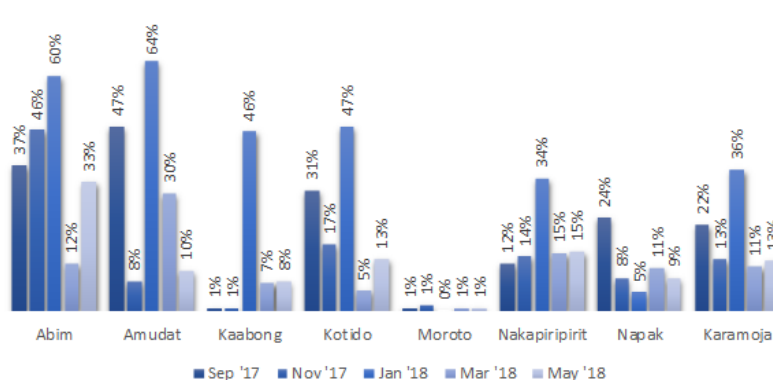## Figure 11: Main income sources, May 2018



## Figure 12: Trends on selling food (Sep '17-May '18)



## Debt prevalence

The debt prevalence was relatively stable in May, compared to March. 70 percent of the overall households reportedly had debt (**Fig 13**), with Moroto, Abim and Napak having significant levels. The debt prevalence was high among female headed households, compared to their male counter parts (**Fig 13**).

Similarly, the debt prevalence remained above the May 2017 levels by 33%, more so in Moroto and Napak by 67% and 51%, respectively.

Overall, households mainly borrowed to *buy food* (35%), *pay school and/or educational costs* (26%) (**Fig 15**). The proportion of households borrowing to buy food was significant in Amudat (47%), Kaabong (45%) and Moroto (41%). The share of households borrowing to buy food was high among male headed (36%), compared to female headed (26%) households (**Fig 16**), revealing that female headed households are using borrowed money for other needs. Borrowing to buy food reveals households are stressed in meeting their food requirements.

In May, the main sources of debt were: *other sources* (34%), followed by *bank/credit institutions* (33%) and *traders* (21%) (**Fig 13**).

*"The major problem is, we rely on crediting money from women groups to invest in businesses, unfortunately these businesses lack market, so, we encounter loses"*, a Female in Lorengecora, Napak

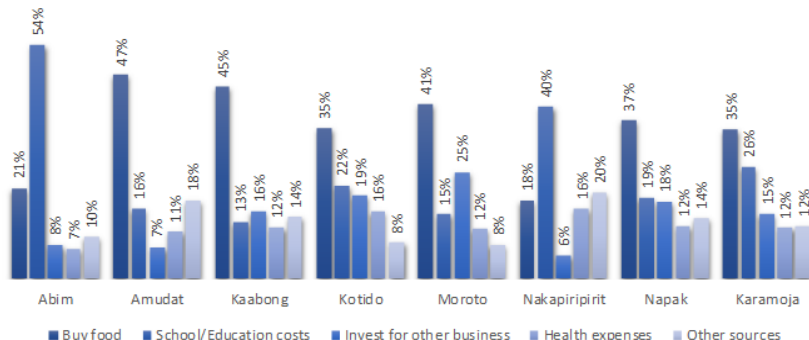## Figure 13: Debt prevalence and main sources by gender, May 2018
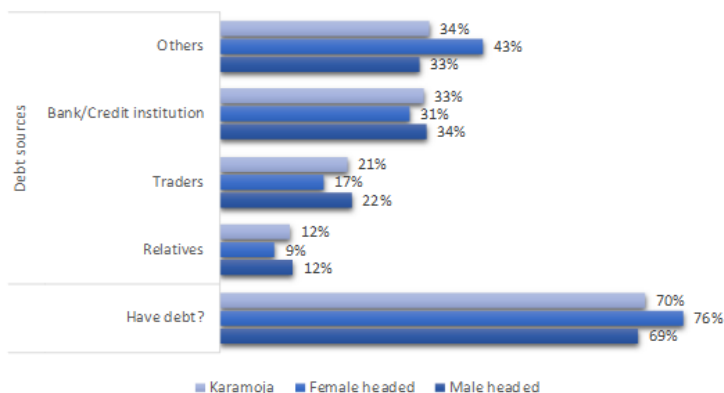
Other credit sources encompassed: Money lender, Village Savings & Loan Associations (VSLAs), friend/neighbor, MTN Mo-Cash, and School.
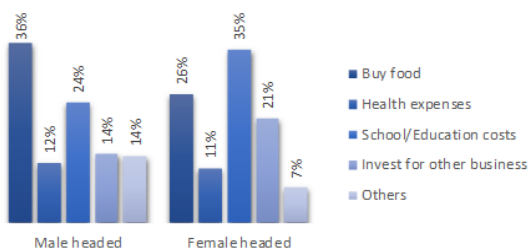
## Figure 14: Trends on the debt prevalence (Mar '16-May '18)
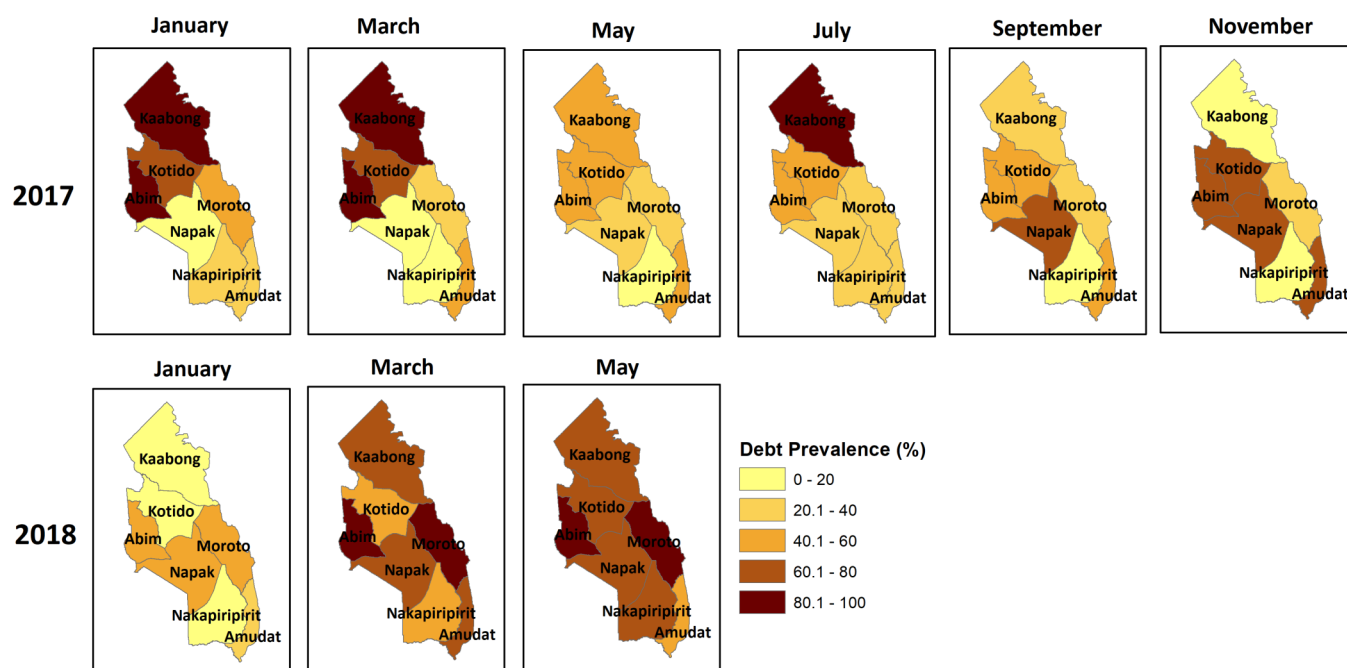
## Figure 15: Reasons for debt, May 2018

## Figure 16: Reasons for debt by gender, May 2018

Other reasons for debt include: buy agricultural inputs, buy or rent land, buy or rent animals, buy or rent or renovate a flat/house, pay for social events/ceremonies, vehicle purchase & settling court case

## Karamoja Market prices for staple foods

The overall average retail price for maize grain increased by 9% in May, compared to April due to tight supplies, while sorghum price remained stable (**Fig 17**). The average retail prices for maize grain and sorghum were significantly higher in Abim and Amudat.

The retail prices for staple foods continue to be below the 2017 and the long term (2013-2017) average. This is attributed to a favorable harvest across Karamoja during the September-to-October 2017 harvest.

Generally, the average retail prices for staple foods are likely to remain fairly stable in June through July, due to the anticipated replenishment of stocks on markets both from traders' current stocks and the ongoing first season harvest in the bi-modal areas of the country.
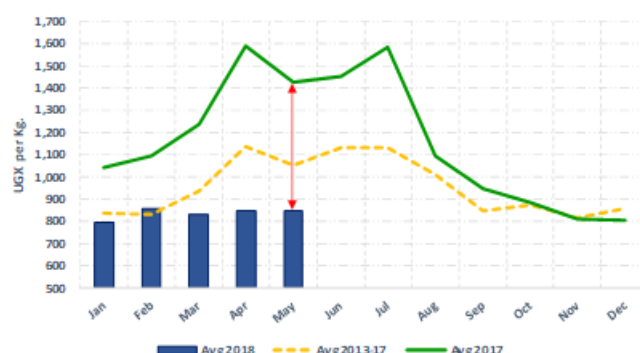
*"The prices for sorghum are low, thus limiting people from selling",* a Female in Alerek, Abim

### Figure 17: Trends on food prices in Karamoja

**Maize Grain**
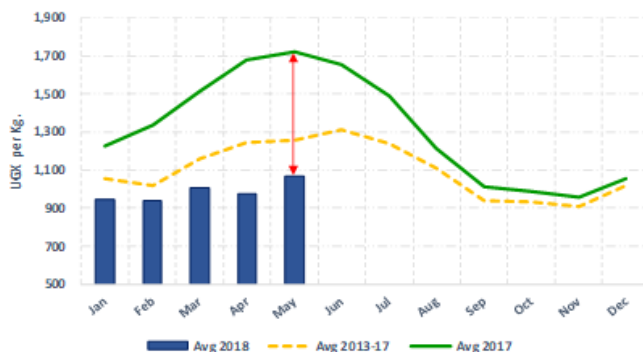


**Sorghum Grain**



## Supplementary Feeding Admissions (SFP)

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.
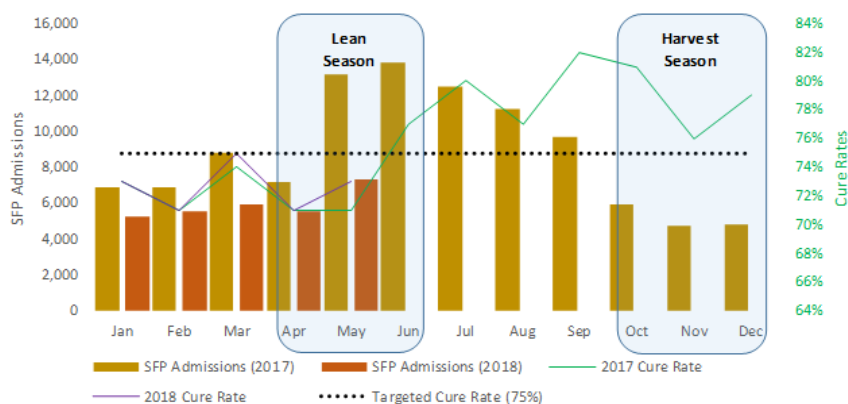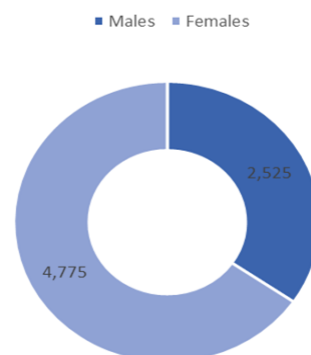
### Figure 18: SFP admissions in Karamoja



*Source: WFP's ProMIS*

### Figure 19: SFP admissions by gender, May 2018



In May, 7,299 of moderately malnourished individuals were admitted to SFP, compared to 5,949 in March (**Fig 18**). The cure rate was at 73%, which was below the threshold. Figure 19 indicates that, more females were admitted to SFP during the month. Furthermore, SFP admissions have remained significantly below the May 2017 levels.

## Admission Trends by District January 2017-May 2018

Kaabong (2,093), Nakapiripirit (1,589) and Kotido (1,588) had the highest admissions to SFP in May (**Fig 20**), revealing a marked increase compared to March, and this could be due to the gradual decline in the food stocks. Results in May showed that, households reporting food stocks fell from 41% in March, to 30%. However, Moroto and Napak observed a decline in the total admissions to SFP by 12% and 5%, respectively.

### *Figure 20: Trends on admissions to SFP by district*
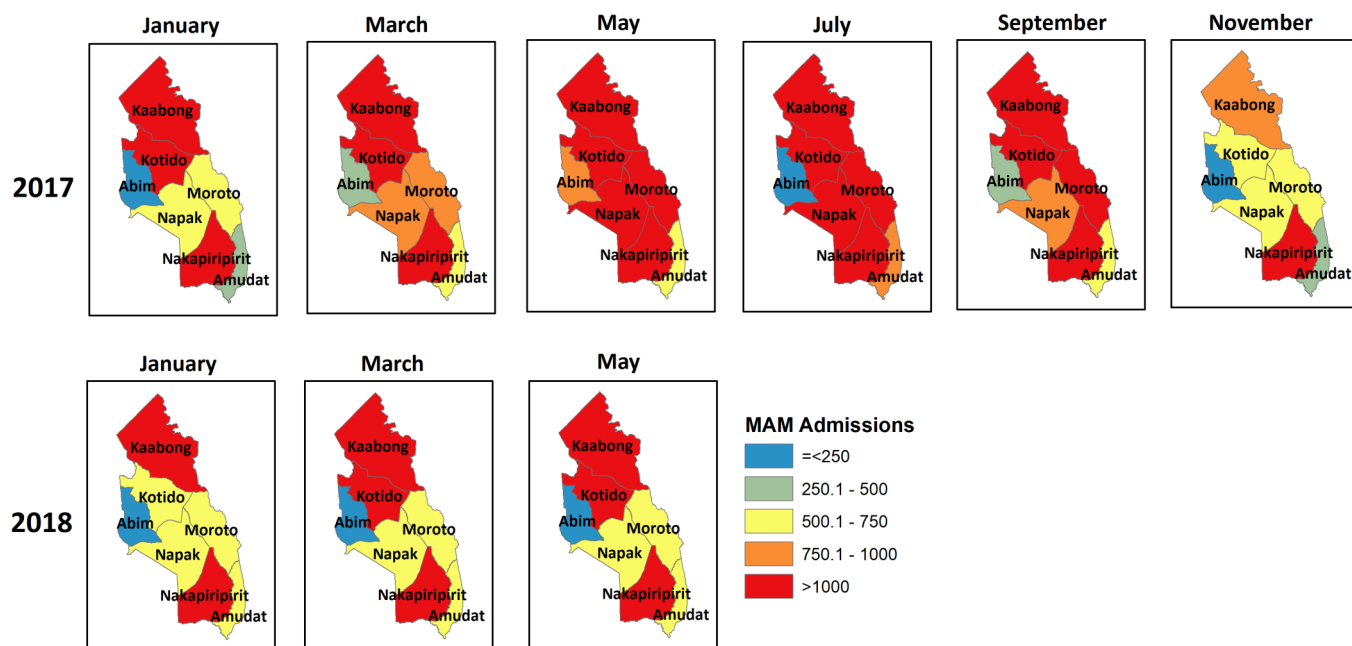


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