Urban Food Security Monitoring

Key points

WFP Uganda expanded its food security monitoring to cover urban areas to monitor the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on some of the most impacted populations. Starting from May 2020, data was collected continuously from 13 urban centres, including for Kampala-based refugees.

The proportion of urban nationals with poor or borderline food consumption increased from 11 percent in May 2020 to 16 percent in June 2020. Household food consumption for this population deteriorated steadily since monitoring started in May, despite a relaxation of pandemic containment measures.

About 24 percent of refugee households in Kampala had poor or borderline food consumption in June which was slightly lower than the proportion reported in May 2020 at 27 percent. Household food consumption for refugees in Kampala improved in the second half of June, albeit initially from a lower level compared to urban nationals.


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Situation Update

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government of Uganda imposed restrictions to economic activity and physical movement from the 18th of March 2020. To monitor the impact on some of the most impacted populations, WFP Uganda scaled up its remote monitoring system to cover 13 urban centres across the country.

The proportion of urban nationals with poor or borderline food consumption increased from 11 percent in May 2020 to 16 percent in June 2020 as indicated in **Figure 1**. Household food consumption has deteriorated steadily since monitoring started in May, despite a relaxation of pandemic containment measures.

In June 2020, 16 percent of urban nationals and 24 percent of refugees in Kampala had insufficient food consumption.

Fig. 1: Proportion of households with poor or borderline food consumption
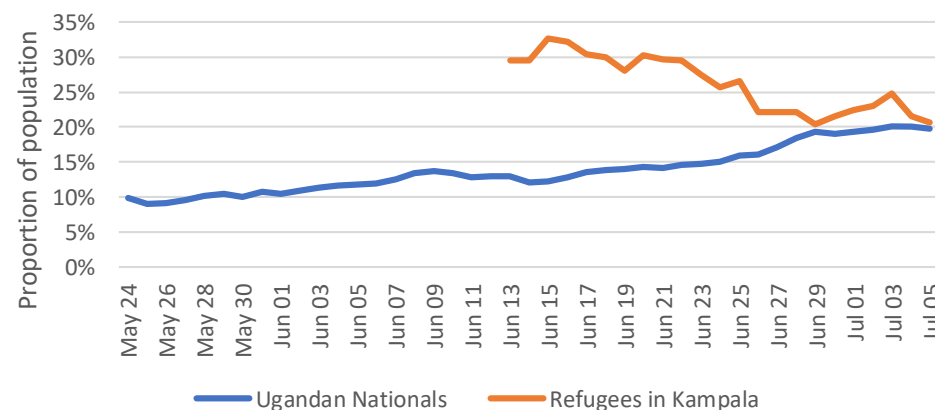
Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020

Food consumption

About 16 percent of urban nationals in urban areas reported having poor or borderline food consumption, a slight deterioration compared to May 2020 (11 percent).

Compared to May 2020, among urban nationals, more female-headed households had poor food consumption outcomes compared to male-headed households.

Overall, 24 percent of refugee households in Kampala had poor or borderline food consumption which was a slight improvement compared to May 2020 (27 percent).

Prevalence of insufficient food consumption was higher among urban refugees compared to urban nationals (24 and 16 percent, respectively).

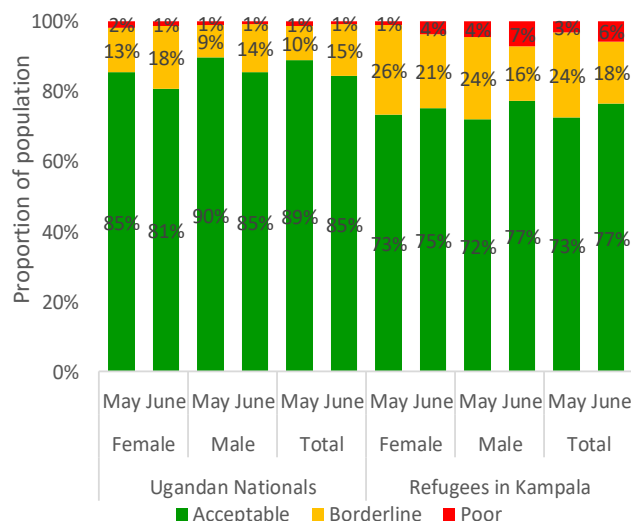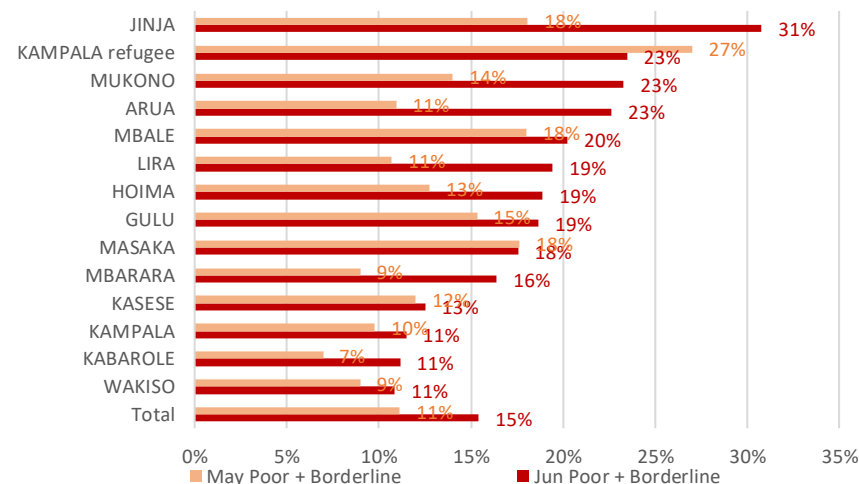Fig. 2: Proportion of households under each food consumption category

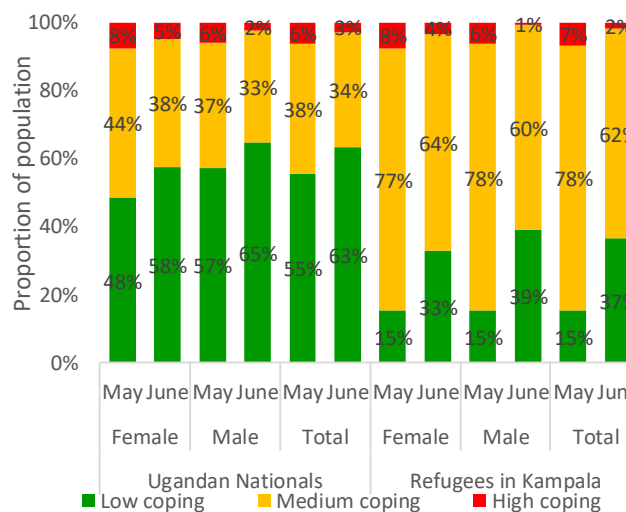Fig. 3: Proportion of households under poor and borderline food consumption by district

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020
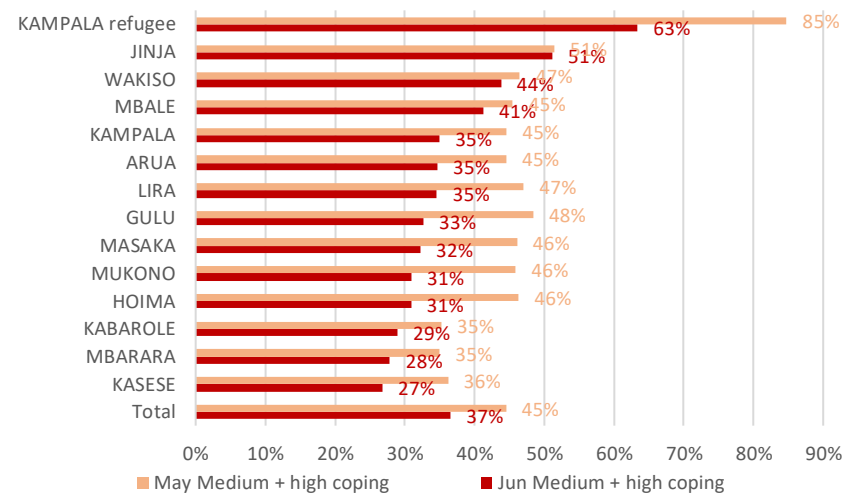
Food based coping strategies

In June 2020, 37 percent of households were employing medium and high food based coping strategies, an improvement compared to May 2020 (44 percent). Jinja, Wakiso Mbale had highest proportion of households with medium/high coping among other urban nationals. Compared to nationals, higher proportion of refugees were employing medium/high coping (63 percent). The COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown disrupted the livelihoods of many Ugandans and refugees of which a considerable proportion of households were already food insecure or at risk of food insecurity due to the loss of jobs, wages and exhaustion of available coping options/strategies. However with easing of the lockdown in June, many were able to resume economic activities.

Fig. 4: Proportion of households employed food based coping

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020

Fig. 5: Proportion of households under high or medium food-based coping by district

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020
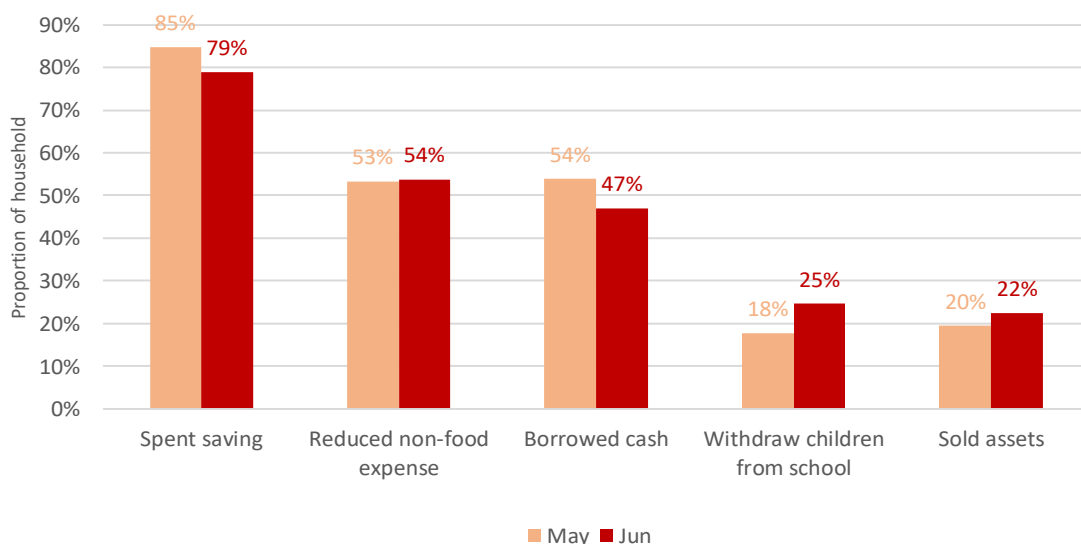
Livelihood based coping strategies

Overall, 2 out of 3 households (64 percent) employed crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies to meet their food needs and other essential requirements and this was similar to May 2020. This is significantly higher compared to the 33 percent of national average for urban nationals in April 2019. More urban refugees (about 92 percent) than nationals employed crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies to meet their food needs despite an improvement from May 2020 (95 percent).

While the use of crisis and emergency coping was largely steady, these negative coping strategies eroded assets and wealth and undermined the long-term ability of households to meet their food and essential needs.

In June 2020, households in urban areas commonly employed strategies of spending saving (79 percent), reducing non-food expense (54 percent), borrowing cash (47 percent), withdrawing children (25 percent) and selling assets (22 percent).
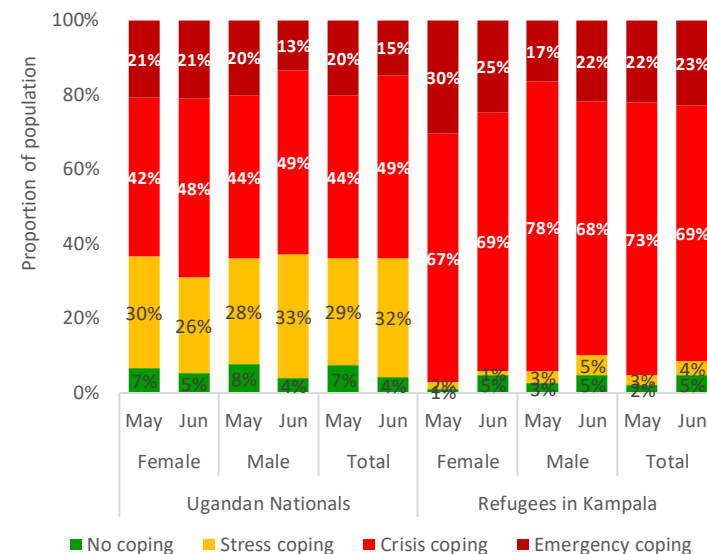
Although COVID 19 seems to have had a major negative impact in Kampala and Wakiso, Jinja, Gulu and Arua still showed the worst food security outcomes.

Fig. 6: Proportion of households employing livelihood based coping strategies

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020

Fig. 8: Top 5 livelihood coping strategies used

Fig. 7: Proportion of households employing crisis or emergency livelihood coping strategies by district
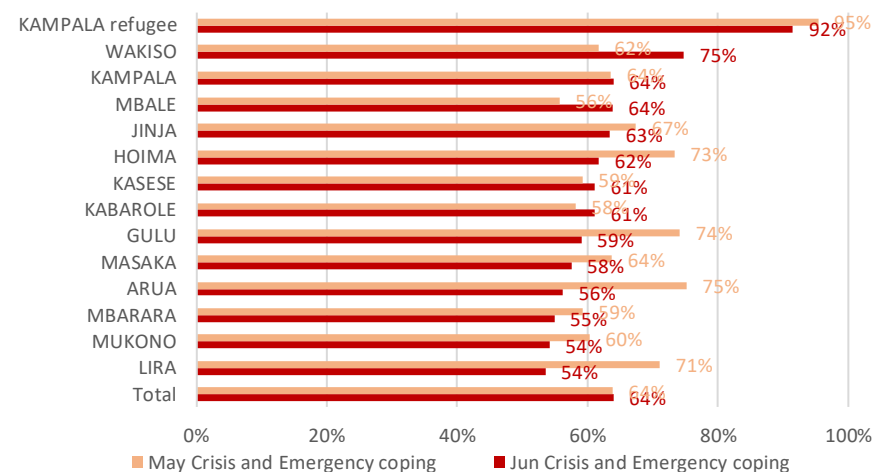
Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020
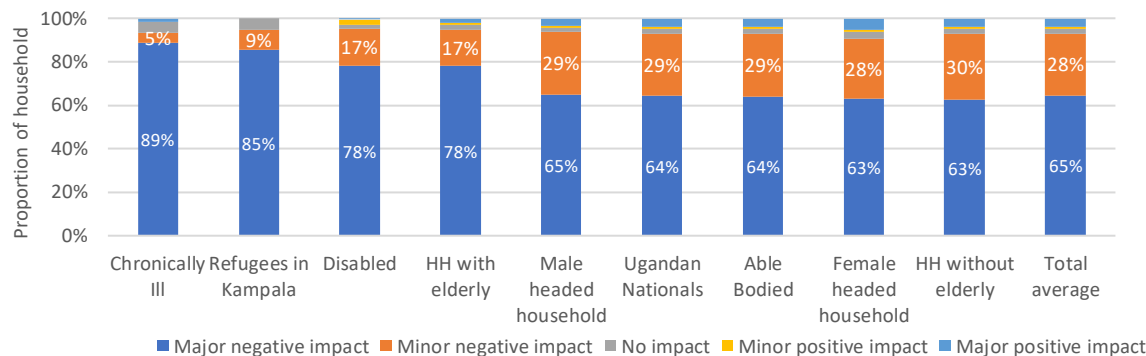
Who are the Most Vulnerable

About 65 percent of the households reported that the coronavirus and the government restrictions (including banning public transport) affected their main livelihood in the past 30 days and this was slightly lower than the proportion of households reported in May 2020 (70 percent, see figure 11). Among the refugees in Kampala, 85 percent of the households reported that the coronavirus and the government restrictions affected their main livelihood in the past 30 days and this was slightly lower than the proportion of households reported in May 2020 (90 percent). Reasons of limited access to market were, market closure, movement restrictions, Coronavirus concerns and high transport cost. Households with a chronically ill, disabled, or elderly member as well as Kampala refugees reported their livelihood have had major negative impact compared to other urban nationals. Also, persons depending on donations, begging, remittance, or day-to-day wages have been affected negatively due to loss of income and depletion of coping strategies (see figure 12).

About 20 percent of the households had no household member earning income thirty days before the survey and this was slightly lower than the proportion reported in May 2020 (23 percent). In addition, 33 percent of the main income earners worked for less than seven days in one month, and it is slightly lower than that reported in May 2020 (46 percent). About 36 percent of income earners worked for about 20 to 30 days and this was an increase from May 2020 which was at 29 percent.

Over three quarters of refugee households (83 percent) in Kampala did not have a household member earning income 30 days before the survey and this was higher than the proportion of households reported in May 2020.

In June 2020 only 18 percent of households on average had received any form of food assistance compared to 19 percent in May 2020 and this was still a small proportion. This average was however skewed by results from the greater Kampala metropolitan area where the government has provided food assistance. Outside Kampala, Wakiso, and Mukono, less than 10 percent of house-holds received food assistance.

Fig. 11: No or limited access to markets and reasons for not being able to access to markets
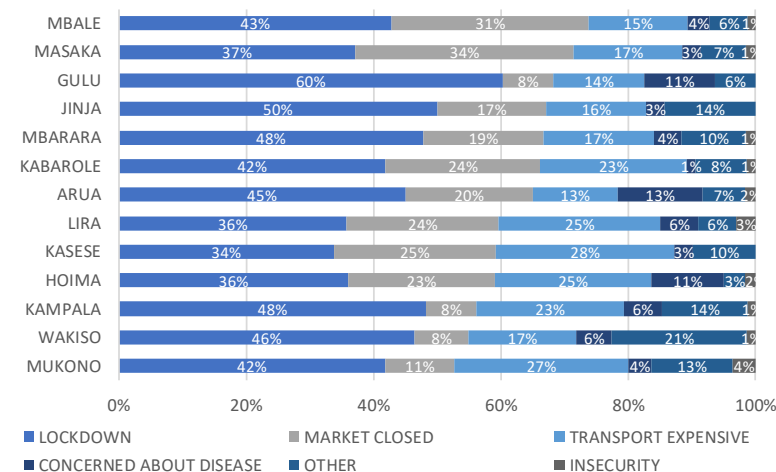
Fig. 12: Proportions of households whose livelihoods have been affected by COVID 19

Fig. 10: Proportions of households with specific demography affected by COVID 19

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020
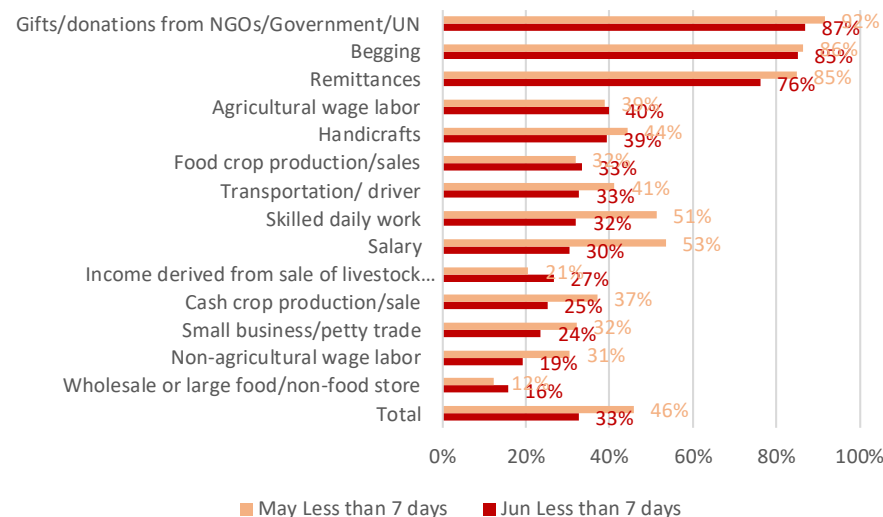
Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020

Where are the Food Insecure Located?

Wakiso, Arua, Jinja, and Mukono had the largest population with poor and borderline food consumption as indicated in Figure 13. Wakiso, Kampala, Arua, Jinja and Mbale had the largest population using medium and high food based coping strategies. Wakiso, Kampala, Arua and Kasese had the largest population using crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies. Within Kampala, Rubaga, Makindye and Kawempe divisions had the largest population with poor food consumption, medium and high food-based coping strategies, crisis and emergency livelihood coping strategies.

In Kampala, **9,584** people had poor or borderline food consumption which was less than in May 2020 (**158,829),** **584,843** were using negative food based coping strategies which was less than May 2020 (**709,979)** while **1,076,192** resorted to the use of crisis and emergency strategies to access food which was significantly less than the population reported in May 2020 (**652,963).** The corresponding figures for Wakiso were **22,598, 1,276,812** and **2,180,750** respectively.

Fig. 13: Summary population table for each indicator

District	Poor Food Consumption	Medium and High Food Based Coping	Crisis and Emergency Livelihood Coping
ARUA	13,797	317,331	515,087
GULU	3,374	106,284	192,323
HOIMA	-	115,725	231,451
JINJA	9,906	263,493	326,890
KABAROLE	-	97,711	206,588
KAMPALA	9,584	584,843	1,076,192
KASESE	-	212,464	485,127
LIRA	2,268	165,547	256,258
MASAKA	1,370	108,246	193,199
MBALE	6,980	241,965	374,581
MBARARA	6,582	149,182	293,976
MUKONO	14,084	216,899	380,277
WAKISO	22,598	1,276,812	2,180,750
KAMPALA REFUGEE	4,423	49,754	71,867
Total	**94,965**	**129,549**	**244,501**

Source: WFP Uganda, mVAM, June 2020

Methodology

The coronavirus pandemic and the strategies employed by governments to control its spread have had far reaching effects on food security and livelihoods globally. In Uganda, restrictions put in place by the Government of Uganda from the 18th of March 2020 to protect the population has disrupted livelihoods and food access for large segment of Ugandans. The increased risk of shocks to food security and essential needs coincided with increased difficulty of monitoring the situation through traditional in-person surveying and data collection. Because of the importance to maintain situational awareness, WFP Uganda scaled up its remote monitoring system to obtain near real time food security information from the 13 urban centre of Arua, Gulu, Hoima, Jinja, Kabarole, Kasese, Kampala, Mbale, Lira, Masaka, Mbarara, Mukono and Wakiso. Separately, 5 divisions in Kampala including Central, Kawempe, Makindye, Nakawa, Rubaga, as well as Kampala refugees are sampled. Live telephone interviews started from 10th May and continues daily. During the reporting period of this bulletin, 4,453 randomly selected households from 13 urban districts. Although the sample was drawn using a structured random selection technique, it may have been biased due to inequalities in mobile phone ownership along lines of wealth and gender. The sample size is statistically representative at each urban centre and division in Kampala with a margin of error of 6.6 percent at a 95 percent confidence level.

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