



World Food Programme

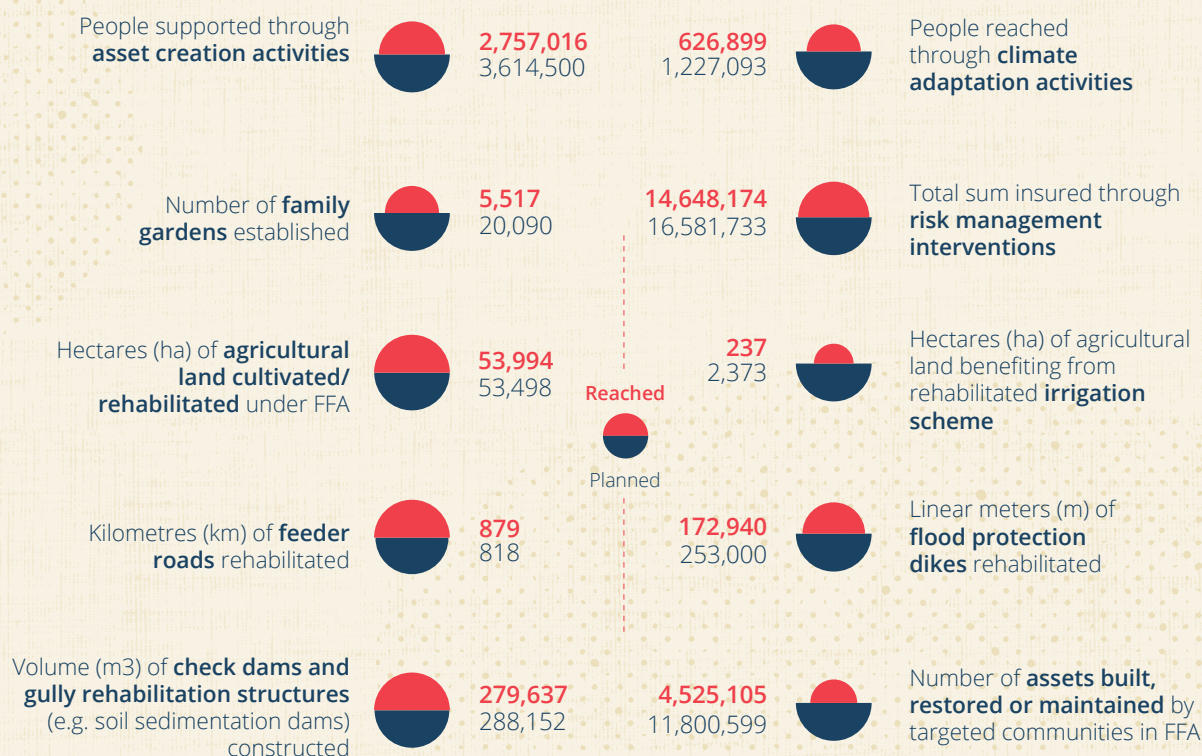
SAVING
LIVES
CHANGING
LIVES

REGIONAL BUREAU FOR **EASTERN AFRICA**

Food Systems

2021 Regional Achievements & Outlook

MAY 2022



Regional Overview

In the Eastern Africa region, Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan face the top ten worst ongoing global food crises. The region represents larger contexts of food and nutrition security issues that communities, Governments, and WFP engage with. In the same breath, Eastern Africa holds many of the answers to addressing these challenges, offering opportunities for WFP to enhance its commitment by adopting a transformative approach to food systems engagement.

WFP looks to align its programmes and activities, as well as its thinking, to adopt a holistic food systems lens. With the objective to transform its assistance, WFP aims to intentionally contribute to the development of a sound food system to make it more nourishing, sustainable, equitable, and resilient for all.

Regional Achievements

Regional strategic support

In 2021, WFP RBN initiated the discussion of food systems for the region in the lead-up to the Food Systems Summit in September 2021. The **RBN Strategic Approach Paper 'WFP and Food Systems'** was developed, summarising the RBN's perspective on food systems and food systems transformation. It offers guidelines for COs on how to more purposefully contribute to a nourishing, equitable, sustainable, and resilient food system in their respective geographies and in the region as a whole. The document aims to provide encouragement as well as strategic and technical direction, focusing on the practical application of a food systems lens to WFP's work, rather than on a purely conceptual discussion of the subject.

In 2021, WFP RBN established a **Regional Food Systems working group**, where COs shared best practices in developing food systems approaches for their respective countries and contexts. An example of this is the 'school system' approach in Rwanda where school meals programming is used to integrate local farmer cooperatives to work with markets, promote fortified grains to meet nutritional needs, work on minimizing the environmental impact of the programme through the ongoing fuel-efficient menu study, and provide technical advice to the Government on sustainable procurement models. Kenya used conservation agriculture and agroforestry to respond to drought. Other practices included strengthening nutrition value chains and involving youth groups in financial trainings, allowing for climate adaptive and mitigative programming.

Risk Transfer (Insurance)

WFP continues to support vulnerable and resource constrained smallholder farmers and pastoralists in Eastern Africa to cope with climatic shocks, through the provision of index-based insurance services for crops and livestock and capacity strengthening for local institutions.

R4 Rural Resilience Initiative

In 2021, R4 initiative reached 49,794 households in Amhara Region, Ethiopia, as compared to 3,042 households in 2018. USD 1,167,670 has been paid as premium to secure a total value of USD 7,961,110, in terms of the value of crop produce insured against drought. In Kenya, the R4 program focused on enhancing financial inclusion through the formation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) among beneficiaries. The aim of the VSLA is to support the beneficiaries in building their reserves and to enable them to make co-payments of their premiums. Through VSLAs, 12,805 beneficiaries were able to access savings and credit. The total sum insured was USD 1,225,94, while 5,545 beneficiaries received pay-outs amounting to USD 96,486.

Satellite Index Insurance (SIPE)

To contribute to combating climate-related shocks, WFP implemented the SIPE intervention in Ethiopia, a satellite-based pasture-drought index insurance cover with additional livelihood support targeted at pastoralists. SIPE helps beneficiaries respond to the loss of pasture and grazing reserves by making timely pay-outs to vulnerable pastoralists, supporting them against the effects of COVID-19, 2020 Desert Locust invasion, and drought. In 2021, in Somali Region Ethiopia, a total of 28,321 households benefitted from the SIPE programme, at a total sum insured of USD 7,660,264. In the Horn of Africa region, pay-outs pay-out of USD 1,672,595 to pastoralists (24,966 received early payout; 25,374 received late payout) households were triggered in response to the 2021 drought situation.

Capacity Strengthening for risk transfer

To build local capacity in sustainably providing Weather Index Insurance (WII) to smallholder farmers in the Amhara region, Ethiopia, WFP is handing over responsibilities of the insurance component to Oromia Insurance Company (OIC) till the end of 2022, including building a microinsurance team, supporting product design, marketing and awareness-raising of the insurance product, establishing distribution channels, distribution strategy and timely pay-outs, premium collection, and supporting R4 WII product licensing and approval from National Bank of Ethiopia (NBE).

WFP also collaborated with the Climate Research Institute of Columbia University (IRI Columbia), to build the capacity of the local index design team through virtual (due to COVID-19 restrictions) refresher trainings. The index design team is expected to have the capability of developing and designing indexes on its own in the long run, with the team being involved in each step of the design process. IRI Columbia was also brought on board to support with risk review, which concluded that there was no basis risk situation for that season but recommended some adjustments to the SIPE contract design, to cater for similar situations in future.



Anticipatory action

The Eastern Africa region is prone to droughts and floods, which, together with other issues like conflict, act as key drivers of the rising levels of food insecurity in the region. WFP, together with Host Governments in the region and various local and international partners, expanded the development of AA systems within the Eastern Africa region. By employing the AA approach, WFP uses forecasts to trigger humanitarian actions and prepositioned financing before an extreme weather event hits vulnerable populations. **This is critical to reducing disaster impact on production and assets, protecting food security and nutrition and building resilience.**

As the UN's largest humanitarian agency, WFP is well-positioned to deliver on using AA. Leveraging our deep field presence in food insecure settings, our strong convening power and expertise in risk analysis – even in the most difficult contexts - we can help to drive a shift in the international humanitarian system to proactively manage risks rather than disasters.

Investment in AA saves money. One dollar that is invested in protection and prevention, can save up to three dollars in the eventual humanitarian response rate.³ In Kenya specifically, the estimated long-term impacts of drought-related AA could result in a potential savings of USD 1 billion a year.⁴

In 2021, WFP supported the ongoing development of AAs systems, capacity strengthening of national actors and implementation of AAs. This was done in seven countries in the region, namely Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. This is supported by various Donors: the Government of Denmark (DANIDA), the European Union (DEVCO and ECHO), the United States of America (USAID) and the UN Central Emergency Response Fund. The AAs implemented in Ethiopia and Somalia were unconditional cash transfers, early warning communication and blanket supplementary feeding. The development of AAs systems in the countries brought together multiple actors to pre-define AAs to be implemented before a drought or a flood occurs and to explore forecast thresholds that will be used to activate the implementation of AAs. **Going forward**, WFP will:

- Invest more in understanding and tailoring AA systems in the context of compounding and consecutive shocks; and
- Scale up AA to cover more people in more locations.

Energy for Food Security

Access to energy remains a cross-cutting theme and informs many of the operations where WFP provides its life-saving assistance: within humanitarian settings, enabling improved livelihoods in rural areas, preventing shocks, and building resilience. In 2021, WFP continued to contribute to the 'Energy for Food Security' dialogues and activities in the Eastern Africa region.

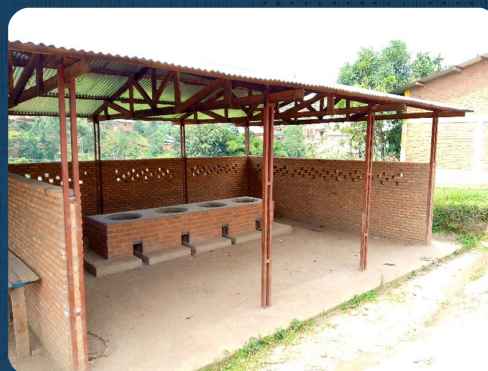
In 2021, within displacement settings, WFP distributed and installed 67 institutional stoves and 13,398 fuel-efficient household stoves. Various assessments were also undertaken across the region, including an assessment of fuel-efficient stove options for the refugee influx from Tigray in Gedaref, Sudan, and a stove assessment in Ethiopia.

Momentum is gathering in the region on transforming the way school meals are being cooked. Burundi begun implementing a \$3.5 million program in school kitchens and stoves for the World Bank. WFP is supporting the World Bank in the mapping of the 'state of cooking in schools', culminating in a landscape report in 2022. The Regional Bureau has funded a study on fuel-efficient school meals in Rwanda, which will have learning and guidance for the region on how to provide nutritious school meals in a more fuel-efficient manner.

Environmental Safeguarding (supported by WFP in 2021)



On-going construction of kitchen and energy-saving stoves at Rugobe School, Burundi – safeguards the Environment and Population by reducing deforestation along the hilly areas resulting in soil erosion, water pollution and siltation of river systems. Additionally, it contributes to the reduction of indoor air pollution.



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On-going construction of a grain storage facility at Kinama Refugee Camp, Burundi – safeguards the environment and population through the provision of proper grain storage to address the effects of storage losses/ post-harvest losses and grain management practices. Four factors which greatly affect grain storability are (1) grain moisture content; (2) grain temperature; (3) initial condition of the grain; and (4) insects and molds.



Building Resilience through Asset Creation and Livelihoods Activities (3PA and FFA)

Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) is a “win-win” approach: in the RBN region, people receive cash or food-based transfers to address their immediate food needs while they build or boost assets that will improve their livelihoods by creating healthier natural environments, reducing risks and impact of shocks, increasing food productivity, and strengthening resilience to natural disasters.

Through its FFA programme, WFP has also built transformative capacities through capacity strengthening activities with government technical services and Local Government. For example, the FFA’s use of the Three-Pronged Approach (3PA) connects local level contexts with those at regional and national levels to inform policies and strategies required to support the most vulnerable populations to better manage risks and shocks. In 2021, WFP continued to partner with three national Universities in the region for the adaptation of the 3PA tools. The partnerships between WFP and the universities aimed at providing technical, programmatic design and operational support to strengthen national and sub-national level planning capacities.

In **Sudan**, WFP aimed to strengthen livelihoods and productive capacity of food-insecure people by equipping women and men with life skills that can contribute to their empowerment. WFP provided cash transfers in return for training in income-generating activities or building community assets to cushion them against shocks.

Inclusive community consultations (Community-Based Participatory Planning) took place to identify the type of assets and skills development activities that would address the priority needs of women, men, and youth in the targeted communities.

In **Uganda**, through FFA, WFP established 3 irrigation facilities, 5.3 hectares of woodlots and 6.5 hectares of gardens. Through its partnership with the Makerere University School of Public Health, WFP facilitated the development of one Integrated Context Analysis, one Seasonal Livelihoods Plan, and thirteen Community Action Plans. The integration of Community Action Plans into the Kaabong and Kikuube five-year district development plans is a significant achievement towards institutionalizing 3PA at the district level.

In **South Sudan**, FFA was rolled out into hard-to-reach conflict-affected locations of Greater Jonglei and Unity, reaching an additional 20,000 beneficiaries. This expansion included the roll-out of pastoral FFA to four locations with a view to support Agro-pastoral and pastoral communities, including people living in cattle camps with the intention to support peacebuilding and community violence reduction through livelihood diversification, market access, and climate change adaptation. Through asset creation activities, 162 dykes were constructed (66 percent of target), 44,552 hectares of land were cleared and cultivated (average 300kg of cereals harvested per household), 478 km of community access roads rehabilitated, and 273 shallow wells created. In addition, a total of 109,000 participants received skills training in various aspects of livelihoods, infrastructure development, environmental management, and social cohesion.

Support to Smallholder farmers

In line with WFP Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFP) and the Smallholder Agriculture Market Support (SAMS) framework, RBN provided guidance and support to COs to promote a demand-driven, value chain development approach to improve smallholder livelihoods and promote systemic changes along the value chain. In collaboration with HQ, pilot COs—Sudan, Uganda and Ethiopia—were supported in developing value chains for selected commodities, in paper-based traceability and in program design to improve the efficiency of the value chains. In addition, the regional bureau also developed a public sector engagement strategy for adopting traceability as an exit strategy and to ensure sustainability of the pro-smallholder procurement.

In the coming year, the unit has planned to professionalize farmer organizations through building their business skill and strengthening institutional capacity. Also in the plans is the development of a training of trainer's manual, training, and an experience sharing and mentorship program for the LRFP countries and school feeding program operational areas.

Post-harvest losses are one of the developing world's greatest challenges, a key to opportunity to unlock food security and economic growth when minimized, and one of the important barriers to drastically reducing poverty.

WFP through its Zero Food Loss Initiative offered opportunity for smallholder families to purchase cost-efficient, air-tight storage equipment. Additionally, RBN guides COs to drive demand through awareness campaigns combined with training of 'power-user' farmers and agriculture extension agents (Government) to create word-of-mouth marketing. On the supply side, WFP works with local manufacturers and distributors to produce simple but effective hermetic storage silos and bags.

In collaboration with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), WFP engaged in encouraging National Government investment in post harvest loss management (PHLM) knowledge and technology, to create an enabling investment environment and support blended financing strategies that smallholder farmers can afford.

In regard to PHLM knowledge management, RBN has shared good practices on local grain storage of different sizes and types for consideration to help farmers who have limited income. In addition, an impact assessment of the existing post-harvest interventions will recommend sustainable, cost effective and context-specific alternative solutions tailored for different farming communities (pastoralist, agro-pastoralist and agricultural).

CO highlights

- **Sudan** held a consultation workshop to team up farmers with the Private Sector and created awareness for Government actors to address post-harvest losses across the country.
- **Rwanda** promoted post-harvest management from harvesting, handling and storage of maize by organizing farmers. As a result, buyers are buying both maize cobs and grains.
- The regional bureau organized an experience-sharing visit for **Uganda** to learn about farmer organizations providing backward and forward market linkages, including post-harvest services to members and non-members.
- Farmers have become price makers, and not price takers. Previous general food distribution recipients in Karamoja, **Uganda**, are now selling quality grain to WFP.





Hydroponics

H2Grow is WFP's hydroponics initiative bringing locally adaptable and affordable hydroponic solutions to vulnerable communities around the world. 2021 was a successful year for hydroponics in RBN, with four new countries jumping into the ladder of innovative agricultural methods, making it one of the regions with the most COs implementing hydroponics. Burundi, Ethiopia, Uganda and Somalia started piloting hydroponics for animal feed or human consumption for the first time, while Kenya, which had been implementing hydroponics for several years, also started a pilot on blended finance for hydroponics.

- **Burundi** started implementing hydroponics for vegetable production. In the first phase, the project was piloted in one school in the region of Kirundo. The CO is preparing the roll-out now and will build 40 additional greenhouses in schools, cooperatives and among IDPs communities.
- **Ethiopia** started implementing hydroponics for animal feed production in the field with 30 household (HH) units reaching approximately 150 beneficiaries in Dolo Ado region and plans to roll out the project in other pastoralist arid areas of the country.
- **Uganda** piloted the production of hydroponics vegetables within their refugee response with two farmers groups for home consumption and aiming at commercial production in a next phase. In the initial phase, 2 demonstration units were installed, one in Kyangwali and one in Kyaka II settlements to grow vegetables like lettuce, tomatoes or spinach.
- **Somalia** piloted hydroponics for animal feed and is preparing the handover to the Government of the training centre in Puntland where hydroponics will be practiced.
- **Kenya** started a pilot aiming at scaling up low-tech hydroponics through access to finance- a blended finance model with asset-based loans, focusing on urban agriculture for vegetable production.

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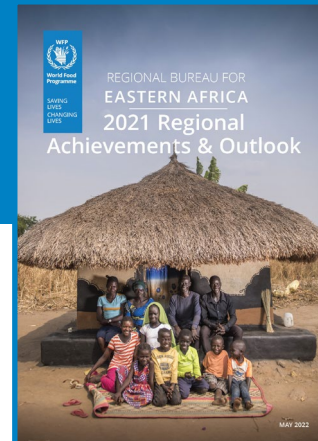
Photo page 06: WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

Photo page 07: WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

Photo page 08: WFP/Samantha Reinders

ENDNOTES

- 1 "The economics of resilience to drought in Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia". USAID Center for Resilience commissioned study.
- 2 The Economics of Early Response and Resilience: Approach and Methodology (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a0ae5274a31e00003c0/61114_Approach_and_Methodology.pdf)



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