Situation Overview

- Based on more than 1,000 telephone interviews conducted in Bidi-Bidi, Kiryandongo, Koboko-Lobule, Kyaka II, Kyangwali, Nakivale, Palorinya, Rhino Camp and Rwamwanja settlements, food security levels remained poor although stable among refugees between December 2018 and January 2019. Compared to January 2018, the food security levels among refugees declined. Nonetheless, the host community had a better level of food security compared to the refugee community.

- The proportion of interviewed refugee households with poor and borderline food consumption slightly increased by 3 percent to 64 percent in January 2019.

- Interviewed refugee households with food stocks increased by 14 percent to 49 percent in January 2019.

- Significant differences were observed between interviewed households in refugee settlements and host community in terms of; household size, availability of food stocks, debt prevalence, debt sources, debt amount, reasons for obtaining debt, food consumption scores and households experiencing shock.

The food security of refugees slightly declined and remained low in all settlements between December 2018 and January 2019, particularly Koboko-Lobule, Nakivale and Rwamwanja. The proportion of interviewed households with acceptable food security scores remained higher amongst the host community (59 percent) than amongst refugees (36 percent). Food assistance remained the main source of food stocks for refugees.

The main difficulties faced by respondents to access food were high food prices, sickness of household head, floods and lack of funds to buy food.

The percentage of refugees interviewed who had at least one income earner in the household remained stable although low at 39 percent. Households with an alternative source of livelihood beyond food assistance remained stable at 63 percent since December 2018.

Debt prevalence slightly declined from 49 percent in December 2018 to 41 percent in January 2019. The majority of debts were contracted to buy food (41 percent), cover health expenses (33 percent) and pay for education (18 percent). The use of negative coping strategies remained stable as seen from the rCSI of 9 points similar to December 2018. The most frequent coping strategy was relying on less preferred food.

With the exception of Kyangwali, Kyaka II and Koboko, the number of new admissions in the Supplementary Feeding Programme (SFP) decreased in 2018 compared to 2017. A significant decline was observed in Rwamwanja and Bidibidi.
Mobile vulnerability analysis and mapping (mVAM) enables WFP to use mobile voice technology for the remote collection of household food security data to monitor seasonal variations in refugee hosting areas in Uganda. WFP introduced mVAM in Uganda in January 2018 and it is still in the pilot phase, rendering a small sample size which may result in a larger-than-average sampling error.

The live telephone surveys were conducted from 23rd January to 1st February 2019 with 1,423 households randomly chosen from a master list. Households were located in Bidibidi, Palorinya, Rhino Camp and Koboko-Lobule in the West Nile Region; Kiryandongo, Kyangwali in MidWest and Nakivale, Rwamwanja, Kyaka II in southwest Uganda. Results were compared with the December 2018 results.

44% of 1,423 interviewed HH Host community households
31% of 1423 interviewed HH Female headed households
22% of 791 refugee HH Extremely vulnerable HH
13% of 1423 interviewed HH Disabled and chronically ill HH

Household food stocks: Generally the proportion of interviewed households with food stocks, remained stable with only 62 percent of interviewed refugee households having food stocks similar to December 2018 and January 2018. The stability could be attributed to the December food crop harvest and continuous food supply from food aid.

Although households in Kyaka II and Kyangwali had a slight increase in proportion of households with food stocks, the proportion was still below the overall percentage of households with food stocks in sampled settlements. Households in Kyaka II and Kyangwali notably received a double food assistance ration in December to cover their food needs for a two-months period (December 2018 to January 2019) and by the time of the survey majority had depleted their food stocks hence the still low number of households with food stocks.

⇒ Bidi-Bidi and Rhino Camp still had the highest proportion of interviewed households with food stocks (90 and 83 percent respectively) although this was a slight decrease from December 2018.
⇒ Koboko-Lobule and Kyaka II had the lowest proportion of interviewed households with food stocks (22 and 39 percent respectively).
⇒ The proportion of Extremely Vulnerable Households (EVH) and Female Headed Households (FHH) with food stocks decreased from 62 and 61 percent in December 2018 to 57 and 51 percent in January 2019. About 96 percent, 59 percent and 62 percent of chronically ill, disabled and able-bodied household heads respectively had food stocks.
⇒ Half of the interviewed refugee households had less than one bag of 50kg of maize and/or sorghum in stock and they expected their food stock to last on average 20 days (about 3 weeks) from the day of the survey.

Source of food stocks: Food assistance remained the key source of food stocks among refugees. However, this was a 10 percent decrease from December 2018. Households also harvested and complemented food received from food aid with their harvest especially in Rwamwanja with 58 percent obtaining food stocks from own production (Figure 2).

⇒ Compared to January 2018, more households depended on food aid than own production because of the not so good harvest.
⇒ In Palorinya, all respondents stated that food assistance was their only means of meeting their food needs while Rwamwanja had the lowest proportion (24 percent) of respondents relying on food assistance.
⇒ Koboko-Lobule and Rwamwanja had the highest proportion (50 and 15 percent respectively) of respondents relying on markets to meet their food needs. This is simply because they receive food assistance in form of cash for the case of Koboko-Lobule.
Income Earners: Overall, more than one-third (39 percent) of sampled respondents reported to have at least one income earner in the household, similar to December 2018. However, compared to the same period of January 2018, this was a 12 percent decrease (Figure 3).

- Only 22 percent of refugee respondents in West Nile had income earners, while 51 percent of refugee respondents in the southwest had income earners.
- Rwamwanja settlement still had the highest proportion of refugee respondents with income earners (77 percent), while the lowest proportion was in Bidi-Bidi (3 percent).
- While similar proportions of male and female headed households had at least one income earner, Male headed households tended to have two or more income earners (41% vs. 35%), suggesting lower income levels for FHH.

Livelihood Profile

Household Livelihood Status: Refugee households with an alternative source of livelihood beyond food assistance was similar to December at 63 percent (Figure 4). Given that majority of the household heads were able bodied (87 percent), it indicated the ability to fend for their families by engaging in income generating activities, thus promoting household food security.

- The main sources of income besides food assistance (37%) were food crop production/sales (14%), agricultural wage labour (11%), petty trade (5%) and gifts (6%).
- The reliance on crop production/sales as a livelihood source slightly increased to 14 percent from 11 percent in December 2018, as households harvested food stocks.
- In addition, there was an increase in reliance on agriculture labour opportunities since households were preparing for the rains in March. Only 11 percent of respondents relied on agricultural wage labour for their livelihood in January 2019.

Debt prevalence

Approximately 41 percent of interviewed households were indebted, a proportion lower than that reported in December 2018 and January 2018 (Figure 5). Also 35 percent of FHH, 43 percent MHH and 34 percent EVH incurred debt.

- Debt amount ranged between 20,000 UGX and 100,000 UGX for 55 percent of the indebted households. About 43 percent had to pay interest on the loan with mean interest of 27,700 UGX especially in Rwamwanja (87 percent).
- About 41 percent of indebted households borrowed to buy food mainly in Rhino Camp (71 percent) suggesting issues with access to food (Figure 6).
- Kyaka II (78 percent) had the highest debt prevalence, while Bidi-Bidi recorded the lowest debt prevalence at 13 percent.
- Credit was mainly from traders (36 percent) especially in Nakivale and Kyaka II, relatives (25 percent) mostly in Palorinya, bank/credit institution (25%) especially in Rwamwanja and money lenders (8 percent) especially in Nakivale.
- Households with at least one income earner were more likely to have debt (44%) mainly to cover health expenses (43%) probably because having an income earner increases credit worthiness of household.

Alternative sources of livelihood engaged in by refugees to sustain life for a given lifespan included; food crop production/sale, cash crop production/sale, agricultural wage labour, non–agricultural wage, sale of firewood/charcoal, petty trade and salary.
A majority of interviewed refugee households (77 percent) suffered at least one shock during the 30 days before the survey mostly in Kiryandongo. Shocks cited included high food prices (34 percent), floods (13 percent) and sickness of household head (9 percent) as indicated in Figure 7f. These shocks have been cited as among the most common considering previous surveys as indicated in the graphs below. The percentage of households lacking funds to purchase food seven days before the survey increased by 17 percent to 53 percent in January 2019 especially in Kiryandongo (83%) and amongst extremely vulnerable households (51 percent).

Similarly, when asked about the food security situation in the community, majority of respondents highlighted high food prices, shortage of food, unemployment, lack of balanced diet among others as the main difficulties faced in the communities (Figure 8).
The use of food consumption coping strategies remained fairly high across the settlements except for respondents in Kiryandongo, Kyangwali and Rhino Camp (Table 2). This indicated a moderate food security situation basing on this food security indicator. However, the rCSI value was lower than January 2018 value indicating improved food security situation compared to January 2018.

Interviewed respondents in Bidi-Bidi had the highest coping strategy index (CSI), indicating increased vulnerability and food insecurity compared to other settlements. Respondents in Kiryandongo had the lowest rCSI, with a significant decrease of 10 points compared to December 2018 and January 2018. A significant increase in the rCSI was also observed in Koboko-Lobule compared to December 2018.

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Table 2: Trend of mean rCSI per settlement, January 2019

The majority (85 percent) of households coped with food insecurity by relying on less preferred food (Figure 9). However, the commonly applied food consumption coping strategies were mostly in Bidi-Bidi, indicating household vulnerability to food insecurity.

Admissions to the SFP provide an indication of the levels of malnutrition in an area. With the exception of Kyangwali, Kyaka II and Koboko, the overall number of new admissions to SFP decreased in 2018 compared to 2017. A significant decline was noted in Rwanwanga and Bidibidi (Figure 10 and Figure 11).

Between October and December 2018, new admissions to SFP significantly dropped in the majority of settlements. With the fair food security situation, admissions to the SFP are expected to remain stable.
In general, the host community had a better level of food security compared to the refugee community. Households in the host community were less likely to apply food consumption coping strategies compared to the refugees.

The proportion of host community interviewed households with food stocks continued to decrease with only 49 percent of the households having food stocks (Figure 12). Bidibidi had the highest percentage of nationals reporting to have food stocks (91 percent) while Koboko-Lobule had the lowest percentage of nationals with food stocks (22 percent).

The main sources of food stocks among the nationals were the own food production by households (82 percent) and markets (11 percent). The majority of households in Kiryandongo (92 percent) and Rwamwanja (91 percent) produced their own food while the majority of households in Koboko-Lobule (48%) and Palorinya (41%) obtained their food from markets (30 percent).

Almost 61 percent of host community households had at least one income earner mostly in Kiryandongo (100%). The main sources of income were food crop production/sales (58 percent), agricultural wage labour (10 percent), salary (6 percent) and petty trade (5 percent).

Debt prevalence slightly increased from 51 percent to 55 percent between December 2018 and January 2019 among nationals (Figure 13). Kyangwali had the highest proportion of nationals with debt (77 percent) while Koboko-Lobule (20 percent) had the lowest proportion.

Unlike the refugee community, the majority of the host community (51 percent) obtained their credit from credit institutions, relatives (29 percent), money lenders (10 percent) and traders (10 percent). Similarly, many households contracted debts to pay school fees (46 percent) rather than to buy food (17 percent) or cover health expenses (17 percent).

In the host community, about 92 percent of the interviewed respondents faced difficulty in accessing food. The main challenges faced to access food were floods/heavy rains (31 percent), high food prices (28 percent), sickness of household head (6 percent) and loss of employment (7 percent) as indicated in Figure 14.

Compared to December 2018, the proportion of interviewed households lacking food/funds to purchase food slightly decreased by 4 percent. About 49 percent of households lacked food or funds to purchase food 7 days before the survey. The percentage of interviewed households lacking food or funds to purchase food was highest in Palorinya (82 percent) and lowest in Kiryandongo (16 percent).

Only 59 percent of interviewed households in the host community had an acceptable food consumption score, with the highest percentage in Kiryandongo (99 percent) and the lowest in Rwamwanja (21 percent). Interviewed households had a mean coping strategy index (CSI) of 9, indicating a fair food security situation. The highest CSI was in Nakivale (13) while Kiryandongo had the lowest CSI (3).
Summary of Findings among refugees by Settlement

**Rhino Camp**

Compared to December 2018, the food security situation improved in Rhino Camp settlement although the proportion of refugee interviewed households with food stocks slightly declined while in the host community the proportion of interviewed households with food stocks increased. In addition, the proportion of food insecure households (6 percent) significantly decreased from 49 percent in December 2018. Also the proportion of refugee households with income earners decreased indicating limited economic access to food even though all the interviewed respondents depended on food assistance as their main source of livelihood. Debt prevalence significantly declined and remained low. Similarly, households applying food security coping strategies remained low as seen by the average rCSI of 6 points which was below the overall average rCSI for all settlements. Only 30 percent of interviewed households mentioned lack of funds to buy food seven days before the survey. The current food security situation in the settlement presents the best out of the nine settlements and it is similar to January 2018.

**Bidibidi**

Compared to December 2018, the settlement has fragile food security levels with high although slight decrease of food insecure households and refugee interviewed households with food stocks. Households with food stocks could result from timely food distribution. However, the proportion of interviewed households in the host community with food stocks indicated a 20 percent increase from 71 percent in December 2018. Economic access to food remained a problem given that the settlement had the lowest proportion of refugee households with income earners and alternative sources of livelihood (1 percent) with majority of households mainly relying on food assistance. The settlement still had a fairly high food security coping strategy index (13) implying that more households were applying food security coping strategies. And at the same time a big proportion (94%) lacked funds to buy food or food about seven days before the survey. On the other hand, the proportion of interviewed refugee households with debts decreased and remained low compared to December 2018. Compared to January 2018, the food security situation in the settlement greatly declined.

**Palorinya**

Compared to December 2018, the settlement has improved food security levels with an increase in the percentage of interviewed refugee households reporting to have food stocks and a decline in the proportion of food insecure households. Similarly, the application of food security coping strategies decreased including significant decrease in debt prevalence. However, the proportion of households with at least one income earner and alternative sources of livelihood greatly declined by 20 percent from 22 percent in December 2018 thus indicating limited economic access to food. In addition, 46 percent of the interviewed refugee households faced difficulty 30 days before the survey while 71 percent reported to lack funds to purchase food. The food security situation was similar to January 2018 although the proportion of refugee households with income earners greatly declined.

**Koboko-Lobule**

The food security situation in the settlement declined compared to December 2018 with the settlement having a significant decline in the proportion of interviewed households with food stocks and significant increase in the proportion of food insecure households for both refugees and nationals. Similarly, interviewed refugee households also reported a high increase in rCSI from December 2018 implying that more households were applying food consumption coping strategies. Debt prevalence also doubled from 20 percent in December 2018 given that the majority (84 percent) also reported to lack funds to purchase food seven days before the survey. On the other hand the settlement had the highest proportion of interviewed households earning income and with alternative sources of income besides food assistance. Also 92 percent of interviewed host community households reported to high food prices. Food security therefore needs to be monitored in this settlement to minimise further deterioration.

**Kiryandongo**

Compared to December 2018, the food security significantly improved in Kiryandongo settlement with an increase in the proportion of interviewed households with food stocks and a significant decrease in the proportion of food insecure households among the refugees and nationals. In addition, low application of food insecurity coping strategies was noted with the interviewed refugee households having a mean rCSI of 5 points from 15 points in December 2018 thus indicating less stress amongst the households. Nonetheless, almost all interviewed households faced difficulties in accessing food thirty days before the survey while about 34 percent of the interviewed refugee households lacked funds to purchase food seven days before the survey. Similarly, there was a slight decrease in proportion of households with income earners while debt prevalence also significantly increased compared to December 2018. The food security levels greatly improved compared to January 2018 although the proportion of refugee households with income earners greatly declined.
### Summary of findings by settlement

**Rwamwanja**

The food security situation in Rwamwanja settlement is fragile given the high proportion of interviewed households that are food insecure although there was a significant increase in the proportion of interviewed households with food stocks among both refugees and nationals. The not so good food security situation could be attributed to the poor crop harvests similar to January 2018. However, interviewed refugees still had a high percentage of households with income earners (72) and alternative sources of income besides food assistance (82 percent). Also debt prevalence continued to significantly decline from 62 percent in December 2018 to 38 percent in January 2019. However, the coping strategy index significantly increased indicating increased application of food security coping strategies by households. Nonetheless, the proportion of interviewed households that faced difficulty thirty days before the survey remained high at 89 percent while 84 percent of the households did not have funds to buy food seven days before the survey. Therefore food security in the settlement needs monitoring.

**Nakivale**

Compared to December 2018, Nakivale settlement food security levels was not so good with decrease in proportion of interviewed households with food stocks and significant increase in the proportion of food insecure households. However, the proportion of households having at least one income earner and alternative sources of livelihood beyond food assistance increased indicating less stress with accessing food. In addition a decline in household debt prevalence and proportion of households applying food security coping strategies was also observed. Households also continued to face difficulty in accessing food thirty days before the survey as reported by 84 percent of interviewed households while 74 percent of interviewed households lacked funds to purchase food seven days before the survey. Compared to January 2018, food security levels in the settlement improved and were better.

**Kyangwali**

The settlement had a fair food security situation with a slight increase in the number of households with food stocks although the proportion of food insecure households significantly increased compared to December 2018. The increase in food stocks could be attributed to the double food assistance ration provided in December 2018 with a little spill over to January 2019 to cover the food needs of households for a two-months period (December and January) while the increase in food insecure households could be because households sold off some food. Compared to December 2018, there was a significant decrease in the proportion of households with at least one income earner and alternative sources of livelihood. In addition, there was a slight decline in the application of food coping strategies by the interviewed households indicating less stress. However, the settlement had a high proportion of households reporting to have faced difficulty thirty days before the survey (94 percent) even if only 21 percent reported not to have had funds to purchase food seven days before the survey. Debt prevalence also significantly declined compared to December 2018.

**Kyaka II**

The settlement had a slight decline in food security situation with an increase in the number of food insecure households although there was a slight increase in the number of households with food stocks compared to December 2018. The deterioration in food security could be attributed to the double food assistance ration provided in December 2018 with a little spill over to January 2019 to cover the food needs of households for a two-months period (December and January). However, the settlement had a decrease in the proportion of interviewed refugee households with income earners. Similarly, debt prevalence and application of food security coping strategies also greatly increased, indicating stress in food access in the settlement. Households also continued to face difficulties in food access thirty days before the survey as reported by 64 percent of interviewed households while 46 percent reported not having funds to purchase food seven days before the survey. However, the settlement should be closely monitored to avoid a deteriorating food security situation.
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