



World Food Programme

SAVING  
LIVES  
CHANGING  
LIVES

Regional Bureau for **Eastern Africa**

# 2023

**WFP Achievements:**  
Impacting Lives  
in Eastern Africa

MAY 2024



Cover and Inside Photo: WFP/Arête/Kibuuka Mukisa



# CONTENTS

- 4** Preamble
- 7** WFP Eastern Africa thanks its Donors for their Generous Contribution and Support in 2023
- 10** 2023 was a challenging year
- 16** Partnerships, Innovation and Resourcing in 2023
- 29** Delivering with Cooperating Partners
- 32** Leading in Emergency Response
- 38** Nutrition Response
- 43** Investing in School Based Programmes
- 50** Climate and Resilience Actions in Eastern Africa
- 65** Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF)
- 69** Social Protection Systems
- 73** Strengthening Government Capacities and Systems
- 77** Food Safety and Quality
- 81** Agile Regional Procurement
- 85** Logistics in Eastern Africa: Delivering Amidst Increased Challenges
- 92** Breakthrough in the Skies: United Nations Humanitarian Air Services
- 95** Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
- 99** Protection and Accountability to Affected Population
- 102** Improved Assurance
- 106** Knowledge Management
- 108** Focus on WFP People

# Preamble

In 2023, the Eastern Africa Region experienced a multitude of unprecedented challenges, significantly worsening food insecurity across the region.

Climate shocks such as severe droughts and floods, along with economic downturns and conflicts worsened humanitarian crises in the region. In Sudan, escalating conflict led to a rise in internal displacements and increased humanitarian needs within the country and across neighbouring countries, already grappling with increased humanitarian demands.

The increased humanitarian needs surpassed the available funding. Across the region, countries faced **reduced funding forcing** WFP to introduce prioritisation and ration-cut measures to adapt to the new funding realities while boosting the efficiency and effectiveness of our work to maximise contributions from donors.

Throughout the year, WFP's network of **more than 5,000 staff** relentlessly worked with the Governments and more than 300 Cooperating Partners (CPs) to deliver food and nutrition assistance, and build the resilience of communities, **reaching nearly 40 million people**.



**In its emergency response operations**, WFP provided immediate food assistance to more than 32 million people affected by crises, mostly in fragile contexts. Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan accounted for 80 percent of the people reached under emergency response. Nutrition was also prioritised to treat moderate acute malnutrition reaching more than 6 million Pregnant, breastfeeding women and girls, and children under 5. WFP integrated social behaviour change, resilience, livelihood and fortification activities into nutrition activities where possible as part of the strategies for promoting long-term change and addressing underlying causes of malnutrition.



**School-Based Programmes, a cornerstone for building human capital**, reached over 3 million children. WFP also strengthened governments' capacity for national ownership of these programmes. There was stronger engagement and resourcing from the Governments on Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes (HGSF) noting its multiple benefits across different sectors including education, health, nutrition and local agriculture outcomes. In line with its integrated food systems agenda, WFP linked smallholder farmers to school markets leading to significant positive outcomes, including boosting local economies and ensuring nutritious meals for school children.



In addition to emergency response, WFP supported communities with **climate adaptation and resilience action**. With increasing climate disasters, more preventive approaches need to be scaled up to help communities cope with the emerging shocks. WFP worked with the Governments to strengthen early warning systems and in developing anticipatory action plans. More than 2 million people were reached with early warning messages and 200,000 people in Somalia and Burundi with prearranged cash-based transfers cushioning them from the impact of floods. This will continue to be pursued in 2024.



**Social protection was critical in responding to crises** and strengthening communities' resilience to shocks. WFP collaborated with governments and international financial institutions to scale up shock-responsive social protection systems, refugee inclusion, systems strengthening and enhancement of policy and institutional frameworks.



**WFP supply chain services served as the backbone of its operations.** WFP established a robust logistics network comprising strategic ports, routes, and warehouses, and collaborated with over 1000 WFP trucks and 499 commercial transporters to deliver 2.9 million metric tons (MT) of food to people in need. WFP distributed cash assistance where markets were feasible, empowering beneficiaries with flexibility and autonomy to make choices on food consumption. More than 16 million people received cash assistance worth USD 507,316,574 cash transfers and USD 242,147,124 value vouchers.



**WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS)** played a crucial role in enabling humanitarian response by providing timely, reliable, and cost-effective air transport to 375 partners. This was particularly vital in fragile contexts where access was limited, and aviation services were unavailable. Furthermore, WFP provided timely on-demand supply chain services to over 150 partners, further supporting humanitarian efforts.



**WFP procurement systems and processes navigated through a dynamic supply chain landscape,** overcoming challenges such as supply chain disruptions, increased food prices, funding gaps, and logistical and access hurdles to ensure the effective procurement of essential goods and services for humanitarian operations regionally. In 2023, WFP procured 261,000 MT of food with local and regional procurement accounting for 49 percent of the purchases. Additionally, **22 percent of the total food was sourced from smallholder farmers** within the region, injecting USD 31 Million into the local economies. Overall, **WFP injected over USD 900 million** into Eastern African economies through food, goods and services procurement, and CBT activities.



Gender, Protection and Accountability to affected populations were prioritized in WFP programming. **WFP adopted a gender-transformative approach** intentionally targeting women and implementing tailored interventions to address the root causes of inequalities impacting food and nutrition security. WFP ensured women's empowerment in accessing, controlling and influencing decision-making over food assistance. **Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations** were embedded in operations by incorporating risk protection assessments, ensuring community engagement and enhancing the capacity of cooperating partners (CPs) and staff in mainstreaming protection.

## Looking Forward

WFP aims to reach more than 35 million people in the Eastern Africa region in 2024 amid record-high acute hunger and decreased humanitarian funding. WFP is committed to delivering emergency food assistance and providing innovative solutions to effectively tackle the root causes of hunger and malnutrition. WFP will prioritize critical nutrition support to prevent and treat moderate acute malnutrition and provide technical support to governments in the scale-up of HGSF. WFP will work with the Governments to strengthen early warning systems to adequately prepare for, respond to and cope with climatic shocks. To build the resilience of affected communities, WFP plans to deliver integrated actions including social protection, anticipatory actions, climate insurance, livelihood actions and smallholder farmers' support.

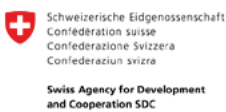
To deliver on these, WFP requires **flexible multiyear funding** to ensure assistance is sustained at scale and identify **innovative and long-term solutions** to addressing hunger. WFP will continue to bolster and broaden its partnerships with government partners, international financial institutions, local partners and the private sector. Alongside other partners, WFP will continue to leverage political influence to address the **barriers to humanitarian access and expand humanitarian space**, particularly in Sudan.



# WFP Eastern Africa thanks its Donors for their **Generous Contribution and Support in 2023**



# Public and Government Donors





## Private Sector Partners





WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

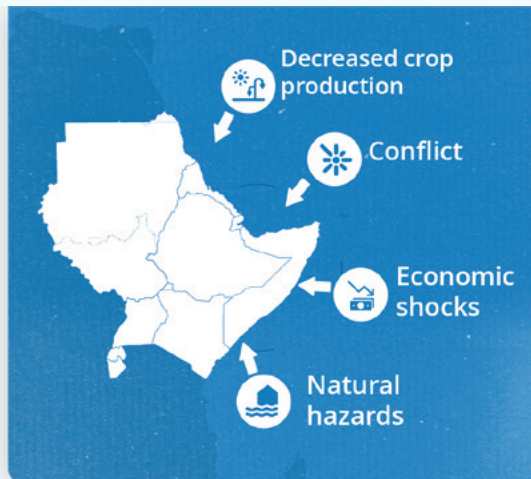
## 2023 was a CHALLENGING YEAR

The Eastern Africa region continued to face increased humanitarian needs in 2023 driven by a combination of interconnected factors such as conflict, climate hazards, and economic shocks. Over five years, the number of food insecure people in the region doubled, reaching 63 million. In 2023, the region witnessed a 44 percent surge in the number of forcibly displaced individuals, reaching a staggering 23 million, up from 16 million in January 2023. The conflict in Sudan contributed significantly to this increase, contributing to what is now recognized as the world's largest displacement crisis, with over 8.5 million people reportedly displaced.

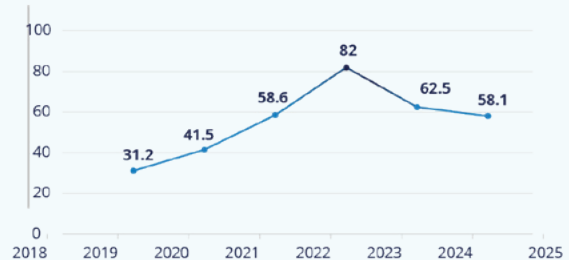
In addition, the region also faced natural disasters such as floods and droughts. Communities in certain regions of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, faced the 'triple burden' of drought, El Niño floods and economic stress. The catastrophic multi-year drought affected two million people exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. These same areas were further affected by El-Niño floods and food inflation rates of up to 30 percent, compounding their challenges.

The increased needs in Eastern Africa, coupled with a decrease in humanitarian funding, put enormous pressure on WFP, affecting its ability to deliver vital assistance at scale to those in need. In response to this funding shortfall, WFP was forced to implement prioritization measures and ration cuts to maximize the utilization of available resources. More than 10 million beneficiaries will miss out on assistance all through 2024 due to prioritisation unless additional funding is received.

## Drivers of Food Insecurity



### Food security trends since 2019



The number of food insecure people in Eastern Africa nearly **DOUBLED** in 5 years (2019-2024)

## Needs in Eastern Africa



**63 million** food insecure, a reduction from the 82 million in 2022.



**Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan** among the most severe global food crises.



**12.2 million** Malnourished children.



Nearly **20 million** people forcibly displaced across the region including **5 million refugees** and **15 million IDPs**; **9 million IDPs in Sudan alone**, making Sudan the largest displacement crisis in the world.



The IDP population increased to **15 million** from 12 million in 2022.



The number of refugees remained high in 2023, totalling **5 million**, an increase from 4.9 million, in 2022.

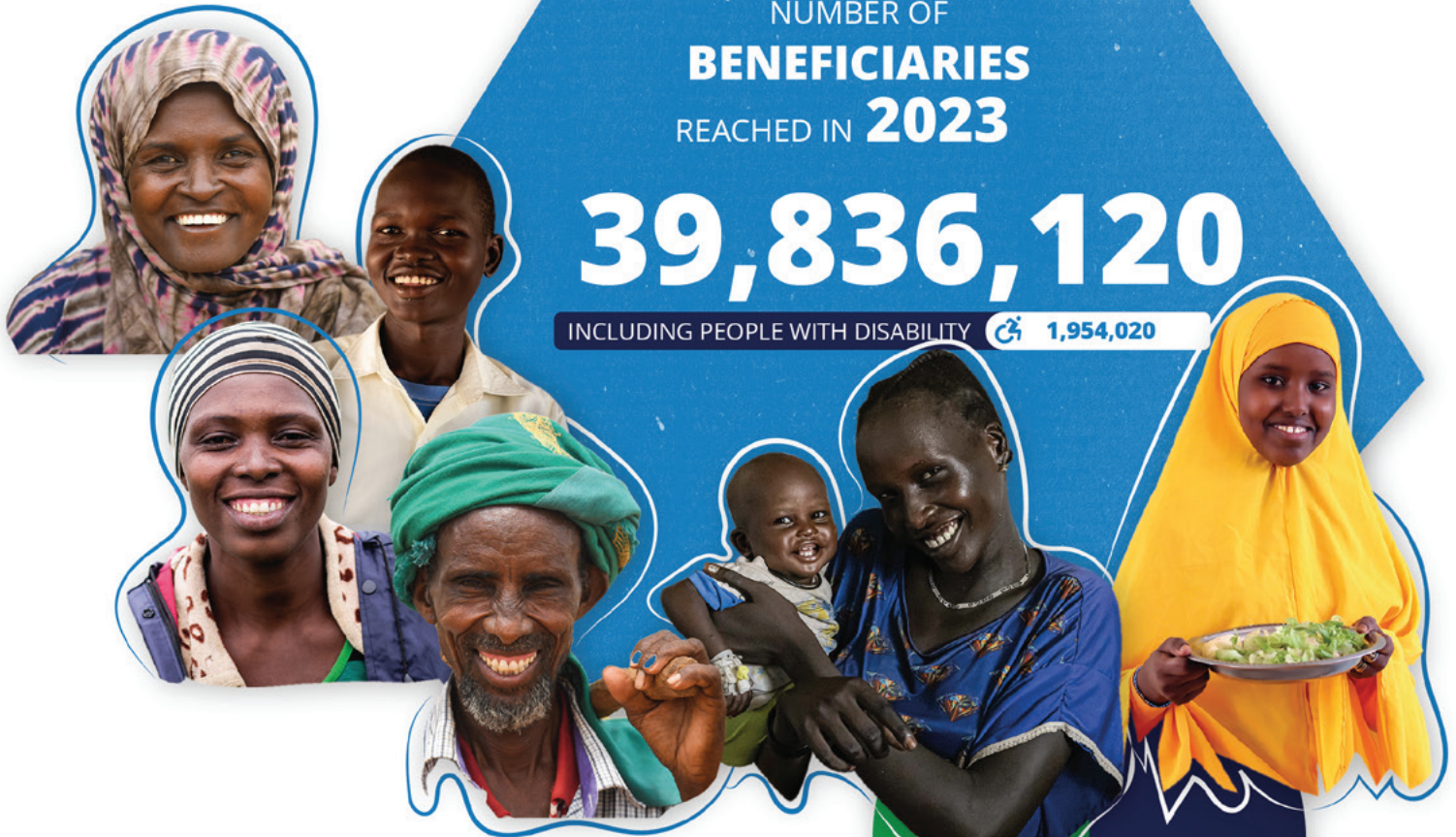


The funding gaps **limited the ability of WFP to meet immediate humanitarian needs**, especially among refugees. This led to ration cuts of up to 70 percent in 2023.

NUMBER OF  
**BENEFICIARIES**  
REACHED IN **2023**

**39,836,120**

INCLUDING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY  **1,954,020**



**BENEFICIARIES REACHED BY  
RESIDENCE STATUS**

FEMALE **51%** MALE **49%**

REFUGEES  
**4,546,890**

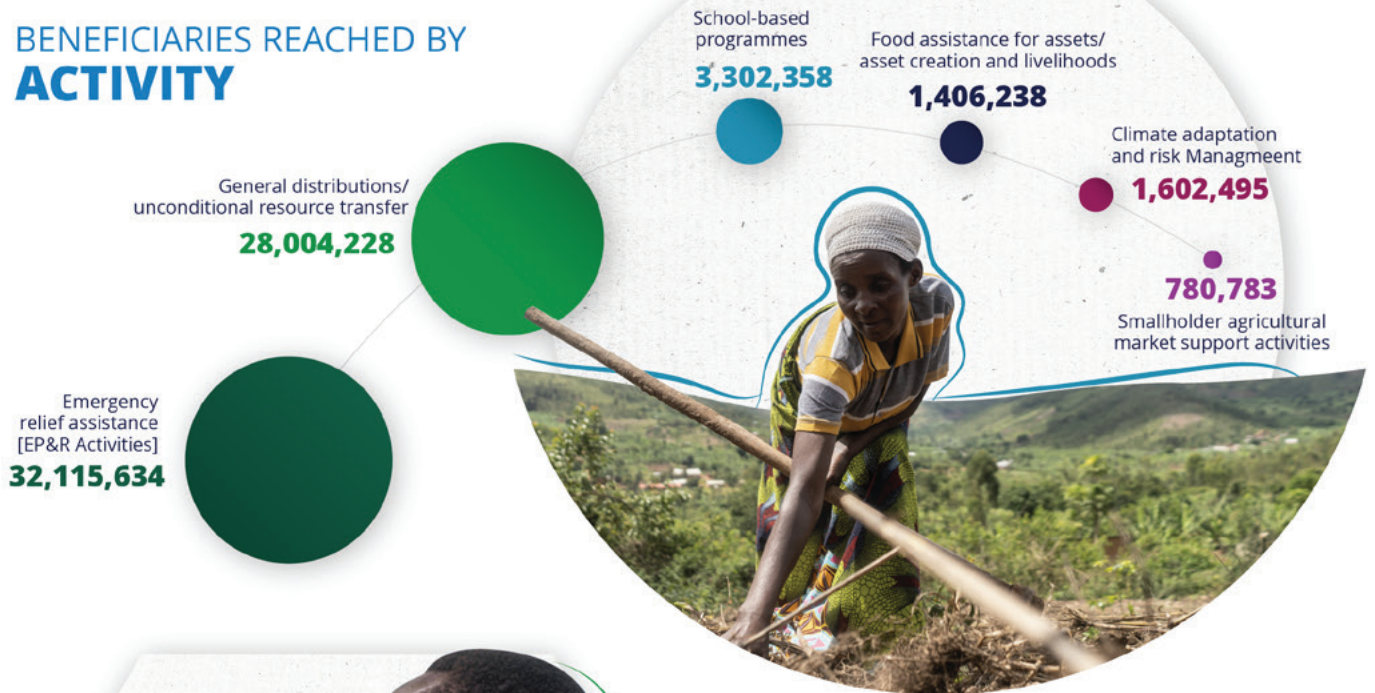
RETURNEES  
**495,656**

INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED PEOPLE  
**6,723,116**

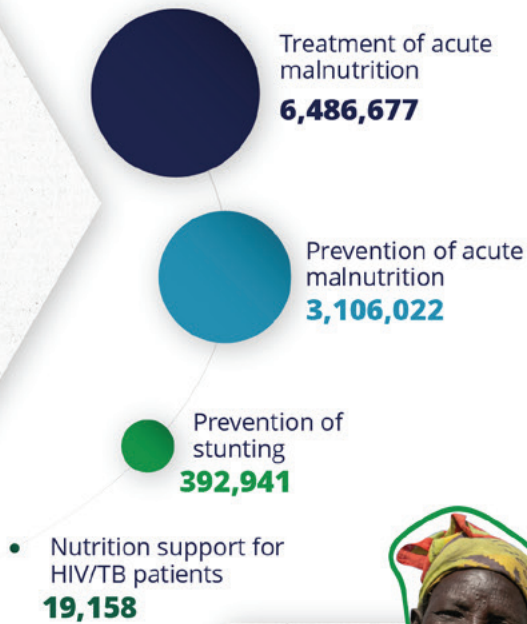
**28,070,458**  
RESIDENTS



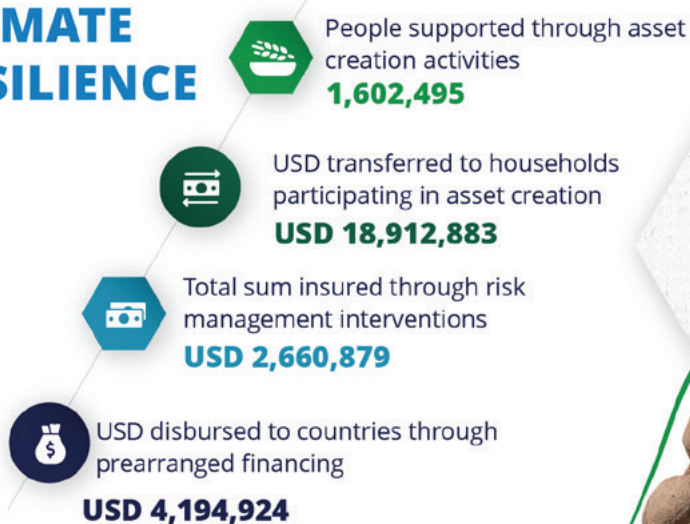
## BENEFICIARIES REACHED BY ACTIVITY



## NUTRITION



## CLIMATE RESILIENCE



# WFP CONTRIBUTION TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Smallholder farmers supported by WFP



**780,783**

Procurement of food purchased locally and regionally



**261,563 MT**  
**USD 212,096,340**



## UNHAS



Amount of cargo transported regionally  
**1,998 MT**



Passengers transported regionally  
**126,350**



Destinations covered regionally  
**72**



## SUPPLY CHAIN

Tonnage of food handed over cooperating partners (mt)

**966,659 MT**



## TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTNERS IN WFP EASTERN AFRICA REGION

**356**

**157**  
Local CPs



**199**  
International CPs

## 2021 - 2023 RESOURCING TRENDS

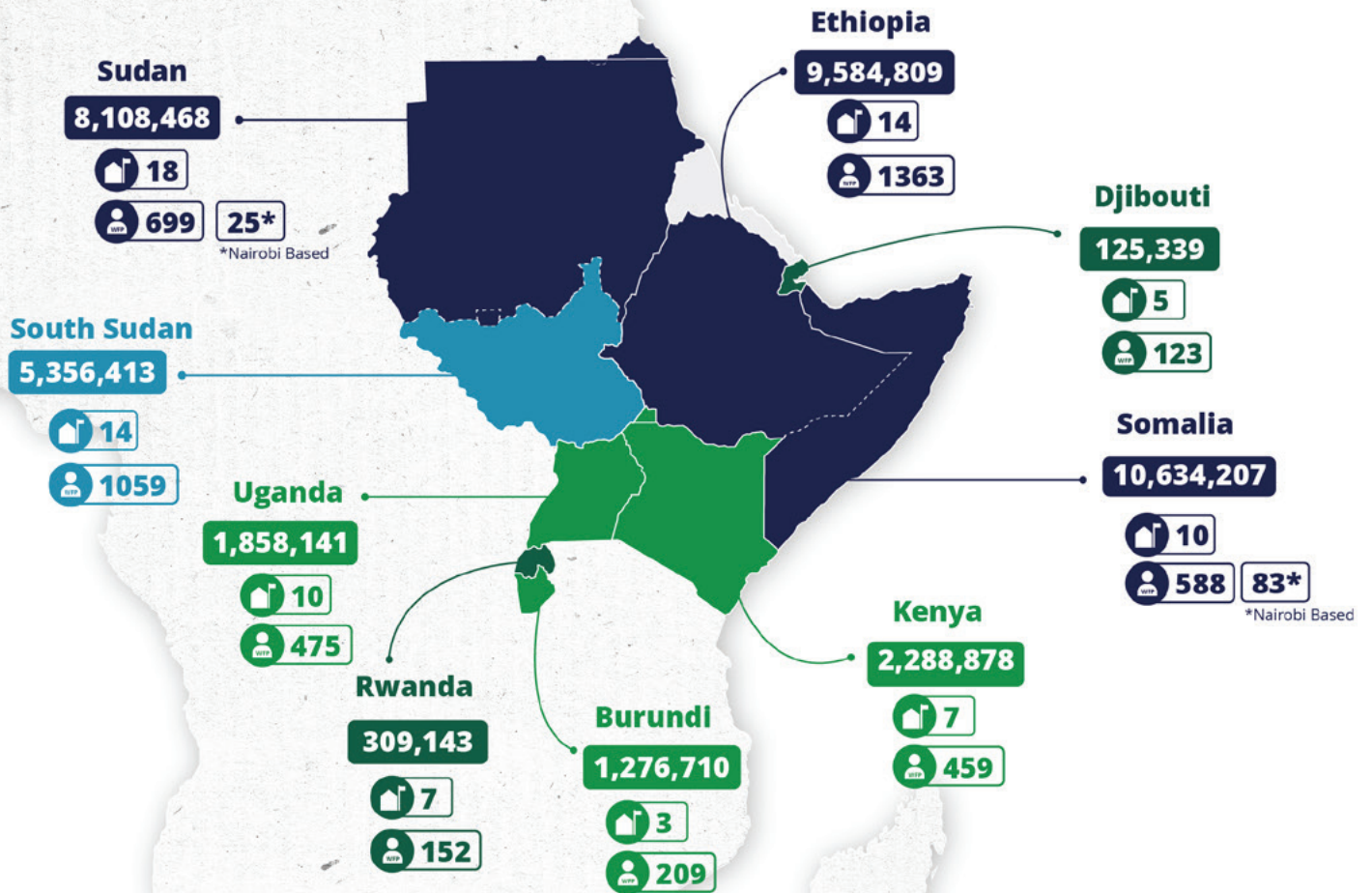


# COUNTRY OFFICE OVERVIEW

## KEY



Total number of people reached



# **PARTNERSHIPS**, Innovation and Resourcing in 2023

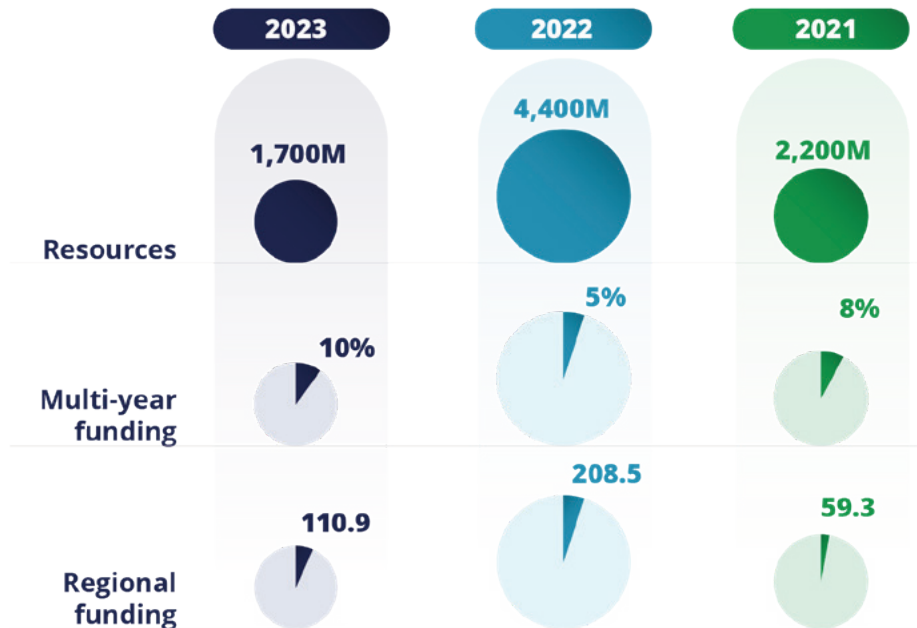




The Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa received **USD 1.7 billion** in confirmed contributions against a needs-based plan of **USD 5.9 billion**, a 61-percentage decrease compared to 2022.

The United States of America remains the leading donor to WFP in the Eastern Africa Region; with a confirmed contribution of USD 974 Million, representing 42 percent of all confirmed contributions.

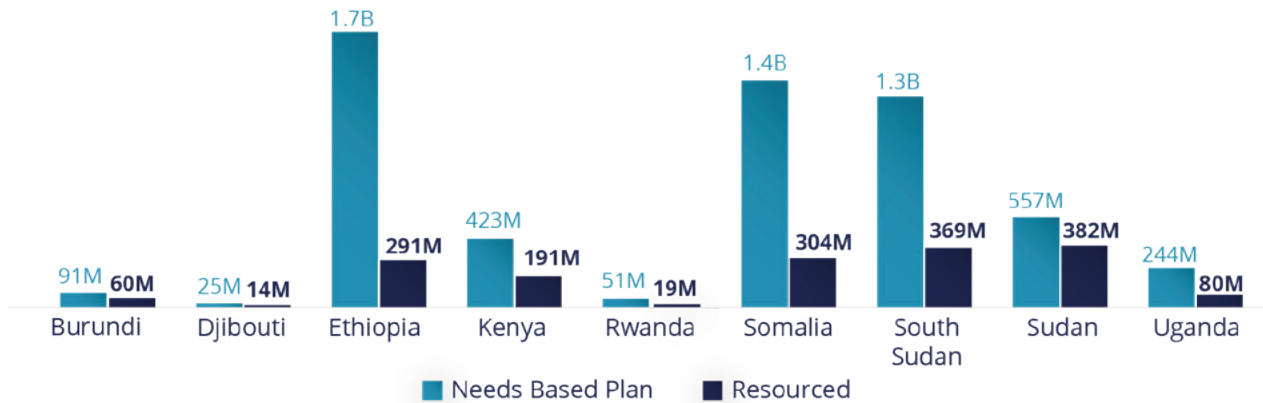
## Annual Trends in Multi-year and Regional Funding 2021-2023, in USD Millions



In 2023, the Eastern Africa region benefitted from a slight increase in multi-year funding compared to 2022. This ensured proper planning and continuity which are crucial in the implementation and overall outcome of interventions, hence highly appreciated. Multi-year funding was made possible by donors such as Austria, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Private donors, Republic of Korea, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Sudan was the largest recipient of multi-year funding in 2023.

In 2023 Eastern Africa region also continued to benefit from regional funding, whereby donors provided funds to the Regional Bureau for allocating to the most critical needs in the region. This flexible approach is very appreciated as it enables very targeted support. Donors who supported this approach in 2023 include Germany and Austria, as well as private sector support from the Zoetis Foundation, the Church of Latter-Day Saints and the Friends of WFP-USA.

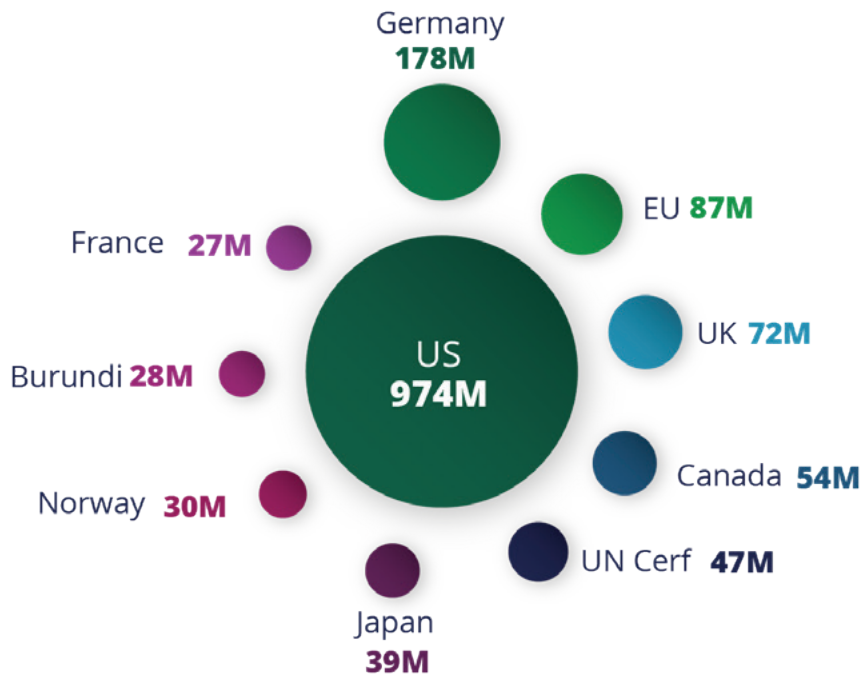
## Resourcing vs. Needs per Country Office



- The big four countries in WFP’s Eastern Africa (South Sudan, Somalia, Sudan, and Ethiopia) received USD 1.3 billion in 2023, representing 79 percent of the overall funding to the region and 16 percent of the overall global funding in 2023.
- Sudan received the highest contributions out of all the funding to the region with a 22 percent share, followed by South Sudan (21 percent), Somalia (18 percent), and Ethiopia (17 percent).

## WFP Eastern Africa Top 10 Donors

Donor Amount contributed in USD Million



## WFP Eastern Africa International Financial Institutions /Partner Governments Funding

In 2023, WFP continued to bolster its engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) as part of its strategy to secure additional funding and support. Funding from IFIs, either via direct contracting or service provision for IFI funded projects through national governments accounted for USD 46.6 million.

WFP continued to diversify its donor engagement and pursue various opportunities. For instance, proposals were submitted for the African Development Bank's Transition Support Facility funding window in countries like Ethiopia and Somalia. Additionally, various country proposals were also submitted to the Global Agriculture Food Security Program (GAFSP) producer organisation funding track.

A significant milestone occurred in South Sudan, where WFP secured the first-ever contribution in the region from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), amounting to USD 15 million.

Regional contributions include:

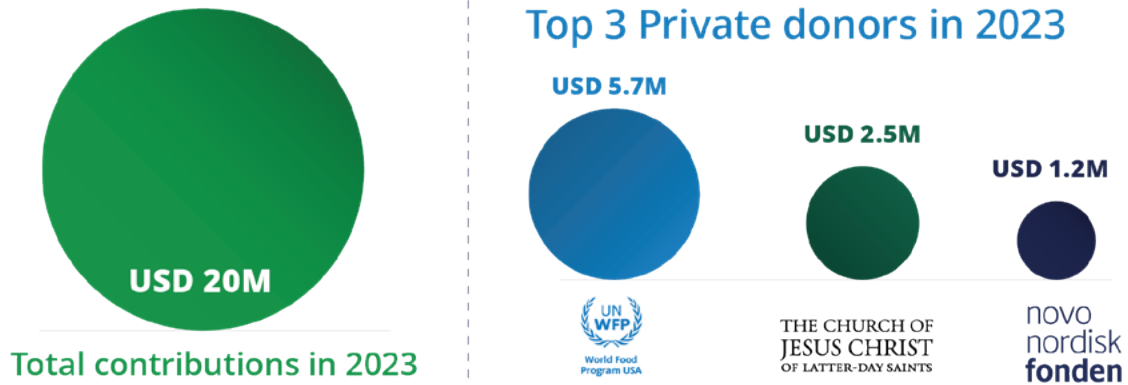
- USD 8.24 Million in additional financing from the World Bank for the Shock Responsive Safety Net for Human Capital Project (SNHCP) in Somalia
- USD 23.36 Million also from the World Bank in Burundi.
- USD 15 Million from the International Monetary Fund for crisis response to humanitarian needs initiative in South Sudan.



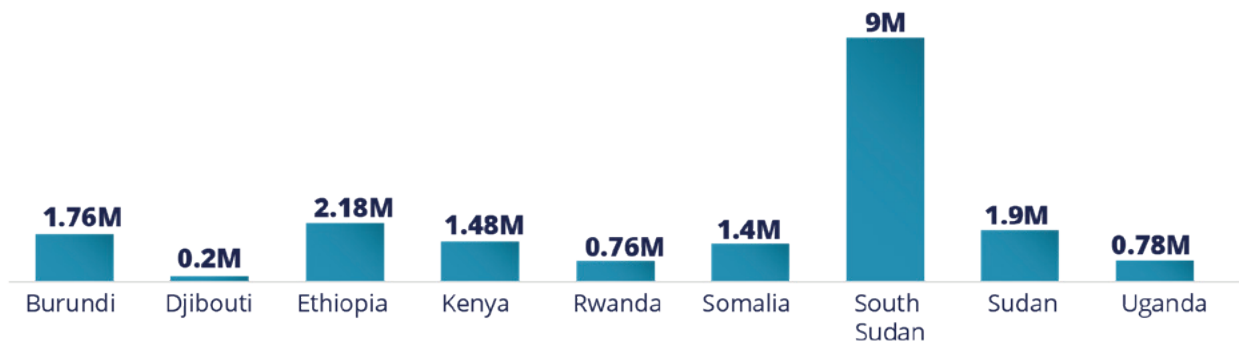
WFP/Samantha Reinders

## Private Sector Funding

Private sector funding to WFP’s Eastern Africa Region decreased from USD 51 million in 2022 to USD 20 million in 2023. The top private sector donations were contributed by WFP USA, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Novo Nordisk Foundation and Individuals.



## Private Sector Resourcing by Country Office in USD (2023)



WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

## Impacting Communities Through Private Sector Partnerships



### Averting Catastrophic Hunger in South Sudan through Dike rehabilitation

Donor: **High Networth Private Donor (Anonymous)**



WFP/Alessandro Abbonizio

Through a generous contribution from an anonymous donor, WFP in South Sudan was able to rehabilitate 8km of the Bor dike. This was an integral part of the total 38.3km rehabilitated in 2023. As a result, about 187,000 people were resettled back in Bor South and Twic East counties after the dike rehabilitation.

The intervention had significant positive impacts on the local community and the environment. Field inspection and satellite image-based evaluation results showed that rehabilitation efforts helped reclaim about 1,644 square km of land by reducing flood-inundated areas by nearly 70% after rehabilitation work.

Moreover, the rehabilitation project provided employment opportunities to approximately 1,000 youths, both male and female, from Bor South County through labour-based works to repair the breached dike points. This not only injected cash earned into the local economy but also fostered peace between the local communities as the youth remained engaged, reducing the likelihood of their involvement in conflicts or cattle raids.

In addition, the dike served as a barrier or protection for the Bor-Mabior road, preventing flooding and ensuring accessibility throughout the year. This facilitated the movement of 3,900 MT of food commodities serving 87,000 people who rely on road transportation of essential goods and services.



WFP/Alessandro Abbonizio

Garang Chol Atem, a 40 years old, (pictured in foreground) is part of a team of workers rebuilding a breached point on the dike in Twic East, Jonglei State, in South Sudan.

“

*“I used to work on this dike before the World Food Programme came and there was no one to help us. But then the water overcame us. Now I have returned to work on the dike because I want the water out of our homes and I want to help myself and my community.”*

*“I’m a resident of this area and my house was devastated by the flood. It destroyed everything I depend on for a living, including the crops.”*

*“Before the flood came, I had cows, goats, and I used to cultivate crops and go fishing in the swampy area. I was able to cultivate, rear cattle and go fishing.”*

*“I work on this dike for myself and for others.”*

*“With the money I earn here my family will be fed and I will use some to send my students to school.”*

*“When this water dries, I will plant crops to have grains and I will rebuild my house.”*

*“I had 25 cows and 30 goats but all were killed by the flood. Everyone was running and we had no time to take the animals so they all died.”*

”



## HARVESTING SUCCESS: Karamoja's Journey with Home Grown School Feeding

Donor: ***Novo Nordisk Foundation***



WFP/Joel Ekström

The Karamoja homegrown school feeding programme is one of the projects that links schools with other sectors and is an excellent example of a high-impact initiative implemented through partnerships with the private sector and foundations. By linking schools with other sectors, this program goes beyond providing meals to school children; it fosters holistic development by integrating education, nutrition, agriculture, and local economies.

In Karamoja, Uganda, droughts and dry spells threaten livelihoods and food security, the WFP Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme, funded by the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF) is a gateway to a better, healthier, and more prosperous future for students and the community in Karamoja. **Yet, it is becoming increasingly difficult for schools to provide locally produced school meals when local food production by smallholder farmers is being hit by drought and erratic rains.**

The Karamoja region in Uganda has the highest rates of food insecurity and malnutrition. WFP's Home Grown School Feeding model provides local, diverse and nutritious school meals, which not only bring and keep students in school (especially girls) but also provide a market for smallholder farmers. **Thanks to funding from the Novo Nordisk Foundation, WFP Uganda introduced a host of innovative initiatives and local solutions to address climate driven challenges and provide nutritious locally procured school meals.** These innovations focus on climate adaptation and food systems interventions such as student led environmental clubs, biofortified drought-resistant orange flesh sweet potatoes for school meals and increased local procurement for the Home Grown School Feeding programme.

To improve the nutrition quality of the school meals, WFP introduced **Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes (OFSP) in school gardens.** Subsequently, 80 schools in Karamoja complemented WFP meals with sweet potatoes contributing to diversification of diets in schools. Not only are Orange Fleshed

Sweet Potatoes rich in vital nutrients like Vitamin A, but they are also drought-resistant and can grow within the dry spells of Karamoja. The establishment of sweet potato gardens promotes agricultural education as students actively participate in the cultivation process, gaining practical knowledge about agriculture, environmental stewardship, and the importance of a diversified diet. This hands-on experience not only imparts valuable life skills but also instils a sense of pride and responsibility in contributing to their nutritional well-being. In addition, children are encouraged to take Orange Fleshed Sweet Potatoes vines to their homes to promote households' production and utilization.

“

*“There was a time when there was no rain and no food for months, but the sweet potatoes survived and so did we,” “Our focus is now on teaching our children how to grow these potatoes because we know that at home there is [sometimes] no food. It is important that children learn resilient methods of farming.”*

~ **Lokiro Dominique, head teacher at Jubilee School.**

WFP also supported the introduction of **Nutrition and Environmental Student-Led School clubs, a platform to foster** active participation in the climate change responsive activities supported by WFP. Through this, **schools were supported to plant 91,600 indigenous trees, equivalent to 204 acres in schools.**

The Home Grown School Feeding design ensures that children receive sustainable, nutritious daily school meals– driving school attendance and curbing malnutrition – while farmers can count on steady demand and fair pricing for their produce. In 2023, WFP exponentially **increased local procurement of maize and beans for school meals by fivefold**, Local procurement increased from 414 MT in 2022 to 2,345 MT. This influx generated **an additional USD 1.9 million for the local economy** (based on the total value of WFP purchases) underscoring the positive economic impact of the HGSF programme.



WFP/Arete/Siegfried Modola

The HGSF program in Karamoja is not just about providing school meals. Through this partnership and funding from the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF), the HGSF has borne results beyond providing school meals and has become a testament to resilience, innovation, and the power of community-driven solutions. This partnership has served as a steppingstone towards sustainable and community-driven interventions using HGSF as the vehicle for change.



## A 'Buzzing' Impact in Kenya

Donor: **Hive Group**



WFP/Alessandro Abbonizio

An example of the evolving model for private sector partnership in the field can be found in WFP's partnership with The Hive Group in Kenya. Unlike conventional partnerships where a partner donates cash or in-kind to WFP, this new model capitalizes on the Hive Group's technical expertise and lays the foundations for sustainable market development and livelihood opportunities. The Hive Group supported WFP Kenya's resilience work through a beekeeping programme, by providing apiary management services and training on elements such as hive inspection, honey harvesting, colony management, and honey processing. Critically, the Hive Group then provided a fair and sustainable market for the honey produced – a market which continues and is now expanding.

This private sector collaboration helped to reshape the narrative for families in Turkana by promoting beekeeping as a sustainable source of income, a viable business that brings, men, women, youth, and people living with disability together where they not only share their passion for beekeeping, but also knowledge, and work towards a common goal of self-reliance. By providing training, equipment, and market access, WFP offered families a pathway out of poverty and into a future of possibilities.

The training sessions and workshops led to the establishment and support of 45 modern apiaries and 1,900 traditional beehives in Turkana. The outcomes were profound: in 2023, 2,000 targeted beekeepers sold 3 metric tonnes of honey. Families that embraced beekeeping experienced newfound stability, reduced reliance on traditional livelihoods, food aids, and improved food security. Additionally, given the importance of bees as pollinators globally and concerns about their declining populations, this partnership also positively contributes to growing and protecting bee populations.

This ongoing partnership isn't just a one-off collaboration; it showcases the long-term power of public-private partnerships, the fusion of sectors working in tandem for lasting change. And it is not limited to Kenya; WFP is currently in discussions to expand the partnership further, and through the WFP Regional Innovation Hub, WFP is working with other private sector companies to support the beekeeping value chain in Uganda and South Sudan.

# INNOVATION HUB:

## Driving Innovations to Promote Food Security

**WFP's Innovation Hub for Eastern Africa** was established in collaboration with CARE Denmark and is supported by Danida and USAID BHA. The innovation hubs work towards achieving climate-resilient, inclusive, and locally-led sustainable food systems by harnessing local solutions to local problems, nurturing the region's entrepreneurial ecosystem to thrive, and simultaneously adding value to operations and programmes.

The hub works hand in hand WFP Country Offices (COs) to support innovative approaches in implementing their Country Strategic Plans. The Hub's work is organized into three pillars: **innovation ecosystem support; collective learning on innovation; and innovation culture strengthening within the organisation**

### Key Highlights:

- Strengthened the local innovation ecosystem by supporting local innovators in tackling food system challenges in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan. Through partnerships with local implementing partners, government, academia, research institutions, and financial institutions and by promoting peer-to-peer learning, innovation ecosystem building was also kicked off in Somalia and Ethiopia.
- Innovations hub created economic growth opportunities for local innovators at various stages in their start-up journeys in Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and South Sudan. Innovators participating in programmes were able to secure over USD 7 million follow-on funding from investors, thanks to the traction they gained and connections made from the programme. The largest gain however is the support in identifying viable solutions to climate and food systems challenges and the ripple effect of the Ignite ventures which has seen the increase in numbers of farmers supported by over 100 percent between 2021 and 2023.

### Deep Dive on Innovation Ecosystem Support

WFP's Innovation Hub for Eastern Africa is dedicated to sourcing, researching and developing viable locally-led business models at scale. To date these have included technology and innovations for climate smart agriculture, building the resilience of marginalized and vulnerable communities as well as optimising WFP operations.

One of the innovation programmes is the Ignite Food Systems Innovation Challenge– a programme which looks for local food system value chain innovators working on finding solutions to problems that are relevant to WFP country offices. IGNITE food systems innovation have been implemented in Rwanda, Uganda and South Sudan, the Vijana in Kilimobizz innovation challenge in Kenya, the pan-Africa Milken Motsepe Prize and the regional Aflatoxin innovation programme. The programme provides training and funding to these innovators and catalyzes the relationship with the country office.

Focussing on the following five related priority areas, innovations hub has supported over 75 innovators to test and scale their solutions across Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and Burundi since 2021:

1. *Hardest to reach*: building self-reliance and resilience for the most marginalised and vulnerable communities, including refugees in East Africa.
2. *Climate smart agriculture*: including the use of Agri-Tech and circular economy business models to increase productivity and improve post-harvest management, including reduction of aflatoxin, as well as decarbonisation of agri-food value-chains from seed to sale.
3. *Nutritious food and market linkage*: expanding local food production, value-addition and access to market for local nutritious food production including for WFP's production of Specialised Nutritious Foods (SNF).
4. *Financial inclusion*: access to affordable finance, including making available blended finance options for smallholder farmers, micro SMEs and entrepreneurs.
5. *Optimising WFP operations*: improving WFP's operational efficiency and impact through application of innovative solutions.



WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# Refugee self-reliance, affordable finance and climate-smart agriculture in Uganda



WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

The use of emerging technologies to help farmers become more efficient and profitable, promises to help revitalize and potentially revolutionize agriculture all over the world. AgriTech innovations can significantly increase farm yields, decrease post-harvest loss, and develop strong markets that link growers and buyers. However, the top challenge identified by these innovators is access to affordable finance, i.e. lack of access to credit and traditional financial inclusion for SMEs (particularly female-led), driven by information asymmetries across the value chain, high transactional costs, burdensome collateral requirements and high perceived risk.

*Omia Agri Business* is an agriculture input distributor and buyer that increases access to climate-smart inputs, such as vegetable seeds, fertilizer and other farm tools, to smallholder farmers in rural areas. The company delivers inputs directly to farmers, including WFP-supported farmer groups (refugees and host communities) in West Nile. As part of Uganda's Ignite programme, Omia Agri Business has demonstrated significant progress in enhancing agricultural productivity and livelihoods, and is working with WFP to equip farmers with portable solar irrigation kits in Koboko district in Uganda. Omia's work enables farmers to continue production throughout the year, hence they get a harvest when products are scarce on the market.

Two of WFP's portfolio companies in Uganda from Ignite have joined forces to extend their services to refugees and host community farmers. Under the Refugee Entrepreneurship and Agricultural Project (REAP) the partnership between Omia and *Emata*, a digital finance provider, will extend access to affordable finance, inputs, productive equipment, market linkage with guaranteed offtake to further develop climate-smart agricultural value chains in West Nile region, Uganda. Starting with loans to loans to Omia farmers growing different cash crops, the partnership will soon expand to other agricultural enterprises, optimizing their cultivation process and market reach along the way.

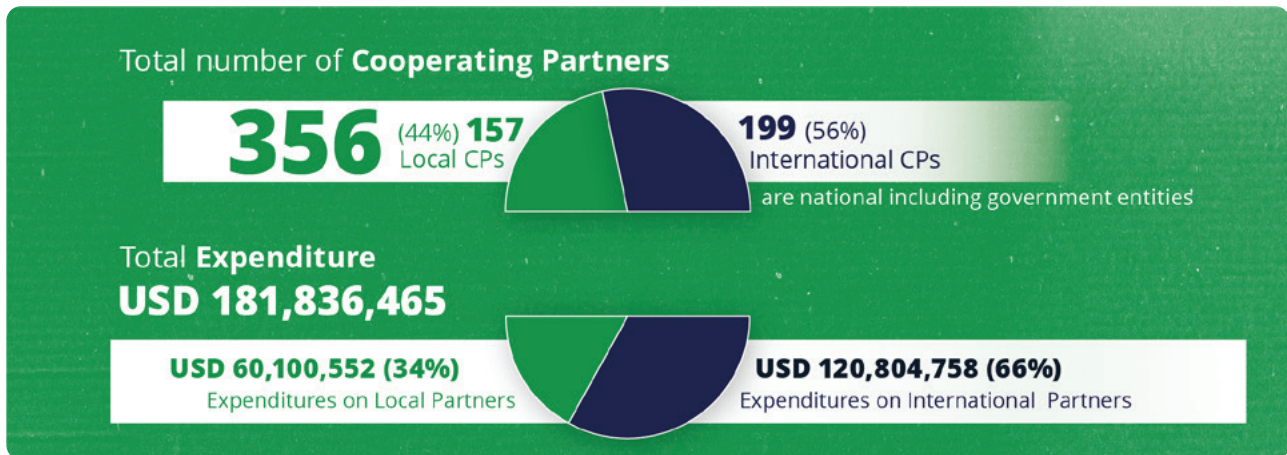
Another IGNITE alumni Quest Banker has been selected as a direct implementing partner to provide digital financial services to thousands of farmers via VSLAs, farmer groups and coops, under the joint WFP - FAO project, *Building Climate-Resilience for Food and Nutrition Security of Smallholder Farming Households in Teso Sub-Region in Uganda*) supporting farmers embed climate-resilient agricultural practices.



[Click here to watch the video](#)

# DELIVERING with Cooperating Partners





WFP Cooperating Partners remain an essential part of the implementation and achievement of WFP's Country Strategic Plans (CSP). WFP partnered with 356 partners, out of which 199 were national organizations across the nine countries.

In 2023, WFP continued to advance the localization agenda as part of its commitment to the Grand Bargain. WFP collaborated with National Non-Governmental Organizations and Governments in the region to increase its footprint in hard-to-reach areas, strengthen capacities, and leverage local knowledge, skills, and solutions while fostering stronger coordination amongst various stakeholders for sustainability. Overall, 33 percent of WFP Cooperating Partners' expenditure was to the national partners exceeding the 25 percent Grand bargain commitment threshold.

The partnership between the Sudan Red Crescent and the WFP has been instrumental in delivering critical food assistance to vulnerable populations in Sudan for over 15 years. In 2023, this partnership remained critical in delivering emergency food assistance, as Sudan faced heightened needs and a challenging situation due to conflict. The Sudan Red Crescent demonstrated its capacity to respond effectively and at scale. Through this partnership, WFP was able to deliver critical food assistance to millions of vulnerable people across nine states in Sudan when needs were at their highest, and the unpredictable political situation threatened to disrupt programmes. Leveraging the Sudan Red Crescent's extensive network of volunteers and their deep understanding of local contexts, WFP was able to navigate logistical and operational challenges more effectively, reaching people in dire need of assistance.



In Burundi, WFP collaborated with the National Meteorological Institute (IGEBU) and Burundi Red Cross to strengthen emergency preparedness, early warning systems, and anticipatory actions. WFP continued to strengthen the capacity of key local and national actors on early warning and anticipatory action. The initiative gained visibility and momentum in the country, drawing national and regional UN agencies' attention, and securing strong buy-in from national Disaster Risk Management (DRM) authorities.



In South Sudan, WFP piloted a partnership between a local NGO Smile Again Africa Development Organization (SAADO) and an international NGO World Vision in Central Equatoria. The pilot partnership aimed to leverage the strengths and expertise of both local and international organizations to enhance the effectiveness and increase local capacities through apprenticeship. WFP plans to integrate this model into future partnership frameworks.



In Kenya, comprehensive capacity-building initiatives were offered to local partners, initially focused on implementation aspects like commodities management and reporting, but progressively expanding to include cross-cutting areas like gender and protection.



In Uganda, WFP's partnership with local partners contributed to enhancing their capacity to implement activities, improve the quality of assistance, and strengthen their financial management systems. These partnerships have been instrumental in promoting sustainability and self-reliance within the communities WFP serves. For instance, WFP transitioned and handed over asset-creation activities in Isingiro district to the local Government, empowering local authorities to take ownership of development initiatives. In addition, to build Self-Reliance, WFP Uganda is planning to work with local partners by mapping out refugee-led organizations and local Community-Based Organizations in the different settlements and supporting their formal registration in the UN Partner Portal. This will enable these organizations to identify and access partnership opportunities from the UN system.

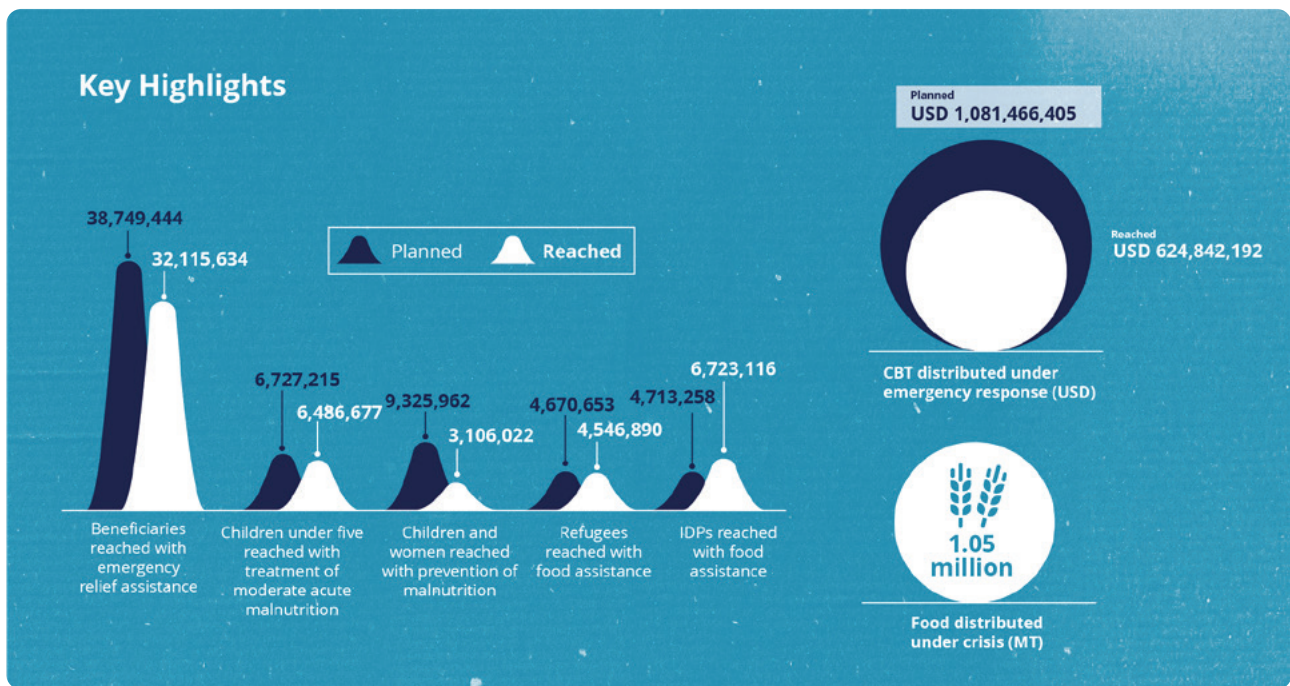


WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

# LEADING in Emergency Response







## Delivering at Scale

WFP continued the provision of humanitarian assistance in Eastern Africa, including in response to the effects of the Horn of Africa drought earlier in the year and El-Nino-enhanced flooding later in the year, against a backdrop of widespread insecurity and conflict in the region. All enabled by the generous contributions from our donors, crisis response accounted for 85 percent of WFP resources in the region.

WFP together with its cooperating partners, reached 32 million people with emergency food assistance including 4.5 million refugees, people affected by crisis and IDPs. The use of cash-based transfers (CBT) was scaled up including in emergency contexts where markets and conditions were feasible. Cash-based transfers not only ensured timely assistance to the affected populations but also empowered beneficiaries to make choices on the use of resources. Furthermore, it supported the local economies by injecting resources into local markets.<sup>1</sup> WFP disbursed a substantial sum of USD 624.8 million through CBT, in addition to distributing 1.05 million MT of in-kind food transfers for crisis response. Somalia distributed the largest amount of CBT in the region, USD 395.2 million, for crisis response. The in-kind food distributed by WFP included 261,000 MT procured from local procurement, thereby injecting approximately USD 212 million into local economies.

WFP monitoring assessments indicated drought response in affected countries helped avert worsening food insecurity. There was a moderate increase in the proportion of households with acceptable levels of food consumption, from 42 percent in 2022 to 49 percent in 2023. This indicates improvements in food consumption frequency and dietary diversity among the targeted population recovering from drought-induced food insecurity. Subsequently, the proportion of households resorting to emergency coping mechanisms decreased from 38 percent in 2022 to 20 percent in 2023. Reductions in negative coping measures correlated with a decrease in the consumption-based coping strategy index (rCSI) from 13 in 2022 to 10 in 2023, indicating slight reductions in the level of stress faced by households due to food shortages.

<sup>1</sup> WFP Economic Impact Assessment \_ expenditures in Eastern Africa\_ 2022

Levels of acute malnutrition remained a concern. WFP reached 6.5 million women and children with the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition, representing only 50 percent of those requiring nutrition support. Compared to 2022, this is an increase of 2 million children, indicating the increased needs and WFP's capacity to respond and scale up its Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) management programmes in fragile contexts where malnutrition rates tend to be higher due to various factors such as conflict, displacement, or economic instability. Prevention approaches must be scaled up to avoid a recurring nutrition crisis.

## Funding Challenges and its Impact on Food Security

The gap between humanitarian needs and funding continued to increase. While WFP pursued efficiencies (including increased use of cash-based transfers and Anticipatory Action) and strengthened its systems to ensure the assistance reached the right people, extensive reduction in assistance was unavoidable. WFP was forced to scale down assistance to populations in need due to funding, including in Somalia, where the number of people assisted was reduced by 74 percent. In South Sudan, one of the countries with the highest proportion of food insecurity in the region<sup>2</sup>, due to funding constraints and poor infrastructure, WFP was forced to shorten the duration of the emergency lean season response and restricted her geographical reach. WFP also reduced ration sizes by up to 70 percent of the minimum food basket, affecting all refugees in the region.

Reductions and delays in the provision of food assistance in the context of worsening economic situation resulted in large unmet basic needs, made self-reliance gains more difficult to achieve, and households resorted to negative coping strategies to meet their food needs and increased in protection risks. There is currently a risk of catastrophic food security and nutrition outcomes in Sudan and South Sudan and serious deterioration in many other parts of the region.



For instance, the food security status of the crisis-affected people in South Sudan slightly deteriorated with the proportion of households with poor food consumption levels increasing from 26 percent in 2022 to 28 percent in 2023.



In Burundi, only 46 percent of refugees reported to be consuming adequate food, a reduction from 92 percent in 2022, and households at risk of food insecurity increased from 7.8 percent in 2022 to 44 percent in 2023.



In Rwanda, food consumption levels for refugees deteriorated from 61 percent in 2022 to 50 percent in 2023, their adoption of food-based coping strategies slightly improved to 12.4 percent in 2023 down from 13.6 percent in 2022.

Despite overall reductions in food assistance, WFP was able to fully sustain nutrition support and school feeding programmes crucially benefiting the vulnerable populations. **Adequate and sustained funding and improved humanitarian access are however urgently needed to address the food security crises in Eastern Africa.**

<sup>2</sup> WFP\_FAO\_hunger-hotspots-fao-wfp-early-warnings-acute-food-insecurity-november-2023-april-2024



© OCHA/Ala Kheir

## Beating all Odds to Reach People Affected by Sudan Regional Crisis

The outbreak of conflict in Sudan in April 2023 resulted in an unprecedented humanitarian crisis, leading to a rise in the levels of acute food insecurity among the Sudanese people. The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) showed that 20.3 million individuals, a record high<sup>3</sup> of 42 percent of the country's population, were acutely food insecure. Nearly 5 million people are in emergency levels of hunger, and over 8.5 million people have been displaced internally and into neighboring countries, including South Sudan, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Central African Republic (CAR), since the war began.

The insecurity led to a two-week operational pause at the onset of the crisis. When WFP resumed operations in May, substantial humanitarian access challenges were faced. WFP then invested in access capacities and worked closely with OCHA and other partners to expand the accessible network of roads and facilitate an effective emergency response. WFP activated a 6-month corporate scale-up for Sudan in June and a corporate scale-up for the Sudan Regional Crisis in November 2023. This enabled focusing whole-organization support on the operation.

In addition to the 5.8 million people receiving General Food Assistance, WFP also reached more than 240,000 children (6-59 months) pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls for the prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. This is a significant reduction compared to previous years due to limited access and non-functionality of health institutions in conflict areas. In South Sudan, WFP reached 363,000 people<sup>4</sup> while in Chad, WFP assisted over 600,000 new refugees, returnees, and the most vulnerable among the host population – all affected by the Sudan crisis. Major achievements included breakthroughs in reaching people in West and Central Darfur through the Chad-Sudan Border and Khartoum with life-saving assistance.

<sup>3</sup> IPC Sudan Acute Food Insecurity Jun2023-Feb2024\_report.pdf (ipcinfo.org). <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156730/?iso3=SDN>

<sup>4</sup> South Sudan Annual Country Report | World Food Programme (wfp.org)

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# Uprooted dreams: One girl's story of struggle and hope



WFP/Leni Kinzli

Nineteen-year-old Aziza Mohammed Izak was about to start her final year of secondary school in Khartoum, eager to move on to university. She loved English, but she especially wanted to get a degree in Psychology to help troubled kids overcome trauma.

Instead, Aziza has been faced with her own anguish after Sudan's war upended her life, forcing her to leave her home in the capital and everything she knew. "We cannot return but we can't stay living like this," Aziza told WFP staff from Port Sudan where she's seeking refuge from the fighting that rages on in Khartoum, "yet there's nowhere else for us to go."

When the clashes broke out in the capital on 15 April, she and her mother sold everything they owned to buy a bus ticket to Port Sudan hundreds of kilometres away; a place where they knew nobody. "We have nothing to our name – no house, no food, no money... our life's memories have been destroyed." Now she and her mother sleep in an overcrowded dormitory with several other women, caught in between holding on to and letting go of a life that has been shattered by war.

Aziza's profound loss is echoed in the experiences of millions of her fellow citizens. Since the outbreak of conflict in Sudan it is estimated that over 8.5 million people have been displaced, forcing them to leave behind their lives and livelihoods in search of refuge from the risk of violence.

In Khartoum, generational homes have been lost to the fighting; the memories of entire families turned to rubble. Violence has wreaked havoc across the country and the trauma caused will similarly take generations to heal for all those in Sudan who have been impacted.

It has now been months since Aziza left her old life behind. Slowly she and her mother have been starting to adjust. Aziza still remembers happier times from before the war: dancing with her friends to hip-hop videos on YouTube or sitting on the banks of the Nile River that cuts through Khartoum.

"I love Khartoum and I would kiss the ground if I could go back to a country in peace," Aziza says, describing dreams of returning to "a warm house filled with love." Then she describes her last memories of the city: helplessly watching people die in the streets as she fled; the impact of the conflict on Aziza and others like her and the depths of its effects are hard to imagine.

Despite this, when WFP spoke with Aziza, she told staff of the joyful atmosphere in the camp that day. WFP had been distributing food assistance, including Sudan's main staple, sorghum, along with lentils and oil. She was especially excited that the kids were laughing and playing, knowing their bellies would soon be full.

"We are so happy to receive this food from WFP," Aziza says, describing traditional dishes she and others will make with WFP provisions. "Now we can have a home-cooked meal with our favourite dishes and don't need to go sleep hungry."

WFP's priority since the crisis has been to reach the most at-risk displaced and conflict-affected communities with life-saving food assistance. This helps ensure that those like Aziza and her mother do not go hungry or risk slipping into fatal levels of malnutrition as they grapple with the uncertainty of life away from their homes, not knowing if or when they would ever be able to return.

Following the conflict, WFP supported 6.2 million displaced/conflict affected people with life-saving supplies. Each one of these people have their own unique story of how their lives and memories have been upended. WFP emergency support helps reduce the impact that conflict-affected communities are facing and, hopefully, will help them find the strength to rebuild their futures.



WFP/Leni Kinzli

# NUTRITION

## Response



## Key Highlights

**6 million** pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) and children under 5 supported with the nutrition programme to treat those with moderate acute malnutrition.

**11 million** people reached with Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities.



Prevention of malnutrition reached **3 million** PBWG and under 5 children.

WFP is piloting cash as a modality to prevent acute malnutrition in 4 countries.

The use of cash for nutrition programmes are contributing to improved consumption of nutrient-dense foods.

In Eastern Africa, the year 2023 witnessed a concerning rise in the number of people, particularly children under 5 years of age and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG), requiring nutritional support primarily attributed to a combination of climatic shocks, including droughts and El Niño events, compounded by ongoing conflicts in the region. The war in Sudan that broke in April 2023 and continues to date has exacerbated the need for prevention and treatment of acute malnutrition programmes. Nutrition emergency response further escalated across neighbouring countries with no exception of age, gender or social status thereby increasing demand for food assistance over limited if not diminishing resources.

Decreased funding for both the treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition has negatively impacted the delivery of services. In some countries, WFP has had to introduce prioritisation, to only reach areas in IPC 4 level and above, this poses a risk of leaving out other vulnerable communities who require food and nutrition assistance. Further, socio-economic challenges such as continuing high food prices continuously posed a challenge, especially for the cash for nutrition programming.



WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

## Treating and Preventing Moderate Acute Malnutrition

Overall, the WFP Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa was able to reach more than six million PBWG and children under 5 with moderate acute malnutrition treatment activities in addition to the over three million supported with malnutrition prevention activities.

Specialized Nutritious Foods (SNF) were supplemented to children under 5 years and PBWG, complementing by food assistance provided to the needy population. In various settings and at the individual level too, nutritional counselling and social behavioural change activities and services were facilitated to empower populations towards better healthy behaviours that affect their nutrition status. In 2023, these Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities have reached an estimated 11 million people.

In Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda, WFP's treatment programme for crisis affected population achieved a recovery rate of more than 90 percent, and in Kenya an 84 percent recovery rate. These rates exceeded the recommended SPHERE standard rate of 75 percent, with remarkably low non-response, default, and mortality rates. This demonstrates programme effectiveness in treating acute malnutrition in PBWG and children under 5.

## Responding to Nutrition crisis - MORE IS NEEDED



In Sudan, nutrition in emergency response was linked to the general food assistance to ensure coverage of nutritional needs of households with children under 5 years and PBWG. WFP was only able to reach a third of its planned targets. Over 178,000 children 6-59 months and PBWG received nutrition support to prevent acute malnutrition and nearly 147,000 children under 5 were reached by home fortification using micronutrient powders. In addition, 189,000 PBWG and children under 5 were reached with treatment of moderate acute malnutrition.

The low coverage is due to access and resourcing challenges which resulted in delayed delivery of interventions and non-functionality of health institutions. This, coupled with the long lead time for the supply of specialized nutritious foods (Ready to Use Supplementary Food), severely impacted WFP's ability to procure and provide nutrition products to the intended number of beneficiaries. The shortage was further exacerbated by the destruction of the SAMIL factory during the early stages of the conflict, which was the only local supplier of specialized nutritious foods to WFP's operations in Sudan.

While WFP's reach was impacted by the disruption to programming, the effectiveness of its emergency interventions and ability to achieve positive outcomes remained high.

WFP requires additional funding to continue to provide critical nutrition support to prevent malnutrition and to quickly treat PBWG and children with moderate acute malnutrition. WFP and its partners are working together to prioritize expanded access which will remain a top priority heading into 2024.



## Cash for Prevention of Acute Malnutrition

WFP continued to explore the use of cash based transfers as a modality to prevent acute malnutrition. Somalia, Burundi, Ethiopia and Djibouti have ongoing cash for nutrition projects as an alternative to the conventional use of specialized nutritious foods.



For instance, WFP Somalia integrated a cash for prevention of acute malnutrition project into ongoing emergency food assistance in IDP camps in Baidoia and Mogadishu, where markets were found to be functional. Targeting households with either a child under 2 years or with a pregnant and breastfeeding woman, WFP reached 15,000 beneficiaries targeting households with cash top-ups. Each targeted individuals received a cash transfer designed to meet daily energy and nutrient requirements.



In Uganda, the NutriCash programme was implemented in close collaboration with the Government and partners in eight refugee-hosting districts of West Nile. Beneficiaries received cash as a critical social safety net and resilience building. In total, 13,633 PBWG and children under the age of two years received monthly cash-based transfers worth USD 2.2 million to help them meet their food and nutrition needs.

Programme recipients and spouses received training on care practices through SBC, and financial literacy training and support to start backyard gardens. Monitoring results indicate that 70 percent of supported NutriCash households reported utilising their backyard gardens to complement and diversify household diets. Similarly, 74 percent of supported households had acceptable levels of food consumption. Furthermore, the Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W) – the proportion of women of reproductive age eating at least five food groups in the past 24 hours – increased from 28 percent (June 2023) at baseline to 38 percent at the second routine monitoring survey conducted after six months (December 2023).



Ethiopia successfully continued the Fresh Food Voucher programme, transferring USD 6 million to 143,890 PBWG and children under 2 which were redeemed through local retailers. Outcome data show that the use of cash contributed consumption nutrient dense fresh foods among supported households.

For instance, in Amhara, only three percent of households reported having never consumed iron-rich food, a reduction from 85 percent in 2022. In addition, the consumption of diverse dietary foods among PBWG in Amhara region stagnated at 75 percent in 2023 due to access challenges while improving in Afar and Somali regions. The minimum acceptable diet for children 6-23 months improved from 7 percent prior to implementation to 52 percent in Afar and Somali. Assessments confirmed that complementing fresh food voucher with SBC was effective in contributing to adherence to recommended nutritional practices.

WFP will continue to pursue this approach, while leveraging on lessons and evidence to inform further scale up. So far, the utilization of cash transfers for nutrition outcomes, coupled with a robust SBC component and assessments of market functionality, reflects a progressive approach in addressing malnutrition. Use of cash provides beneficiaries with greater autonomy and flexibility in meeting their nutritional needs, while the incorporation of SBC strategies enhances knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to nutrition. Despite the potential benefits of cash transfers for nutrition, challenges persist in the registration and tracking of beneficiaries. WFP is testing and adopting innovative solutions such as mobile-based registration and tracking systems, community-based monitoring mechanisms, and strengthened partnerships with local authorities and community organizations.

## Collaboration in the implementation of WHO Guidelines

The release of the 2023 WHO Guideline on prevention and management of wasting and nutritional oedema (acute malnutrition) in infants and children under 5 years has brought WFP, UNICEF and WHO into further collaboration ensuring wider dissemination of the recommendations. The Eastern Africa region has five frontrunner countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Somalia, and Sudan) identified to initiate programmatic transitions from old protocols. These countries were identified based on the high burden of wasting and with an implementation guide developed through the corporate partnership of UNICEF and WFP.

## WFP's HIV Response in Eastern Africa

The battle against HIV remains relevant both in the Eastern and Southern Africa regions although significant strides have been made. There was a commendable 65 percent decline in HIV incidence among women and girls since 2010. However, the overall decline in incidence across countries and populations is not yet swift enough to meet the 2025 targets.

In 2023, WFP's regional HIV efforts focused on a three pronged approach, **evidence and analytics for strategic programming and advocacy**; **resource mobilisation** for programme implementation and research; and **strategic partnerships**.

To strategically position HIV at the centre of WFP's regional efforts, a comprehensive synthesis of food security and nutrition vulnerability assessments among people living with HIV and HIV-affected households was conducted, utilizing evidence from Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda.

The evidence reveals a complex profile of intersecting vulnerabilities, spanning social, economic, gender, and other inequalities, highlighting how HIV is both a product of and a contributor to disparities and vulnerability. This will inform effective programming for PLHIV and their households while supporting WFP's efforts towards achieving SDG 2. High-level results from four assessments conducted between 2022 and 2023 in Djibouti, Rwanda, Uganda, and Somalia, focusing on the importance of food and nutrition security for the HIV response in both stable and emergency contexts, were widely disseminated, including through seven presentations at the International Conference on AIDS in Africa (ICASA).

Engagement in the Regional AIDS Team for East and Southern Africa (RATESA) has fostered strategic partnerships with all 11 UN co-sponsors on the United Nations Joint Team on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and additional partners, such as IOM and OCHA, to advance the East and Southern Africa HIV agenda. Co-leading with UNHCR in the area of work on HIV in humanitarian settings and efforts on HIV-sensitive social protection with the ILO, WFP continues to play a key role in regional efforts to eliminate AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

# INVESTING in School Based Programmes



## Key Highlights

Government-led Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) is a critical platform for food systems transformation in the Eastern Africa Region.

WFP facilitated and supported the participation of member states from the region at the Global School Meals Coalition Summit in Paris.

WFP Rwanda transitioned **108 schools** to the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP).

**158,597 children** provided with take home rations in Sudan.

value of assets and infrastructure handed over to national stakeholders as a result of WFP capacity strengthening support; **USD 1,287,721**.



The first Sub-regional Network on School Meals Coalition was launched in June 2023.

In Kenya and Djibouti, WFP has successfully completed the transition of school feeding programmes to government.

**3,302,358 school children** (51 percent boys; 49 percent girls) reached through school meals programme.

**38,934 MT** of food distributed in schools.

In Ethiopia each **USD 1** invested in school meals generates **USD 5 in return**.

WFP supported schools reported higher education outcomes **attendance, retention**.

Governments in the region are increasingly recognizing school feeding as a critical investment in human capital, local economies, health, and nutrition, and are firmly leading the advancement of this agenda, despite the significant challenge of limited fiscal capacity. WFP continues to play an important role in school feeding and is well-positioned to support governments and contribute to the multiple benefits it offers.

WFP invests in both direct programmes and capacity strengthening activities, tailored to specific country contexts. The capacity strengthening efforts aim to establish long-term systems that enhance the resilience of the most vulnerable communities.

In 2023, WFP effectively reached **more than 3 million** school children with nutritious meals, employing diverse approaches to enhance school attendance and retention rates in supported institutions.

## Transitioning school feeding programmes to Government Ownership

As government interest and investment in the establishment and expansion of national school feeding programs in the region accelerate, WFP is increasingly regarded as the partner of choice for providing technical assistance and support to strengthen policies and systems. Capacity strengthening activities in school feeding vary and include development of systems and tools including policies and strategies, training of government staff at various levels and partners, secondment of staff to various government institutions, facilitation of south-south learning to identify areas of mutual learning by the hosting and visiting countries, targeted resource mobilisation to support transition processes and programme design.



In Kenya and Djibouti, WFP has successfully completed the transition of school feeding programmes to government management. In Ethiopia, the process is ongoing, with efforts focusing on enhancing the government's capacity to maintain and improve the quality of the programme and secure sustainable funding.



WFP Rwanda transitioned 108 schools to the National School Feeding Programme (NSFP) in September 2023, and continues to provide technical assistance at national and district levels, with a focus on supporting the revamp of the NSFP's new procurement model, aimed at improved cost efficiencies, more nutritious meals, and strengthened market linkages for smallholder farmers to supply the school feeding market.



In Somalia, WFP in partnership with the Ministry of Education, hosted a high-level ministerial round table on school feeding in Mogadishu. The event laid a foundation for the establishment of a national home-grown school feeding programme and brought on board three key ministries to support this initiative, positioning school feeding as a national development priority.

## Home Grown School feeding, a Catalyst for Strengthened Food Systems



WFP continues to support the roll-out of Home-Grown School Feeding Programmes with increased government engagement and resourcing. The HGSP programmes have multiple benefits, as they contribute to various sectors including, health, nutrition and local agriculture outcomes.

In partnership with foundations and other donors, WFP proactively pursued the transformation of local food systems using the HGSP in Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya- aimed at improving value chains through enhancing production, post-harvest loss management and adoption of healthier menus in schools. In these countries, adoption of climate tolerant and indigenous nutritious crops was promoted, as well as fortification to improve micronutrients in food supplied to schools.

Across the region, national governments are either scaling up their HGSP programmes or improving quality, focusing on improved menus, integration of clean cooking energy or strengthening linkages with smallholder farmers. Significant advancements have been made in Kenya and Rwanda, with substantial increases in both coverage and funding, with Kenya allocating USD 40 million and Rwanda USD 75 million. Countries are also investigating how HGSP can help tackle climate change issues. Kenya is leading the way by incorporating climate factors into school feeding, aiming to develop a Climate-Smart Home-Grown School Feeding program as part of its expansion strategy.

While HGSF programs are more prevalent in stable environments, such as Kenya, Rwanda, and Ethiopia, countries in volatile situations, including Sudan, South Sudan, and Burundi, are making strides towards adopting Home-Grown School Feeding models, which helps build resilience among smallholder farmers.

With the current fiscal space shrinking, WFP is supporting national governments in developing sustainable financing strategies and evidence generation to demonstrate impact and increase stakeholder interest.

## Galvanising Partnerships for School Feeding

Uganda was the latest country to join the School Meals Coalition, bringing the total number of member states to **eight out of nine** countries in the region, with five having drafted their national commitments. This underscores the importance national governments place on school meals in the region.

WFP Regional Bureau was instrumental in the creation of the East African Sub-Regional School Meals Network in Rwanda in June 2023, marking the first of its kind on a global scale. This network has a strong engagement from Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Rwanda as the host operates as a community of practice, with WFP Regional Bureau serving as its secretariat.

Additionally, WFP facilitated the participation of member states in the inaugural Global School Meals Coalition Summit in Paris with high level representation from Burundi, Ethiopia (Addis Ababa municipality), Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia and South Sudan.

To advance its advocacy efforts on school feeding, WFP together with the Governments' in the region, engaged and participated in the Africa Day of School Feeding held in March 2023 in Addis Ababa. The event highlighted the increasing government investment in school feeding, contributing to education outcomes.

With a three-year funding of USD 31.3 million from Novo Nordisk Foundation, WFP is developing a regional project which will be implemented in Kenya, Uganda, and Rwanda. This project aims to utilize Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) as a catalyst for transforming food systems.

## Evidence on Impact of School Feeding

Burundi and Ethiopia commissioned Value-For-Money studies in collaboration with Harvard University, aiming to demonstrate the impact of WFP-supported school feeding on education outcomes. In Burundi, despite a 2 percent decline in national attendance and retention rates compared to 2022, WFP supported schools exhibited an average attendance rate 2 percent higher than the national average. Also, WFP supported schools reported higher graduation rate, a 1.5 percent lower repetition rate, and a 3.6 percent lower dropout rate. It was also revealed that school meals contributed to social protection, accounting for an average of 8 percent of household consumption expenditures and up to 14 percent of household food consumption.

Ethiopia saw a 2 percent rise in school attendance, reaching 73 percent, with dropout rates in WFP-supported schools' 4 percent lower than the national average of 14 percent. Preliminary findings for the value for money studies from Ethiopia indicated that each USD 1 invested in school meals generates USD 5 in return.

Rwanda and Somalia showcased impressive 99 percent retention rates in WFP-supported schools, underscoring the success of the school meals initiative. In South Sudan, communities benefiting from WFP's onsite school meals and take-home rations witnessed a notable 31 percent increase in enrolment, surpassing the 2022 figure of 13 percent. Moreover, in refugee camps, attendance, enrolment, and retention rates reached 12, 82, and 71 percent, respectively. Uganda experienced a significant 24 percent surge in enrolment compared to the previous year.

WFP Rwanda completed the mid-term evaluation of its HGSP programme, which highlighted positive results, particularly in terms of quality and transition strategy. Additionally, in partnership with the World Bank Development Impact Evaluation (DIME), the decentralized procurement (HGSP) model in Burundi was evaluated, comparing it to the centralized procurement model. Preliminary results underscore the need to scale up and strengthen the local decentralized procurement model. In Burundi and Rwanda, a Development Evaluation of the WFP-Rockefeller partnership has been conducted, identifying gaps and opportunities to strengthen local food systems.

Additionally, WFP in collaboration with Ethiopia's Ministry of Education conducted a gender analysis to evaluate the impact of the school feeding program on gender gaps in the Afar, Oromia, and Amhara regions and to identify pathways for making the program more gender transformative. The findings highlighted the positive effects of school feeding on increasing girls' school enrolment, participation, confidence, motivation, and overall well-being.



**IN THE FIELD  
RWANDA**

5-year-old Irishyura Yvan taking super cereal plus porridge in school

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# Grace and Salwa: a story of resilience in South Sudan

Grace Martin, left, and her daughter Salwa Anthony tend to the family plot in Yambio, South Sudan. Photo: WFP/Eulalia Berlanga

In Yambio, in southwestern South Sudan – a town known for its agriculture and fertile lands – teenager Salwa and her mother, Grace Martin, are beginning their day.

Now in her final year of primary school, Salwa has big dreams for the future, but faces many challenges.

“My mother struggled a lot and even now she works very hard to pay my school fees and bring us food every day,” she says. “This makes me want to go to school and study very hard to help her in the future.”

Martin is a single mother of two. Along with raising her children and two sisters, she cares for her own mother.

“I had a lot of problems before,” says Martin. “I didn’t have enough money to pay school fees and my children were falling sick because there was not enough food in the house.”

Today, however, Martin works at a community farm, where she has a vegetable plot. She also contributes to improving access to community roads. Both activities are part of a joint project to build resilience, run by UNICEF and WFP and funded by the German Development Bank.

The initiative, which includes training in such areas as post-harvest management and business, has been rolled out in urban areas of South Sudan like Yambio.



It aims to enhance access to safe learning spaces, improve health and nutrition services, and bolster food security for communities. For Martin and her daughter, this support has been transformative, turning dreams into stepping stones for a brighter future.

“Now my children eat at least two meals every day and school fees are a priority,” Martin says.



WFP/Eulalia Berlanga

*Women at Salwa’s school dish up WFP school meals that include produce from the school’s garden.*



Eating two meals every day, along with going to school, is not something everyone can do in this East African country, where 7.1 million people are food insecure, and 1.65 million children are malnourished. South Sudan also has some of the world's lowest literacy rates.

WFP school meals ensure students eat at least one nutritious meal daily and promote attendance. This is especially important for girls like Salwa - as 40 percent of girls in South Sudan marry before the age of 18, drop out of school and miss out on higher education.



*Salwa's education includes practical agricultural skills that she can bring to use at home.*

Salwa, too, is part of the resilience-building initiative. Schools like hers where WFP provides school meals to more than 1,400 students - are not only teaching subjects like science but are also offering essential life skills and empowerment.

Gender equality and awareness about gender-based violence – for both girls and boys – are integral parts of the curriculum. They ensure a well-rounded education that prepares students for the challenges of the real world and helps build more equitable communities.

Additionally, Salwa's education includes practical agricultural skills. She contributes to the school's garden, which supplements the WFP meals with fresh fruits and vegetables.

"I use what I learn at school to take care of our vegetable garden at home," she says.

The family's now flourishing garden provides nutritious food and extra income earned from selling the surplus produce.

But Salwa doesn't want to be a farmer when she grows up.

"My favorite subject is science," she says. "I like it a lot because I want to be a doctor in the future and help people."



# CLIMATE AND RESILIENCE

## Actions in Eastern Africa



WFP's climate and resilience efforts aim to ensure that climatic shocks and stressors do not leave long-lasting adverse impacts on communities. WFP worked with Governments and partners to strengthen household resilience and enhance livelihoods through a combination of climate actions and food systems actions which reduce the reliance on humanitarian assistance and are also cost-effective.

WFP implemented integrated programmes action across several sectors including increasing access to adequate, nutritious, and affordable food through functioning food systems; early and anticipatory protection from climate shocks; food and nutrition support during crises; basic social services to build human capital; livelihood support; and community infrastructure and ecosystems restoration.

In 2023, evidence already indicates that resilience programmes reduced humanitarian needs, protected people against the impact of droughts and floods, enabled people to sustain their livelihoods, improved social cohesion, helped to empower women, promoted water resource management, regreened landscapes and regenerated soils for improved food security and nutrition.

## WFP Eastern Africa Climate and Resilience Actions



WFP/Kabir Dhanji



# MITIGATING Impacts of Climate Shocks through Anticipatory Actions

## Key Highlights



**228,000** people reached with anticipatory cash transfers in **Somalia and Burundi**.



**USD 4 million** was distributed to beneficiaries through pre-arranged funding.



**1.3 million** people were reached with early warning messages in **Burundi, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Uganda**.



WFP provided technical assistance to **strengthen national early warning** and forecasting capacities.

## Key Partners

GOVERNMENT MINISTRIES



ICPAC  
IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre



ICPALD  
Centre for Pastoralists Areas and Livestock Development



UNU

unicef



UNDRR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



World Vision



## Anticipatory Action coverage and climate hazards of focus



The Eastern Africa region experienced climate crises from consecutive below-average rainfall seasons to unprecedented flooding. The interaction of these climate-related disasters with ongoing conflicts in certain areas has compounded the challenges faced by affected populations further exacerbating the food and nutrition security, and livelihoods of communities.

To reduce humanitarian needs and related costs, WFP advanced in its efforts to support communities ahead of predicted disasters through anticipatory actions. WFP collaborated with Governments and partners to scale up anticipatory actions for droughts and floods reaching 228,000 people with anticipatory cash and 1.3 million people were reached with early warning messages. These actions aimed to protect people's lives, food security and livelihoods from the impacts of predictable climate hazards.

Successful implementation of Anticipatory Action is dependent on the existence of strong and reliable early warning systems for climatic hazard prediction, the development of predefined operational plans and the availability of prearranged funding that can be quickly released to facilitate actions when predefined trigger thresholds are met. In this regard, WFP's work in the region focused on:

1. Enhancing governments' capacity to develop and implement anticipatory action systems to ensure ownership, scalability and sustainability; and
2. Delivering anticipatory actions at scale and institutionalizing the approach within humanitarian systems, including WFP's emergency preparedness and response systems.

## Somalia Flood Anticipatory Action - WFP'S FIRST IN AFRICA



In 2023, the Global Horn of Africa Climate Outlook Forecast (GHACOF) predicted the occurrence of El Niño-induced floods in Somalia. Responding to this forecast and underscoring commitments towards mitigating impacts of predictable climate disasters, WFP Somalia in close collaboration with the Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA), activated a flood anticipatory action programme – a first of its kind for WFP in Africa – building on the foundations laid by the national flood anticipatory action framework.

- Early warning messages disseminated through radio and community loudspeakers reaching more than 440,000 people empowering them to prepare for the floods and safe evacuation.
- WFP disbursed cash-based transfers totalling USD 2.7 million to more than 218,000 people with 59 percent being women). These cash transfers enabled communities to safeguard themselves and their assets from the impacts of floods.
- WFP also provided specialized nutritious foods to 25,000 children under five years and pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) facing acute malnutrition.
- To support evacuation and delivery of nutrition commodities and fortified biscuits, WFP pre-positioned boats at strategic points along the Juba and Shabelle rivers. This ensured swift and efficient transportation to affected areas and timely access to vital nutrition assistance.



## Flood Anticipatory Actions in Burundi

WFP in collaboration with the Burundi Hydrometeorological Department (known in French as Institut Géographique du Burundi or IGEBU) and Burundi Red Cross successfully activated and implemented anticipatory actions to cushion communities and their livelihoods from the impact of heavy rainfall and potential floods in the vulnerable areas of Rumonge and Muhuta. This was based on the flood Early Action protocol that WFP Burundi supported the Burundi Red Cross to develop.

- More than 10,000 people received Early Warning Messages, enabling households to take timely actions to mitigate the impact of floods on their livelihoods.
- Anticipatory cash transfers to about 9,000 people to meet basic food and other essential needs. The cash was distributed three days ahead of heavy rains and 12 days ahead of peak flooding in the targeted locations.

## Strengthening National Early Warning Systems

Developing systems and capacity strengthening is an important part of delivering anticipatory actions at scale and supporting the sustainability of the approach. This involves conducting anticipatory action feasibility studies, strengthening early warning systems and capacities for forecasting, enhancing operational readiness and delivery systems, and enhancing the policy and enabling environment for anticipatory action.

WFP continued to collaborate and provide technical support to the Governments in the region to strengthen national and local capacities to anticipate, prepare for and respond to predictable climate disasters. About USD 12.5 million has been invested so far in the region to support systems strengthening for anticipatory actions in 9 Countries (Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda).

WFP's comprehensive anticipatory actions in the region exemplify its commitment to proactive disaster preparedness and its dedication to safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable populations. WFP will continue to engage and advocate for additional funding while strengthening its collaboration with the Government to mitigate the impacts of climate-related disasters and enhance the resilience of communities facing recurrent threats.



SpeakoutMedia

## CLIMATE ADAPTATION and Security

WFP helps communities and governments to better prepare for, respond to and recover from climate-related shocks through inclusive risk financing and insurance solutions at a micro and macro level.



### Ethiopia

To pursue sustainability, scalability, and efficiency, WFP redesigned the climate insurance component – R4 programme – by adopting a strategy that integrates Area Yield Index Insurance within the Government Input Voucher Scheme and partnered with an insure-tech private company. Under the approach, 610,760 people were reached through a meso level crop insurance provided to smallholder farmers, through the government’s Input Voucher System (IVS), which enables farmers to access insurance when collecting agricultural inputs in six woredas (districts) in the Amhara region. The total premium paid was USD 1.2 million offering yield protection worth USD 18.5 million.





WFP/Kevin Gitonga



## Kenya

WFP Kenya is implementing inclusive insurance under R4 by providing parametric crop insurance for smallholder farmers and Index Based Livestock Insurance for pastoralists livestock asset protection under a Zoetis Foundation-funded project, known as “Ufugaji Bora.”

WFP provided 32,668 people (90 percent women) with inclusive insurance through the R4 programme. USD 32,060 of payouts benefitted 10,228 people. Participants build their risk retention capacities through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) where they pool their savings to form a loan fund that they borrow from. Over 600 Village Saving and Loan Associations with an average membership of 25 people were supported resulting in USD 100,078 worth of saving. The program addressed needs such as buying farm inputs, paying casual laborers, and starting on-farm and off-farm income-generating activities.

Under livestock insurance, WFP Kenya reached, 4,274 households in the Arid and Semi-Arid counties of Isiolo and Garissa in collaboration with the World Bank-funded De-risking, Inclusion and Value Enhancement of Pastoral Economies in the Horn of Africa (DRIVE) project.



## Sudan

In Sudan, despite the conflict-related challenges, WFP successfully introduced the Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) Replica programme and purchased an ARC Replica policy, providing financial protection against catastrophic drought conditions to nearly 63,000 people. In June 2023, the drought insurance policy was signed between WFP and the ARC Limited Insurance Company. The operational plan was developed for two consecutive seasons 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 and submitted to ARC.



## Somalia

WFP held a workshop on the Africa Risk Capacity (ARC) Replica which introduced ARC Replica to partners as well as created a platform for networking and exchanging knowledge. WFP’s ARC Replica programme also aims to mainstream gender into the interventions and prioritize different needs and vulnerabilities of men, women, boys and girls.





WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

## SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

### Agriculture Market Support

#### Key Highlights



More than **700,000** smallholder farmers (35 percent women) and **403** farmer groups supported across **6** countries.



WFP injected **USD 31 million** into local economies by purchasing from local smallholder farmers and traders.



Smallholder farmers were supported with **equipment and training** on post-harvest management.



Home Grown school feeding **provided markets** for supported smallholder farmers.

WFP food systems interventions aim to transform rural livelihoods and local food systems through the implementation of value chain development interventions as part of its resilient food systems programming. WFP supported more than 700,000 smallholder farmers (35 percent women) and 403 farmer groups across 6 countries. These aimed to address value chain inefficiencies, enhance local food production for local consumption and increase farmers' access to markets through local and regional procurement.

In line with its Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFPP), WFP linked smallholder farmers to school markets, where farmers supplied food commodities to the Home homegrown school feeding programme.

Post-harvest losses remain a concern in the region, with reports indicating reports estimating annual grain losses in the region of USD 4 billion. WFP supported and provided capacity support to agrifood value chain actors including smallholder farmers and farmer organisations, aggregators, millers, processors, and traders in mitigating and reducing post-harvest losses. These included postharvest management training, provision of equipment and infrastructure and market linkages. This has the potential to unlock economic, social, and environmental benefits for value chain actors while optimizing agricultural productivity.

WFP also supported governments in developing postharvest management manuals on grains, fruits, and vegetables. WFP sensitized leaders, experts and policymakers on food safety and quality. It also empowered farmer organizations in their governance, market and business skills and financial literacy.

## Results from WFP Smallholder Support Activities

WFP's investment in smallholder farmer market access in 2023 led to significant achievements in strengthening food systems and supporting smallholder farmers. Cumulatively, WFP injected USD 31 million into local economies by purchasing from local smallholder farmers and traders.



In Burundi, where WFP supported 128 cooperatives, farmers reported an increase in the production of nutritious crops from 50 percent in 2022 to 70 percent in 2023. Further the percentage of targeted smallholders selling through WFP-supported farmer aggregation systems reached 70 percent.



In Ethiopia, WFP collaborated with aggregators, smallholder farmer groups, and the Gambella Bureau of Agriculture to support production and increase access to markets. Over 5,000 MT was procured from 155 smallholder farmers and 12 aggregators, injecting USD 3.5 million into the local economy.



Farm to Market Alliance (FtMA) in Kenya supports a network of 1,081 Farmer Service Centers (FSCs) that currently serve 244,008 smallholder farmers (54 percent women) across Arid and Semi-Arid Lands and high-potential agricultural areas. Smallholders sold 6,377 MT of food commodities (maize, high-iron beans, sorghum, and potatoes) valued at over USD 3.7 million, directly increasing farmer income. The observed increase in sales is attributed to farmer service centres assisting farmers in implementing improved post-harvest handling and storage practices and enhanced awareness and capacity to maintain food quality to increase market value thereby enhancing food safety, quality, and access to predictable markets.



WFP/Carolina Moncayo

## RESILIENCE BUILDING Through Asset Creation

WFP’s resilience work is a central component of its climate offer given its ability to advance ecosystem restoration, diversify livelihoods, promote social cohesion, protect people from shocks and contribute to climate adaptation at the local level. Through its asset creation and livelihoods programme, implemented in 9 countries, WFP was able to directly reach 1.6 million people.

### Key Highlights

Number of people supported through asset creation activities:

**1,602,495**



USD transferred to households participating in asset creation:

**USD 18,912,883**

Hectares (ha) of agricultural land cultivated/ rehabilitated under FFA:

**76,300 Ha**



Number of assets built, restored or maintained by targeted communities in FFA:

**3,607**

## Rwanda’s Resilience Project Handed Over to the Local Government



In Rwanda, WFP has supported 180,000 vulnerable households in five districts to enhance their livelihoods through the Sustainable Market Alliance and Assets Creation for Resilient Communities and Gender Transformation (SMART) project.

The project adopted an integrated approach to building resilience to help communities to meet their basic needs, and enhance agricultural skills, practices, quality and yields for sustainable livelihood improvement.

Along with its partners, WFP supported communities in advancing climate resilience through various interventions. This included the establishment of irrigation schemes, reclamation and rehabilitation of degraded land, restoration of degraded landscapes, water resource management, access to markets, livelihood skills and diversification.



WFP continued to expand the integration of conservation agriculture to all the project districts. This approach promoted sustainable farming, reduced land and soil degradation and helped farmers to cope with climate shocks. The project, which set an example of collaboration between partners and local communities, made a significant contribution to food security, ecosystem restoration and women’s empowerment, and was successfully handed over to the government with WFP continuing to offer its support.

### Beneficiary Perceptions: South Sudan Asset Creation and Livelihoods



In South Sudan, WFP supported 82,000 households (494,000 people) to establish and rehabilitate community and household assets to increase connectivity, access to water, agricultural production, and protect livelihoods from hazards. Supported households reported that the support including training has improved their resilience against climate shocks and variability by adapting agricultural practices and livelihoods.

The proportion of households with a medium to high climate resilience capacity score increased from 88 percent to 91 percent while the proportion of households with a medium to high climate adaptation benefit score increased from 11 percent to 17 percent. This demonstrates an increase in the number of households feeling adequately prepared to withstand adverse climatic conditions and a decrease in those feeling underprepared. Further, the proportion of assisted households reporting benefits derived from improved assets rose from 62 percent to 82 percent, surpassing the annual targets.

## Economic Empowerment and Resilient Livelihoods for Youth

Climate resilient livelihoods for youth are a key driver for WFP. Almost half of the world's youth population will be African within the next decade. Climate risks and high rates of unemployment leave young people vulnerable to shocks. To support young people, WFP is partnering with the Mastercard Foundation to increase agribusiness employment opportunities in Kenya, Rwanda, and Uganda. These countries alone have an estimated population of over 24 million young people. WFP is facilitating income generation by promoting both on and off-farm service provision, enterprise development, and employment opportunities through specialized trainings, business development and coaching, and access to finance.

Capacity strengthening activities reached close to 66,00 participants (with 62 percent being youth ages 18-35 years of age, of which 54 percent were young women) in 2023. Countries also supported 4,881 youth enterprises, with 34 percent being led by young women. Outcome monitoring results in Kenya and Uganda show promising areas for youth employment opportunities, with almost 17,000 youth (over 50 percent women) having reported increased income as a result of project participation in 2023. These youth are engaged in a range of activities, including farming, aggregation, Farmer Service Centers, service providers, seasonal workers, retailers, transporters, and village savings agents, among others.



WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# In Ethiopia's Somali Region, women build businesses and resilience to climate change



WFP/Michael Tewelde

In eastern Ethiopia's Bokolmayo refugee camp, Sadiya heads her women-dominated cooperative union, which has allowed her to build a thriving livestock business. Photo: WFP/Michael Tewelde

Sadiya starts her day early by letting out her goats from her backyard barn at Bokolmayo refugee camp, a collection of makeshift houses in Ethiopia's Somali region. Whistling cheerfully, she leads them first to a water point nearby, then farther away to find a good grazing spot amid the cracked land.

## Businesswoman

With her flowing blue robes, the 25-year-old refugee from Somalia is a rare sight among pastoralists who dominate this slice of eastern Ethiopia, where men traditionally oversee livestock rearing.

"It is not easy to be in this business as a woman," says Sadiya. (As a refugee, her last name is withheld). "When we started, many people told us not to waste our time and money as we would surely fail."

Sadiya's assessment reflects the complex social fabric of Ethiopia's predominantly pastoralist Somali region. Here, women are often confined to age-old roles such as taking care of household chores and children. Their involvement in public life and decision-making is limited.

Refugees like Sadiya, whose family fled fighting in her homeland more than a decade ago, face further challenges. They do not have access to land, job opportunities, or financial services such as loans.

## Entrepreneurship

But an initiative that builds skills, incomes and social cohesion among locals and refugees is challenging the status quo – and offering new economic opportunities in one of Ethiopia’s poorest areas.

Supported by the World Food Programme (WFP) and international nonprofit Mercy Corps, it has enrolled some 1,000 mostly female participants in refugee camps across the Somali region, including Bokolmayo.

Empowering women is central to the initiative, which gives them training and leadership in start-up businesses, while their male counterparts play contributory roles. But it aims to lift up entire communities, in a region where climate-intensified droughts and floods have led to soaring hunger.

“The programme focuses on entrepreneurship, where women select businesses that they want to engage in,” says Daniel Ocom, WFP resilience programme officer for the Somali region. “Once the businesses are set up, we provide them with different trainings that equip them with skillsets to sustain thriving businesses.”

## Savings cooperatives

Since the project was first launched a few years ago, some 600 women have established their own businesses and formed 24 registered business cooperatives.

The initiative links them to sustainable markets to sell their products and services. Participants have also created village savings-and-loans associations, in which members pool money to lend and invest in business projects.

“Access to markets and financial services is a game-changer for many women in this region,” Ocom says. “From our interventions, we have seen first-hand that the women in these areas have many innovative ideas. When linked with the right markets and given financial access, they will be able to build profitable businesses.”

That’s the goal at Bokolmayo, where Sadiya is chair of the camp’s cooperative union: 25 women and five men who have pooled their resources, and matched their savings with WFP start-up capital, to launch their own small businesses, as well as invest in a jointly owned livestock trading venture.

After tending to her goats, Sadiya heads to the weekly meeting of her cooperative, Hodan, which means wealth in Somali.

When the group first started, meetings would often be held in the tree-shaded backyards of a member’s house. Now, the participants have invested their business profits in building a corrugated metal house that they lovingly call their ‘headquarters.’

Sadiya kicks off the session with a roll call. Next, the members tally last week’s sales and decide on how much to save, and what type of livestock to invest in.

“Many of the skills we have now, we gained through WFP’s trainings,” says Sadiya, who started her own goat-breeding and trading business last year. Her new career is a source of hope for the mother of seven, who married young.

“They trained us on how to save,” she adds, “how to develop our business, how to buy and sell livestock, and how to share information within the cooperative.”

The project is also nurturing ties between the region's refugee and host communities, who share the same language, history and ancestors.

At Hilaweyn refugee camp, some 50km southeast of Bokolmayo, local trader Unah Ibrahim Mahmud has set up a clothing business in the camp. She is part of the 25-member, majority-women Wadajir cooperative, which includes both refugees and Ethiopians like herself.

"Business is good," Ibrahim says of the group, whose members sell food and non-food products at the camp, which previously had very few traders. "As a cooperative, we support each other and always share our experiences."

## Gender equality

Beyond business training, the programme offers sessions – open to participants and their families – on issues like gender equality, land inheritance, division of home labour and women's participation in public spheres.

"When we first started, some women's husbands came to us and asked for their wives' shares without the wives' knowledge," says Sadiya, from the Bokolmayo camp. The men also accused cooperative members of stealing their spouse's money, she adds.

"Now they are saying that we are making good progress and encouraging us," Sadiya says.

Another Hodan cooperative member, Mouslima, agrees the sessions have changed perceptions.

"Before the training, many people in our community thought women should take care of their families and stay at home," says Mouslima, who is also a Somali refugee. "Now we all know that mothers can also earn

an income and support their families – and fathers should support mothers."

Somali refugee Mouslima hopes her business profits will educate her three sisters – then she wants to finish school herself. Photo: WFP/Michael Tewelde

Mouslima is Hodan's bookkeeper. She also runs a hair salon at the camp. But she has bittersweet feelings about her new business career.

"I felt so happy to learn and gain knowledge, but at the same time I felt bad for not finishing school," says Mouslima, whose family fled Somalia in 2018, during her last year of high school.

She hopes to use her business profits to help educate her three younger siblings.

"Once all of them graduate, I swear it will be my turn to go and get a degree," she says.

Her training has taught her to be patient. "I learned that everything is gradual, step by step," Mouslima says, "and it is never too late to learn."



WFP/Michael Tewelde

*Somali refugee Mouslima hopes her business profits will educate her three sisters – then she wants to finish school herself.*



# Environmental and Social Sustainability **FRAMEWORK** (ESSF)



In alignment with WFP’s Environmental Policy and Sustainability Framework, measures are in place to guarantee that activities outlined in the Country’s Strategic Plans do not inadvertently harm the environment or populace and to progressively increase the environmental and social sustainability of WFP programme activities.

WFP also invest in sustainable management systems to reduce the environmental impact of support operations, including supply chain activities, and to further promote socially responsible and inclusive labour practices.

## Environmental and Social Safeguards for Programme Activities

WFP identified environmental and social risks at the programme level to avoid (through redesign) or otherwise manage negative environmental or social impacts. WFP systematically addressed environmental and social concerns, prioritizing the prevention of land degradation and promoting land restoration, nature-based solutions and sustainable natural resources management.



WFP Burundi supported the Government’s environmental goals by focusing on restoration, conservation, and climate adaptation. WFP supported communities to maintain 152 hectares of land, rehabilitate and/or construct drainage canals and flood protection dykes, and produce 15,876 cubic meters of compost. Additionally, WFP-assisted schools also benefited from briquets and participated in reforestation activities contributing to environmental sustainability and fostering eco-consciousness among students.



In Ethiopia, WFP prioritised environmentally sustainable practices and technologies in its resilience interventions. These included solar-powered irrigation systems in Somali and Amhara regions and the construction of half-moons to restore 300 hectares of degraded agricultural rangeland. Irrigation systems have enabled communities to use scarce water sustainably, helping them to protect against drought and stabilizing their food security. Renewable solar energy is reducing reliance on diesel generators.



**IN THE FIELD  
GODE, ETHIOPIA**

Rehabilitation of a solar-powered small-scale irrigation system in Gode, Ethiopia towards equitable water and energy utilisation.

WFP/Anna Eriksen



In Djibouti, WFP supported the Government to address development challenges. through crisis response enhancing resilient livelihoods, institutional support in social protection, and cost-efficient supply chain services for the humanitarian community. In 2023, all implemented CSP activities were subjected to an environmental and social risk screening and management/ mitigation measures were put in place.



WFP Kenya's interventions extend beyond alleviating hunger by promoting climate-smart practices such as planting drought-resistant crops and water harvesting, conserving water resources, and strengthening resilience against unpredictable weather. Reforestation initiatives combat soil erosion, and waste management, and enrich the soil. Additionally, infrastructure projects consider environmental and climate factors for sustainability. In 2023, WFP assessed programme activities for environmental and social risks, implementing necessary mitigation measures. Moreover, WFP reduced fossil fuel consumption by expanding the use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar power, to advance decarbonization efforts.



In Somalia, WFP facilitated community-led rehabilitation and the creation of assets including small-scale solar-powered irrigation systems. Programme beneficiaries were supported to build soil bunds, produce 206 kg of fodder, construct 843 cubic meters of check dams to control soil erosion, expand water reservoir (Berkard), and establish sand dam and vegetable gardens. These assets were vital in natural resource management, promoting land restoration, climate-resilient and regenerative agriculture practices, value chain and market development (with a focus on women and youth), climate risk management, and financial inclusion.



WFP South Sudan supported climate-affected communities to implement long-term solutions to environmental challenges, constructing 350 shallow wells, and 40 multipurpose ponds to improve water availability for agricultural use in 43 counties, and building and rehabilitating 175,000 km of dykes to mitigate flooding. Communities were also supported to rehabilitate 569 km of roads and 38 km of flood control dykes in Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile States. 7.7 million tree seedlings were distributed for reforestation. Activities implemented under 21 field-level agreements were screened for environmental and social risks before implementation in 2023, the included, asset creation activities and projects.



In Rwanda, WFP supported communities to terrace hillsides to retain valuable topsoil during monsoonal rains, preventing soil erosion and improving crop yields. WFP also introduced conservation agriculture in the SMART project resulting in a significant boost in maize and bean yields (increased by 28 percent and 38 percent, respectively). In 2023, handed over an additional 16 newly constructed energy-efficient stoves, this reduced firewood usage for cooking school meals aiming to combat air pollution and deforestation while



In Sudan, WFP assisted 200,000 smallholder farmers with vital resources for wheat production, including heat/drought-tolerant seeds and fertilizers. An evaluation of WFP's post-harvest loss shows that farmers eliminated the use of chemicals and pesticides during storage thereby reducing environmental hazards to humans, and animals, and promoting biodiversity. WFP worked with local communities in areas in Kassala and Gadarif reaching 50,000 farmers with post-harvest loss support to reduce food losses and shortages during droughts.



In Uganda, WFP planted 91,600 indigenous trees in Karamoja to restore and preserve the environment in the semi-arid sub-region. Additionally, WFP distributed energy-efficient stoves to 1,423 households and large energy-efficient stoves to 36 refugee reception centres. These stoves utilize less fuel, thereby decreasing the environmental impact and improving the overall health of communities. Smallholder farmers were trained in briquette production, as an alternative to wood fuel. In 2023, asset creation and agricultural market access and support activities were subjected to environmental and social risk screening with prompt mitigation measures implemented for sustainability.

## Environmental Management and Sustainability

Demonstrating commitment to WFP's [Environmental policy](#), WFP launched and implemented an Environmental Management System (EMS) in all countries in the region, to minimise the environmental footprint of its operations.

### Decarbonisation of WFP infrastructure



32 cross-functional energy audits were carried out across 6 countries, including detailed energy and electrical assessments and solar systems design covering WFP offices, guesthouses, and warehouses (Burundi, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Uganda). The energy audits have led to the development of an evidence-based decarbonisation roadmap, already under implementation in Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya and Somalia.



WFP is implementation of 8 solar systems for a total solar capacity of 500kWp across the region (Burundi, Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda).

### Sustainable Waste Management



WFP expanded its network of recyclers and worked with partners to increase recycling rates, reaching more remote areas through reverse logistics approaches, fostering country-to-country collaboration, and positively contributing to local recycling ecosystems.



In 2023, WFP recycled 7 million polypropylene bags, 345 MT of pallets, 3 MT of metal tins, 12,000 litres of engine oil, and 20 MT of e-waste (Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Sudan).

### Resource Mobilisation for the Green Transition



Two successful renewable energy projects funding applications for the WFP's Energy Efficiency Programme grant (Burundi, Uganda).

# SOCIAL PROTECTION Systems



## Key Highlights

### South Sudan



Implementation of emergency cash response with digital biometric IDM system.

### Djibouti



WFP expanded coverage of the national Safetynet, reaching additional **12,000 households** with food assistance.

### Uganda



The Government approved the design and pilot Government-to-Persons (G2P) payment mechanisms for the Senior Citizen's Grant (SAGE) in four districts in West Nile.



Supported the development of national social protection strategies.



Setup of data analytics for identity management improvement.

### Somalia



Delivering social protection on behalf of the Government.

### Kenya



WFP reached close to **1 million people** in 12 counties through the lean season response using the Enhanced Social Registry for targeting.

### Rwanda



WFP-supported the Government in the design of a digitized cash transfer delivery system for the national public works program.

### Burundi



Support the Government in integration of refugees into the flagship national social protection programme, Merankabandi, and capacity strengthening to enhance social protection systems.



WFP enrolled over 5 million households across 24 counties into Kenya's national registry, linking it to the Enhanced Social Registry.

## Overview

The situation in the region, characterised by shocks, fragility, and conflict in many countries, continued to highlight the importance of social protection as a way of meeting essential needs, responding to crisis, and building resilience to shocks. WFP enhanced partnerships with governments, donors, and international financial institutions (IFIs) to mitigate the impacts of this situation through supporting the scale-up of shock responses, refugee inclusion, systems strengthening and enhancement of policy and institutional frameworks. WFP also continued to implement complementary programmes and supported delivery of social assistance programmes on behalf of governments.

## Shock Responsive Social Protection

As part of strengthening government shock responsive social protection (SRSP) systems, WFP implemented complementary programmes using national systems. In Djibouti, WFP utilised the national social registry to expand coverage of the national SafetyNet providing food assistance to an additional 12,000 households as part of the lean season response. In Kenya as part of the governments' national drought response, WFP progressively scaled up its existing lean season response, reaching close to 1 million people in 12 counties, using the Enhanced Social Registry for targeting.

WFP also supported capacity strengthening for shock responsive social protection. In Uganda, WFP supported the development of national shock responsive social protection guidelines and assessment of the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) programme.

## Refugee Inclusion

The region hosts over 4 million refugees with most of them having been refugees for an average of more than 5 years. WFP is engaging across different sectors to identify ways to transform refugee assistance looking into long-term solutions including refugee inclusion in social protection systems. One notable example of supplementary initiatives by WFP included the integration of refugees into the Programme National de Solidarité Famille (PNSF) in Djibouti. In partnership with Ministère des Affaires Sociales et des Solidarités (MASS), WFP replicated the national safety net programme for 743 refugee households. These households were registered in the national social registry, with WFP providing cash transfers.

## Strengthening Delivery Systems



In Uganda, WFP supported the enhancement of social protection delivery systems, including the approval by the Government to design and pilot Government-to-Persons (G2P) payment mechanisms for the Senior Citizen's Grant (SAGE) in four districts in West Nile.



In Rwanda, WFP supported the Government to design a digitized cash transfer delivery system for the national public works programme. In addition, WFP supported strengthening of the Grievance Redress Mechanism by conducting a diagnostic review, developing SoP's and new guidance for the national safety net.



WFP Kenya hosted multiple peer learning visits to showcase Kenya's delivery systems, ESR and shock responsive social protection programming.

## Investments in Social Protection Digitization

WFP prioritized social protection digitization, investing in government management information systems (MISs) and social registries (SR) in Burundi, Somalia, Kenya, and Uganda. This included system design, operationalization, and capacity building. In Somalia, WFP supported the registration of 2.9 million people, 14 percent of the population, into the registry. In Kenya, WFP supported in enrolling over 5 million households across 24 counties into the national registry, linking it to the Enhanced Social Registry. In Burundi, WFP helped develop a roadmap for the national social registry. In Uganda, the focus was on stakeholder engagement and a feasibility study for the proposed national social registry. These digital systems enhance the efficiency, coordination, and integration of social protection programs with humanitarian actions. In Rwanda, to facilitate data-informed emergency response, WFP supported the development of the first national digitalized household emergency needs assessment toolkit for use by the Government and partners.

## Social Protection Policies

WFP supported review and formulation of national policies/plans/strategies in Kenya, Uganda and Djibouti. In Uganda WFP supported, the development of the national social protection strategy (2023-2028) and the national social protection capacity development strategy. In Kenya, WFP supported development of the revised National Social Protection Policy and the Social Protection Investment Plan which aim to establish a more comprehensive and inclusive social protection system. In Djibouti, in partnership UNDP (UN Development Programme), WFP provided support to the development of the National Social Protection Strategy 2023-2027. The strategy provides a framework for government to effectively reach 12 percent its population through non-contributory schemes.



WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd



# STRENGTHENING Government Capacities and Systems

WFP/Arrete/Fredrik Lerneryd

ISOMO RYA 2 | Isuku y'umuntu kugiti cye

Igice cya 2.3: Uko ibiryo byandura



## Key Highlights

Government funding for the National School Meals Programme in Kenya increased from USD 15 million to **USD 40 million**.

Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA) supported to develop national flood anticipatory action framework.



Kenyan Government aims to expand to reach 10 million children under the National School Meals Programme by 2030.

WFP support South Sudan Government in data collection, analysis, and beneficiary registry review for the Safety Net program.

In leveraging its extensive emergency footprint, operational presence and increase its contribution to achieving the global goals of ending hunger, WFP continued to partner with and support Governments to strengthen the national capacities to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Eastern Africa region.

Aligned with national priorities, WFP successfully contributed to strengthening national capacities along the five pathways that include policy and legislation, institutional effectiveness and accountability, strategic planning and financing, programme design and delivery, and engagement of non-government actors as per the 2022 CCS Policy update<sup>1</sup>.

There is great and sustained progress on advancing capacity strengthening in terms of providing technical support for long-term systems strengthening, and also capacity substitution which consists of technical assistance to temporarily fill gaps in local Government capacity as seen in South Sudan on the food security and nutrition analysis, strategy development and planning.

With multiple and complex hazards in the region, WFP has managed to successfully partner and work with the Governments to enhance emergency preparedness and response. A lot of investments have also gone into technical support on disaster risk management, early warning systems, anticipatory action, and shock responsive social protection in both stable and fragile contexts.

## Capacity Strengthening in Fragile Contexts



In Somalia: WFP provided technical support to Somalia Disaster Management Agency (SODMA) for the development of the national flood anticipatory action framework which subsequently laid the foundations for WFP's flood anticipatory action programme, a first-of-its-kind for WFP in Africa. In addition, by leveraging on its large operational footprint, WFP's provided technical support and continue to effectively provide critical logistics services and air services. In 2024, WFP aims to closely monitor project implementation, thoroughly evaluate capacity strengthening outcomes and continue support provision to ministries in developing concepts that involve key stakeholders throughout the project life cycle. WFP plans to prioritize support for institutions in assessing behaviour change and measuring the return on WFP's training investments.

<sup>1</sup> Country Capacity Strengthening (CCS) policy update | WFPgo



In South Sudan: WFP also supported the data collection, analysis and evidence generation, and review of the beneficiary registry for Safety Net programme. The review helped the Government prevent duplication of the assistance between its programme and WFP's ongoing activities. Other successful capacity strengthening actions in this fragile context has been on the development of an anticipatory action and climate services programme with the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Disaster Management.

WFP remained instrumental in fostering leadership and advocacy through participation in international fora like the African Day of School Feeding, Global School Meals Coalition meeting and the Regional School Meals Coalition forum where Ministry of General Education and Instruction staff participated. To complement these efforts, WFP signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry to continue providing school feeding services, strengthening institutional capacities, and coordinating with relevant stakeholders and advocating for resource mobilization worth USD 500,000.

## Support in Policy Development and Institutional Effectiveness



In Rwanda: Significant success by WFP was in the development of the new national Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Policy which was approved in May. In addition, WFP continued to strengthen the capacity of key national institutions with trainings, simulations, south-south learning and other activities linked to emergency preparedness and response, and shock-responsive social protection. WFP also facilitated a study tour to Malaysia for Government officials, which informed Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA's) Strategic Plan, currently under development and experts from the China National Risk Reduction Centre, recruited through the WFP China Centre of Excellence. Additionally, WFP provided capacity-strengthening support to national programmes for the improved nutrition of children, adolescents, and women of reproductive age. Focusing on reducing all forms of malnutrition with an emphasis on stunting, WFP is aligned with the Government's National Strategy for Transformation 1 (NST-1; 2017-2024) which aims to reduce stunting prevalence to 19 percent by 2024 and with SDG target 2.2 to reduce stunting by 40 percent by 2025.



In Kenya: WFP's capacity-strengthening efforts have yielded significant results in 2023. Targeted advocacy and partnerships have led to the Government more than doubling its funding for the National School Meals Programme, from USD 15 million to USD 40 million, with plans to expand its reach to 10 million children by 2030. Consistent access to nutritious meals contributed to positive trends in school enrolment rate by 11 percent and attendance rate to 98 percent a 11-point increase since 2018. Feedback from students indicated widespread appreciation for the programme. By implementing protocols under the Guidelines for Safer School Meals, WFP was able to support school feeding programme actors in safer reception, storage, cooking and serving to ensure the children had access to safe meals.

## Provision of Advisory and Technical Support



In Burundi: WFP provided advisory and technical support, expertise, and assets to the government and national actors, the private sector, the Burundi Red Cross and NGOs. The support was aimed at strengthening national capacities, systems, and services in emergency preparedness, early warning, forecast-based anticipatory measures, gender and protection, supply chain, social protection, school feeding, nutrition, and sustainable food systems to enable timely and effective humanitarian assistance.



In Uganda, WFP through the Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF) programme contributed to the agricultural sector by strengthening the capacity of smallholder farmers in agriculture and creating predictable markets through local procurement by schools. Through the continued focus on HGSF, WFP registered a fivefold increase (from 414 in 2022 to 2,345 MTs in 2023) in the local procurement of food from smallholder farmers in Karamoja, translating to USD 1.9 million injected into the local economy.

## South to South Triangular Cooperation

WFP facilitated several South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships to promote progress toward achieving Zero Hunger in Eastern Africa region. For example in Burundi two cooperation partnerships were promoted in 2023 where WFP supported a one-month visit for technical staff from the national meteorological institute to Nairobi in IGAD Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC) office, which is a regional metrological centre of excellence; and WFP supported the exchange visit of the president of the national Disaster Risk Management platform to Madagascar to learn on an effective national early warning systems.



WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

# FOOD Safety and Quality





Food safety and quality are critical pillars of WFP's mission to alleviate hunger and food insecurity worldwide. WFP is committed to providing safe, nutritious, and high-quality food to those in need, recognizing the health implications of consuming substandard or unsafe food. This commitment is not only driven by the immediate need to address hunger and malnutrition but also by the responsibility to ensure that donors' contributions are effectively used to purchase good, nutritious food. WFP's approach to food safety and quality involves meticulous oversight at every step of the supply chain, from production and processing to storage, handling, and distribution.

### Food Safety and Quality Oversight and Support

In 2023, following the introduction of Food Safety and Quality (FSQ) corporate guidelines in 2022, WFP Food Safety and Quality unit at the Regional Bureau launched FSQ field missions to various country offices, including Rwanda, South Sudan, Djibouti, and Kenya. These missions aimed to enhance the risk mitigation strategies within the WFP Supply Chain and facilitate the integration of FSQ practices into the operations and programmes across our country operations.

Additional 14 support missions were directed to country offices, focusing on local food procurement, programme support and capacity strengthening, external partnerships establishment, food inspection and laboratories assessment, resolution and investigation of food incidents.

During the Sudan crisis, WFP Food Safety and Quality activated its Emergency Response protocols to facilitate timely response. This included waiving food inspections for early releases and early dispatches, as well as streamlining the supplier qualification process for low and medium-risk foods. This facilitated the swift movement of essential food supplies.

### Supplier Quality Assurance and Food Incidents Management

Food supplier audits and assessments were conducted to ensure food safety and quality, checking compliance with regulations, manage risks, improve operational efficiency, and maintain consumer confidence. As part of local and regional food supplier capacity development, WFP Food Safety and Quality team conducted 38 supplier audits/assessments, surpassing the target for 2023 by 20 percent. These efforts aimed to support the implementation of the local/regional food procurement policy (LRFPP) and monitor the performance of existing suppliers.

Concerted efforts between the Regional Bureau and country office Food Technologists, resulted in the management of 59 food incidents; categorized as 3 critical, 17 major, and 9 minor. In 2023, the total food impacted was 72,985 MT, a 50 percent decrease from 2022's 164,790 MT. This reduction highlights the effectiveness of implemented controls and interventions in mitigating food loss and ensuring food quality and safety.

## Capacity Strengthening

The region organized 22 regional and country office trainings, reaching about 3,500 participants, including WFP staff, external partners, government workers, and other key players in the food supply chain. The training sessions included food handling, warehouse management, food incident management, FSQ guidelines, traceability, and post-harvest management, aiming to enhance food safety and quality. A regional training on Integrated Pest Management was held in Mombasa in September, bringing together CO Food Technologists, logistics staff, inspection service providers, and government agencies to share pest control knowledge and best practices.

## Food Safety and Quality Terrain Utilization

Food Safety and Quality Terrain (FOSTER) platform is an online solution that enables WFP and its partners, to manage food safety and quality more effectively and safeguard the delivery of food to its beneficiaries. The platform is used to manage five core WFP food safety and quality business processes; pre-shipment Inspections, Supplier Audits, Supplier Corrective actions, compliance and products testing , products specifications management.

By the end of 2023, the platform's utilization across the region had reached 70 percent, falling short of the global Regional Bureau's target of 95 percent. This gap can be attributed to changes related to a high volume of early releases in Sudan, and the exclusion of vendors who are not listed as Logistics services providers, such as millers, affecting approximately 328,265 metric tons of food.

## Partnerships

WFP food safety and quality team in the region actively collaborated with various stakeholders, including Trademark Africa, IITA, BHA, and Partners in Food Solutions (PFS), to further WFP's goals. Trademark Africa focused on reducing trade barriers, such as levies and harmonizing food standards and SPS measures. BHA funded Aflatoxin control projects and strategies in the region. PFS aimed to help food processors meet technical standards.

## Country Office highlights



In Rwanda, an agreement was established with the Rwanda Standards Board (RSB) to support the development, implementation, and compliance monitoring of food safety and quality standards, as well as capacity building. WFP supported national and regional meetings under the Quality Framework Facilitation pillar and funded RSB's laboratory equipment purchase. Initial engagements included consultations with Rwanda Food and Drugs Authorities (Rwanda FDA) and the National Industrial Research and Development Agency (NIRDA) for quality inspection and technical support. Training workshops were conducted for school-level stakeholders on procurement and food safety, aiming to ensure safe and high-quality meals. Additionally, a national training workshop on FSQ in School Feeding for District Officials was organized to address FSQ gaps and raise awareness.



In Burundi, WFP FSQ led the development and introduction of fortified whole grain and refined maize meal, offering technical assistance to millers (Unikorn, BFF, and Minolacs) for regulatory compliance and Food Safety Management Systems (FSMS) enhancement. WFP FSQ also supported the implementation of an agreement signed in October 2022 between Bureau Burundais De Normalisation (BBN) & WFP for supporting small and medium millers in food fortification. Additionally, WFP provided practical training to five cooperatives on post-harvest handling, storage, and warehousing practices, significantly improving the

quality of grains supplied to WFP. WFP conducted technical assessments of food factories, recommending four for further support to be included in the local food vendor roster. WFP FSQ also developed specifications for biofortified beans to improve household nutrition.



In Djibouti, WFP assessed the Golden Africa Djibouti, a fortified vegetable oil manufacturer with an annual capacity of 216,000 MT, as part of WFP's local and regional food procurement policy (LRFPP) and national capacity strengthening strategy.



In Sudan, the WFP FSQ led a Food Safety & Quality integration mission, aiming to enhance FSQ service delivery and collaboration with various country office programmes. WFP also conducted onsite FSQ training for ten farmer organizations in North Kordofan and South Darfur, supporting the LRFPP.



In Kenya, WFP supported in onboarding five local wheat millers, 2 of which was used by the Government to manage in-kind wheat that was redirected to the Mombasa port after challenges were foreseen in taking the grain to Ethiopia following the pause in distribution.



In Ethiopia, WFP streamlined and standardized its grain re-bagging operations, salvaging 29,300 MT of food commodities, a 75 percent increase from 2022, to mitigate food loss. WFP also conducted technical assessments on five local vegetable oil and iodized salt manufacturers for LRFPP support and led a USAID-funded milling project that transformed 10,000 MT of wheat grain into 8,000 MT of wheat flour, aiding thousands of internally displaced people in Afar.



In Uganda, WFP conducted 34 technical assessments, including 27 grains & pulses suppliers and 7 processed food suppliers. Through these assessments, 15 suppliers met food safety and quality requirements and were recommended for inclusion on the local food vendor roster to support the LRFPP initiative.



In Somalia, WFP secured its status as a Technical Committee member for food standards within the Somalia Bureau of Standards (SOBS), a key step in enhancing Somalia's capacity for standard harmonization as it integrates with the East African Community (EAC). This achievement highlights Somalia's dedication to improving regulatory frameworks and ensuring compliance with international standards. WFP also negotiated the exemption of its commodities from import inspection, improving pipeline efficiencies and ensuring smooth delivery of humanitarian food assistance. Additionally, WFP successfully negotiated with the regional Governor to lift restrictions on foreign pest control management firms, enhancing agricultural resilience and supporting government bodies in pest control. WFP is currently engaged in warehouse management and supply chain capacity building initiatives, demonstrating its commitment to improving Somalia's food safety and logistics management capabilities.



In South Sudan, WFP led in engagements with the South Sudan Bureau of Standards and partners to develop a fully operational laboratory in South Sudan, supporting Country Capacity Strengthening. This aimed to enhance the Quality Assurance Framework and support government efforts in monitoring and enforcing food standards, improving public health and controlling food cross-border movement. Currently, a review of initial needs assessments with the FAO is ongoing to identify equipment and technical skill gaps for upgrading the national laboratory to accreditation status.



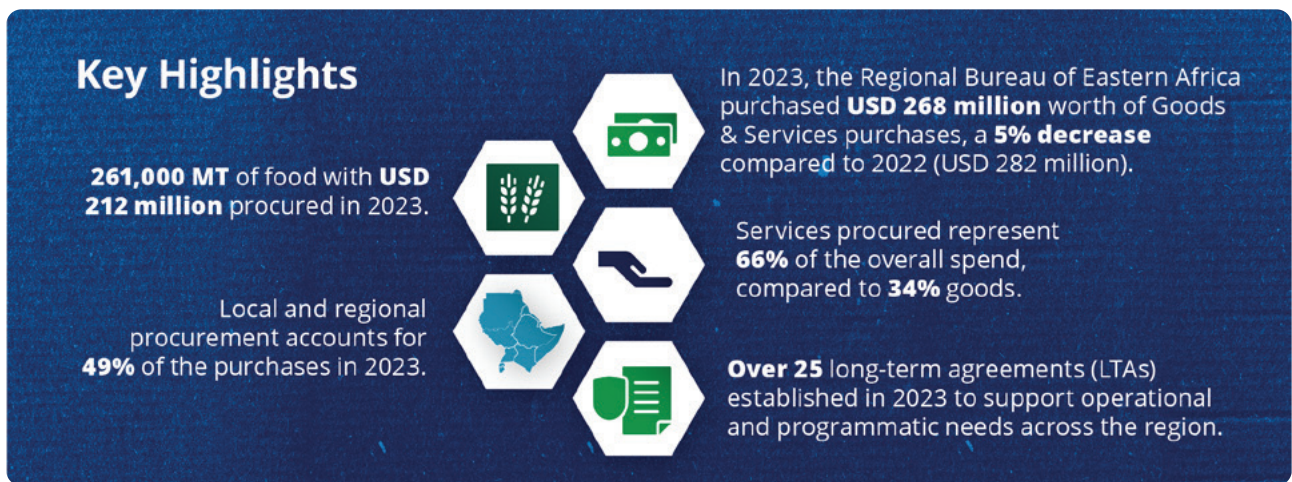
# AGILE Regional Procurement



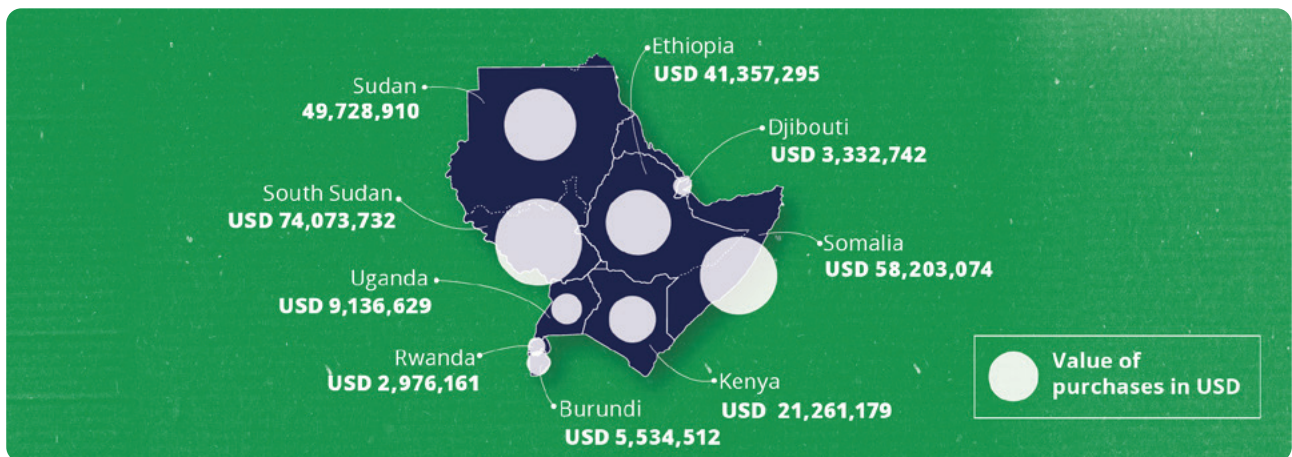
## Overview

WFP navigated through a dynamic landscape, overcoming numerous challenges such as supply chain disruptions, funding gaps to logistical hurdles to ensure the effective procurement of essential goods and services for humanitarian operations regionally. Despite these obstacles, WFP remained steadfast in its commitment to delivering timely and efficient procurement services, contributing to the organization’s mission of addressing hunger and food insecurity.

The Regional Bureau of Eastern Africa injected over USD 900 million into the local economies where WFP operates through food procurement, goods and services procurement, and CBT activities. Due to increased commodities prices, WFP spent more on fewer goods in 2023. WFP procured 261,000 MT of food in 2023, compared to 2022, this represented a 19 percent drop in tonnage procured owing to compounded and concurrent crises limiting the purchase of food.



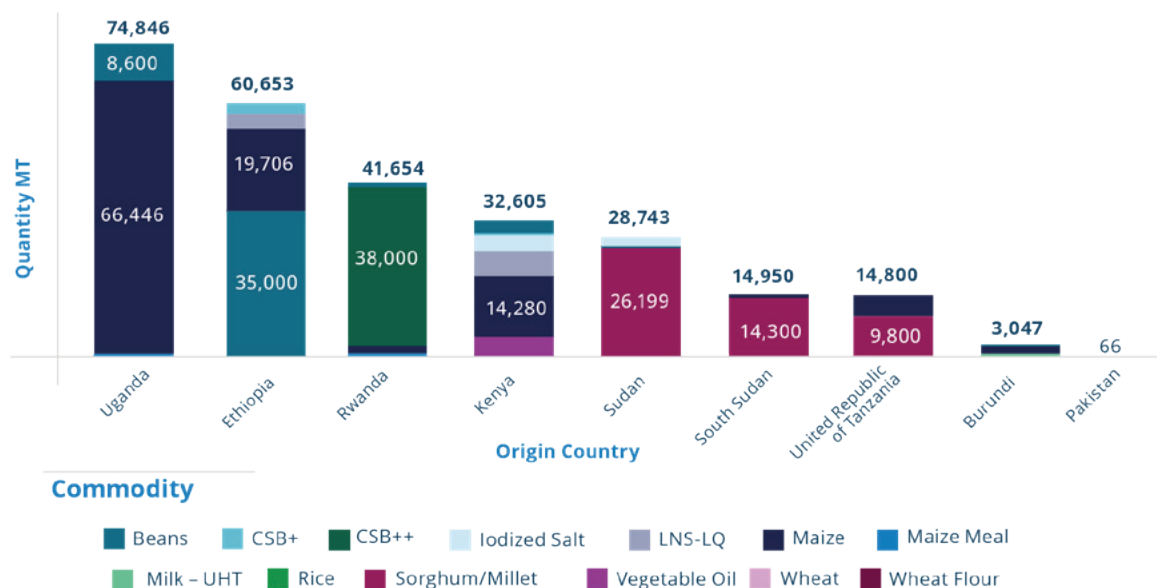
## USD Value of Goods and Services Purchases by Country



## Breakdown of Purchases by Commodity, Comparing 2023 to 2022

Commodity		Qty MTN.	Average of USD/MT
Beans	2023	12,729	1,151
	2022	22,923	891
Corn soya blend	2023	41,000	1,479
	2022	53,774	1,465
Iodised salt	2023	6,160	156
	2022	3,946	147
LNS	2023	9,514	3,151
	2022	11,088	2,822
Maize	2023	109,169	528
	2022	129,705	459
Maize meal	2023	1,186	878
	2022	1,738	781
Rice	2023	752	1,141
	2022	1,859	1,294
Sorghum/Millet	2023	40,499	545
	2022	100,630	424
UHT Milk	2023	400	1,070
	2022	2,026	1,070
Vegetable oil	2023	5,000	1,560
	2022	13,506	2,016
Wheat	2023	35,000	500
	2022	-	-
Wheat flour	2023	150	550
	2022	-	-
Grand Total	2023	261,563	815
	2022	341,195	

## Purchased Food by Origin Country MT (Jan - Dec 2023)



## Local Regional Food Procurement

The WFP Local Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFPP) aims to optimise local commodity purchases by working and empowering smallholder farmers and strengthening local food systems. WFP sought to increase the volume and value of regional purchases through commodity import substitution and increase regional sourcing capacity for specialised nutritious foods. Local and regional procurement accounts for 49 percent of the purchases in 2023.

In the Eastern Africa region, **22 percent** of the total food was sourced from smallholder farmers within the region in 2023, injecting **USD 31 million** into the local economies. Efforts of substituting imports for similar locally available foods or with different commodities were realised. For instance in Ethiopia, where 35,000 metric tons of wheat were locally sourced injecting **USD 17.5 million** into the local economy.

A regional evaluation of local and regional food procurement pilots in Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan found that integration of procurement and programming interventions was key for the local procurement to address bottlenecks in value chains and have a wider effect on local food systems, livelihoods and resilience of smallholder farmers. As an example, the evaluation found demonstrable evidence that through integrated efforts, particularly related to direct procurements, smallholder farmers' capacity, yields, and crop quality was improved, and they received between **5-15 percent above market value** for their grains, increasing their incomes.

The evaluation highlighted that when using indirect procurement modalities through traders, it is necessary to incentivize pro-smallholder farmer purchases. Success in doing so is constrained by challenges in traceability, lack of definitional clarity on characteristics of smallholder farmers, and contextualization of conditionality thresholds (as the level of existing purchases from smallholder farmers varies significantly among different countries).

The evaluation also identified a challenge in the limited application of value chain analysis findings to design targeted interventions and the use of monitoring data and evidence to measure the impact of local procurement efforts. As the implementation of the policy moves into its next phase, the findings in this evaluation point to important and practical areas for adjustment to maximise the positive effect of LRFPP on the ground.

## Gender Responsive Procurement in South Sudan

South Sudan Country office contracted a woman-owned business to supply 3,000mt of white sorghum through local food procurement. The woman-owned business won the contract through competition and demonstrated remarkable resilience by persistently participating in WFP tenders. This is a first for the country office which has a limited supplier base often dominated by large, men-owned, trading companies.



WFP/Eulalia Berlanga









# LOGISTICS in Eastern Africa: Delivering Amidst Increased Challenges



## Overview

In 2023, the Eastern Africa region faced unprecedented operational, economic, and access challenges. Despite these hurdles, the WFP Logistics remained a resilient backbone of its operations. Our logistics operations were agile, efficient, and swift, ensuring that we reached people affected by crises. The efforts in reaching beneficiaries during emergencies and providing lifesaving food assistance significantly contributed to the mission of eradicating hunger.

Key areas of logistics interventions:

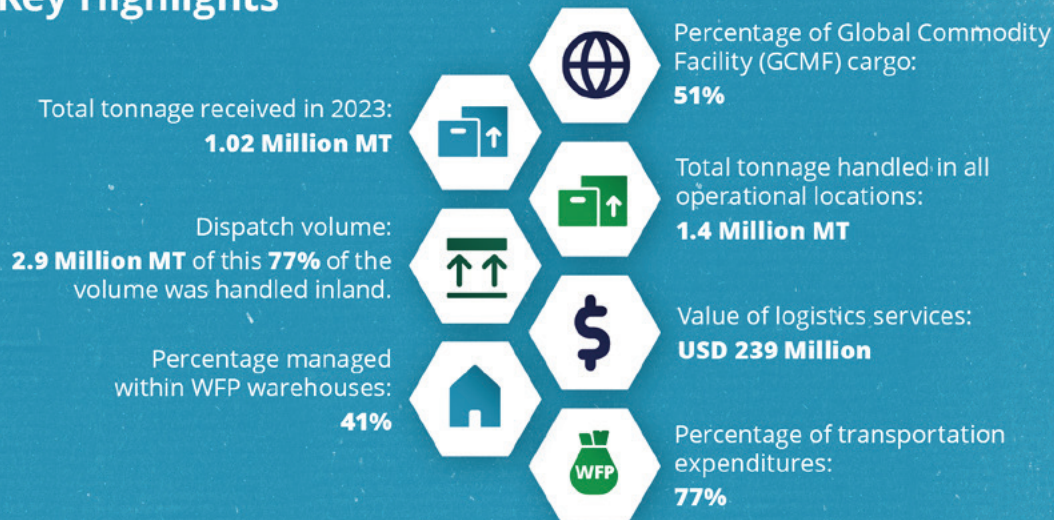
-  Efficient logistics network management.
-  Sustainable supply chain operations.
-  Optimized corridor operations.
-  Supply chain Cash Based Transfers (CBT).
-  Evidence based supply chain planning.
-  Supply chain sustainability.
-  Efficient on-demand service provision.
-  Commodity management and delivery assurance.

## An efficient Logistic Network

WFP operated a robust logistics network in the Eastern African region. This network was characterised by effective coordination of logistics networks, including ports, routes and warehouses. Several strategic ports of entry were utilised to receive food, including Mombasa in Kenya, Mogadishu and Berbera in Somalia, the Port of Djibouti in Djibouti, and Port Sudan in Sudan.



## Key Highlights



The value of logistics services totalled 239 million USD, with transportation accounting for 77 percent of the expenditures. WFP handled 1.4 million metric tons (MT) of food in 2023 including in warehouses, ports, and transshipment points, with 41 percent managed within WFP warehouses.

WFP worked with about 1000 WFP trucks and 499 commercial transporters of Road, River and Air, leveraging local knowledge of road networks while also contributing to the local economies. More than 2.9 million MT of food was dispatched to various operations providing food assistance to nearly 40 million people.

WFP used its **Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF)** to purchase food when prices were favourable. Of all the food procured within the region, 74 percent was through GCMF. This shortened emergency response times, as the food was readily available and reduced delivery lead time because the food was delivered and prepositioned in strategic locations ready to dispatch when countries received their contributions.

In addition to in-kind food assistance, **WFP distributed cash assistance** where markets were feasible, empowering beneficiaries with flexibility and autonomy to make choices on food consumption. More than 16 million people received cash assistance worth – USD 507,316,574 cash transfers and USD 242,147,124 value vouchers.



WFP/Mohamed Elamin

## Logistics Delivering in Fragile Contexts: Sudan Response

In its commitment to leaving no one behind, WFP logistics in the region worked with partners, governments, and communities to identify alternate routes to reach people in need particularly in areas with access challenges.

In Sudan, the conflict not only disrupted supply routes but also damaged the infrastructure and led to diminished visibility on conditions of the road network, making it difficult to deliver food assistance. These challenges were exacerbated by an increase in country transport costs due to the lack of access to fuel, and limited access to cash.

WFP established five new food supply corridors (Chad, South Sudan, Libya/Egypt, Ethiopia) along transport routes that had become complex and contested. In addition, the logistics cluster in close coordination with the OCHA-led Humanitarian Access working group and the humanitarian civil-military coordination cell, established UNHAS services/air bridge from Kenya to Port Sudan, provided support for the management of humanitarian crossline convoys to hard-to-reach areas. The corridors utilized to receive food in Sudan during the emergency response included Chad - 7,528 MT, Egypt - 50 MT, South Sudan - 352 MT, and Port Sudan - 95,298 MT, along with GCMF handovers and local purchases. In 2023, more than 187,000 MT of food and USD 39.2 million were distributed to more than 8 million people across Sudan.

## Logistics Fundamentals

Despite the challenges encountered, the WFP Logistics team maintained a commendable 93 percent data reliability index score (which is a measure of real-time transaction entries), and enhanced the operational effectiveness, especially towards responding to the emergency challenges when pipeline breaks would have had fatal consequences. To ensure the integrity of food distribution, WFP implemented tracking measures to verify the food commodities in the warehouses and track them through the system once they are dispatched for delivery. Several tools including agreements with transporters and training programs focused on commodity tracking to support this effort were put in place.



WFP enhanced its supply chain Food Transfer Cost budget planning, clearance, and approval process. This has helped increase the visibility of supply chain cost information contributing to informed decision-making during budget reviews and strategic planning processes.

Moreover, WFP made significant strides in enhancing its assurance measures. This was made possible through the efforts of an augmented team that assisted country offices in reviewing their commodity management practices and assessing potential risks of food leakage at the final stages of distribution. This comprehensive review covered 286 final distribution points and involved over 305,488 metric tons of food.

## Enhanced Accountability through Supply Chain Planning

Recognizing the need for enhanced transparency and efficiency, WFP established a control tower for Uganda and Ethiopia, serving as centralized hubs for managing critical supply chain functions.

This was critical as it provided real-time downstream and upstream information on pipeline projections. The towers also introduced qualitative and quantitative transporter performance dashboards, enabling real-time monitoring and analysis of transporter performance metrics. This facilitated oversight of food and goods and services procurement, food loss monitoring, food supplies, cooperating partner last mile monitoring, food and non-food items procurement, and handovers against issued food release notes.

## Supply Chain Cash-Based Transfers and Market Support Services

WFP is progressively scaling up the use of cash across the region, recognising its contribution to the local economy and its ability to empower beneficiaries. WFP logistics monitored market functionality to identify their potential to support CBT operations and inefficiencies.

WFP worked with contracted retailers in the region, monitored their services and provided training to ensure WFP received quality services.

Through workshops and training sessions, staff capacity was augmented, facilitating improved market linkages and the effective implementation of market development initiatives.

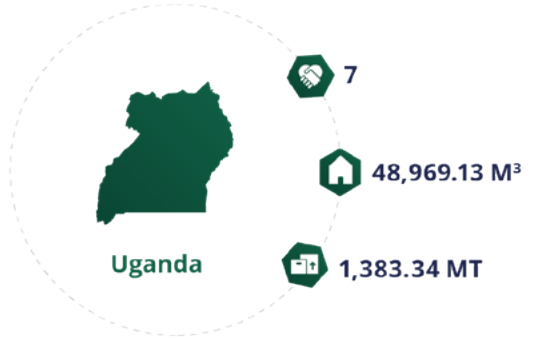
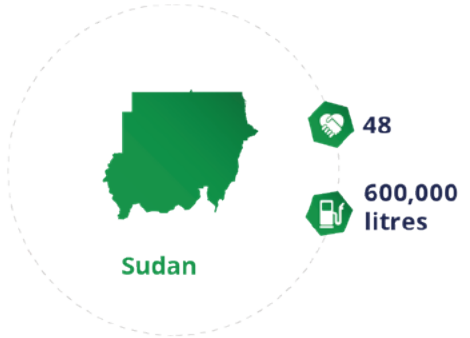
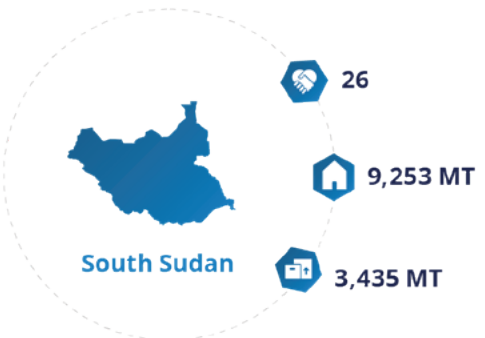
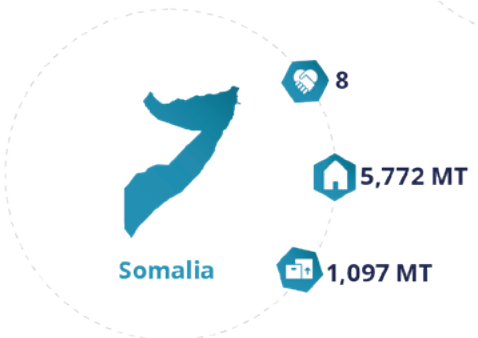
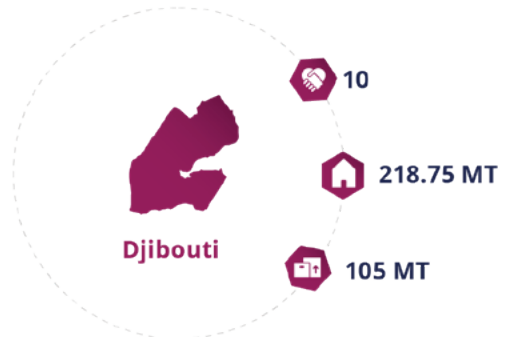
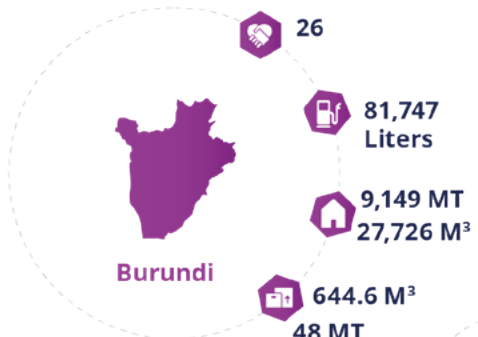
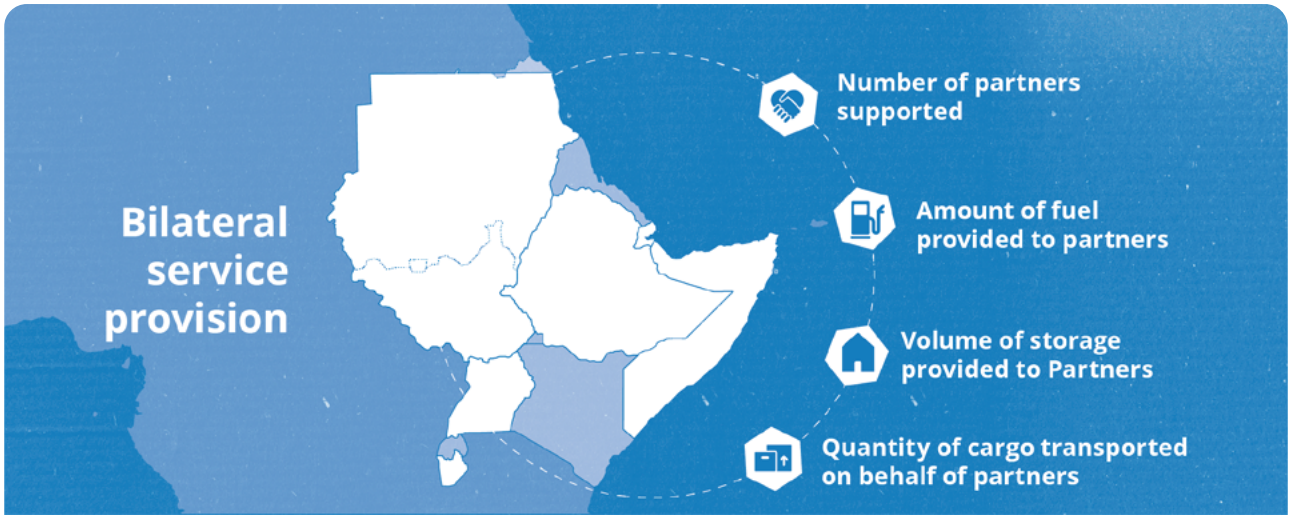
## Transformative Logistics Initiatives

The Regional Bureau provided support to country offices on **Corridor Management**, focusing on timely budget setup, continuous operational support, periodic financial closure, and advanced analytics resulting in improved corridor operations. Despite significant disruptions, the logistics team ensured that resources were allocated efficiently and effectively through proactively demand planning, optimization of warehouse utilization and corridor routes, enhancing accessibility and ensuring efficient resource management.

## Bilateral Service Provision

WFP supported 156 partners with timely on-demand supply chain services across the region enabling them to deliver in their mandate, especially in hard-to-reach areas and where the logistics capacity may be limited. These services included procurement of fuel, food and non-food items on behalf of partners, and transportation and storage.

Additionally, support was provided for the establishment of the region's first common back office (CBO) in Kenya, with the pilot of the first transport service being successful.



## Digitalization and Optimization

Three major digital systems were launched in 2023 significantly boosting operational efficiency and effectiveness.

- The logistics impact dashboard which integrates various operational data, including programmatic information, enabling monitoring of the environmental, economic, and social impacts of logistics operations. This enabled informed, data-driven decision-making to identify and implement interventions aimed at minimizing negative impacts.
- The digital contracting system that improved the efficiency of the contracting process, leading to 50 per cent cost savings, enhanced quality through the elimination of manual data entry and vendor offers data re-editing, reliability and responsiveness.
- Tracking partner stocks, WFP developed a model for managing the operations of cooperating partners in support of the assurance project. This will provide WFP with full visibility of cooperating partner stock management and transport, and endpoint distribution.

## Supply Chain Sustainability

To reduce emissions, WFP continued to regularly calculate the carbon footprint of WFP distribution activities to compare different distribution methods and to develop strategies to reduce emissions. To address this, the WFP logistics team created a CO2 emissions accounting model and a live dashboard. This tool helps track and monitor carbon emissions throughout the entire supply chain, including in-kind and cash food assistance. It's the first step in designing and implementing a sustainability strategy.

The Regional Bureau led workshops and trainings focused on sustainability practices to help Country Offices integrate these practices into their operations. Key initiatives included Energy Efficiency Programs (EEP) in Djibouti and Uganda, as well as a sustainable warehousing investment case in South Sudan and a business case for the new humanitarian hub in Mombasa, Kenya.

These efforts aim to reduce carbon emissions and improve supply chain efficiency and sustainability. Collaborations with external organizations and internal WFP units were established to share expertise and resources, leading to the creation of the first draft of the supply chain sustainability strategy.



WFP/Benoit Lognone

# BREAKTHROUGH IN THE SKIES:

## United Nations Humanitarian Air Services





WFP/Benoit Lognone

WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) played a crucial role in enabling humanitarian response in Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia Kenya and South Sudan. UNHAS provided timely, reliable, cost-effective air transport service to 375 humanitarian partners. This was particularly critical in fragile contexts where access was limited due to conflict or climatic disasters, and no suitable commercial aviation options were available.

UNHAS aviation services facilitated a range of humanitarian responses including the transportation of humanitarian cargo and workers, diplomatic missions, medical evacuations, and interagency assessments. With these services, WFP was able to support partners to reach vulnerable people with timely humanitarian response.

Aligned with Sustainable Development, in Kenya, UNHAS transported more than 15,000 humanitarian workers. Responding to heightened humanitarian demands resulting from drought, UNHAS conducted over 12 special charters, aiding organizations in reaching affected areas like Wajir, Mandera, Garissa, and Lodwar. Concurrently, EU-HAF Kenya transported over 6,000 passengers and 30 metric tons of cargo.



In Somalia, UNHAS played a vital role in ensuring continued assistance during floods and prolonged droughts. Utilizing fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters procured jointly with the logistics cluster. Notably, UNHAS supported flood relief efforts by transporting 15 boats and 570 metric tons of urgent humanitarian cargo.



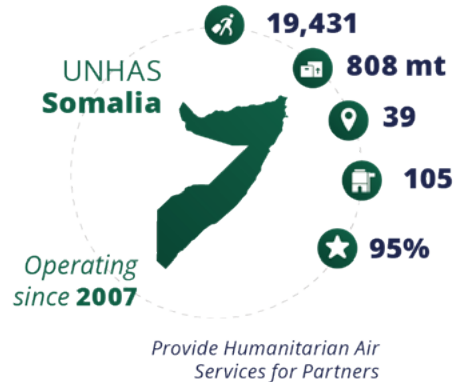
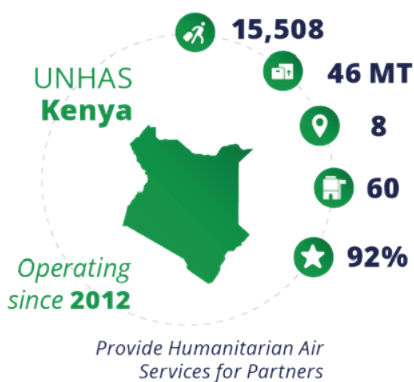
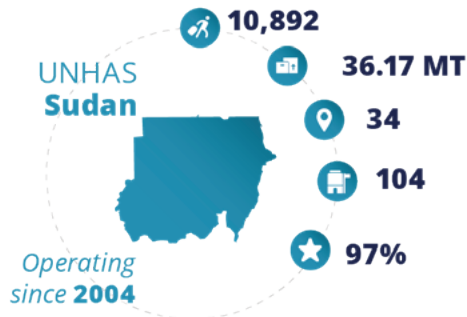
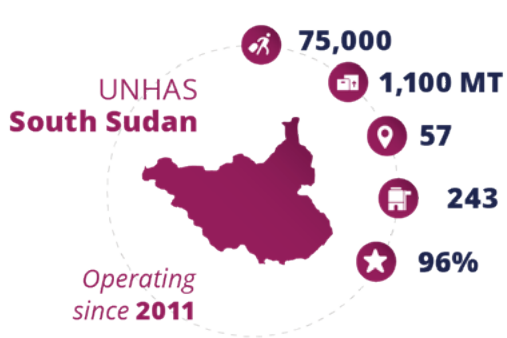
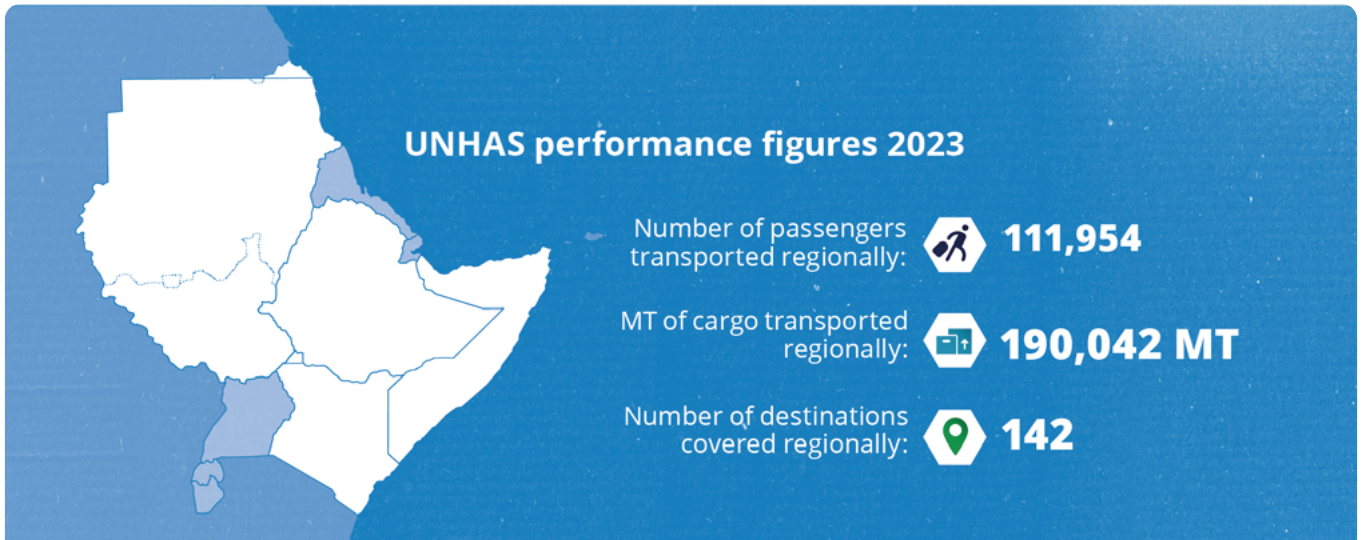
In Ethiopia, UNHAS transported humanitarian workers and cargo to Melkadida, Mekelle, and Shire and supported ad hoc flights in Jijiga. Due to the resumption of regular commercial flights to Tigray and the corresponding decrease in demand, UNHAS ceased its services in July.



In Sudan, the outbreak of war in April prompted UNHAS to swiftly reconfigure its fleet to adapt to changing demands. This adjustment facilitated the evacuation of approximately 600 humanitarian personnel and their families from Sudan. UNHAS developed a Concept of Operations to establish regular air transport service to and from Sudan through airbridges connecting to Nairobi and Amman. This provided the humanitarian community with reliable air access to Port Sudan to enable the implementation and resumption of humanitarian programmes. In 2023, UNHAS transported over 11,000 passengers for 104 different user organisations.



In South Sudan, to respond to the Sudan crisis, UNHAS increased its weekly flights to Renk, the primary county of entry for new arrivals, from two to eight flights.







# Gender **EQUALITY** and Women's **EMPOWERMENT**



Gender inequalities and lack of women empowerment are critical barriers to achieving food security. Across the countries in the Eastern Africa Region, women continue to face adverse inequalities, ranging from social and cultural norms such as limited access to productive assets, education, resources and opportunities. In a region facing multiple frequent shocks, women and girls are disproportionately affected.

Contributing to SDG 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women, and working with communities, partners and Governments, WFP adopted a gender-transformative approach in its programming. These included intentionally targeted women to strengthen their resilience, nutrition and food security. WFP interventions were tailored to address the root causes of inequalities that affect food and nutrition security. WFP also ensured women were empowered to access, control and influence decision-making over food assistance.

## Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Goals

-  Enhanced and equitable participation.
-  Strengthened leadership and decision-making.
-  Enhanced protection to ensure safety, dignity, and meaningful access.
-  Transformative action on social norms and structural barriers

## Spotlight on Country Offices

### Financial Inclusion:



In Uganda's refugee response, financial literacy training was provided to 86,459 individuals (51 percent women) across all 13 refugee settlements contributing to improving their financial management skills, in alignment with the CBT scale-up and enhanced joint decision-making at the household level. Monitoring results indicate 47 percent of households are making joint decisions, an increase of 13 percent compared to 34 percent in 2022.



In Ethiopia, under its climate and resilient activities, 59,400 Village Saving Loan Associations (VSLAs) members comprising of 62 percent women smallholder pastoralists and agro-pastoralists were supported to invest in a microcredit value of USD 538,000, which were used to invest in businesses and cover short-term needs.

### Focus on Youth and Women in Kenya



WFP implemented various initiatives to strengthen the socio-economic empowerment of women and youth in Kenya's agricultural value chains. These included participation in Climate-Smart Agriculture training, establishing linkages with input suppliers, and receiving access to certified farm inputs.



## Gender Equality Learning Initiative in Rwanda



Since 2017, WFP has piloted and rolled out the **“Transforming Social Norms for Gender Equality”** learning initiative in the form of a Training of Trainers (ToT) programme. Its purpose was to increase WFP staff and partners’ understanding of and ability to address the discriminatory social norms that underpin gender inequalities and deepen food insecurity, with an emphasis on how to engage men and boys more actively in this work.

At the heart of the gender transformative approach is the link between personal and social change. As the FAO/IFAD/WFP compendium of good practices on gender transformative approaches makes clear, “starting with a self-analysis of their own lives helps people realize that they are part of the solution to any challenge that they may be facing, and they can commit to plan for change.” This capacity building initiative models this approach, emphasizing personal reflection, interactive group discussion and participatory learning over formal presentations.

In 2023, WFP Rwanda piloted this initiative which aimed to strengthen staff capacity and also commit to integrating gender transformative approaches into their day-to-day work. This pilot sought to contribute to ongoing efforts to set a norm within WFP itself, such that gender transformative work on food security and nutrition is integral, rather than optional, to its mission. At the end of the training in November, there was a personal and collective understanding of social and gender norms and how critical for WFP teams to be able to design and implement gender transformative programming.

## Gender Analysis of School Feeding Programme in Ethiopia



In collaboration with UNICEF and the Ministry of Education, WFP Ethiopia carried out a gender analysis focused on the School Feeding Programme (SFP). This analysis aimed to evaluate the SFP impact on reducing gender disparities in access, agency, participation, and power dynamics within selected regions of Ethiopia, specifically Afar (Zone 1), Oromia (Borena Zone), and Amhara (North Wollo). Additionally, the study aimed to identify strategies for enhancing the SFP to more effectively address gender gaps in future initiatives.

The findings indicate that the SFP significantly contributes to gender equality outcomes, particularly in terms of school enrollment, attendance, and a decrease in dropout rates.

Participants in the study confirmed that the SFP also enhances academic achievements and boosts girls’ agency and self-confidence, although these improvements cannot be solely attributed to the school feeding alone. This highlights the critical role of SFP partnerships with other organizations within schools and communities to achieve broader gender equality goals.

The SFP is actively engaging men, women, boys, and girls in its implementation process, resulting in changes in gender norms. While there’s been progress in shifting attitudes towards girls’ education, prevalent gender norms in target areas, including child marriage, school-related gender-based violence, and traditional gender roles, still hinder girls’ advancement. The SFP could further mitigate these challenges and enhance reporting in future programming.

## Gender and Water study: Gender analysis of water (in)security

In 2023, WFP partnered with UNICEF CGIAR and UN Women to carry out a study in **Kenya, South Sudan and Ethiopia** to explore the gender and power dynamics within households and communities that influence women's access to, use of, and control over water resources for productive purposes. Findings from this study will inform interventions within the region including in devising targeted, transformative strategies to overcome barriers related to gender and water for productive use.



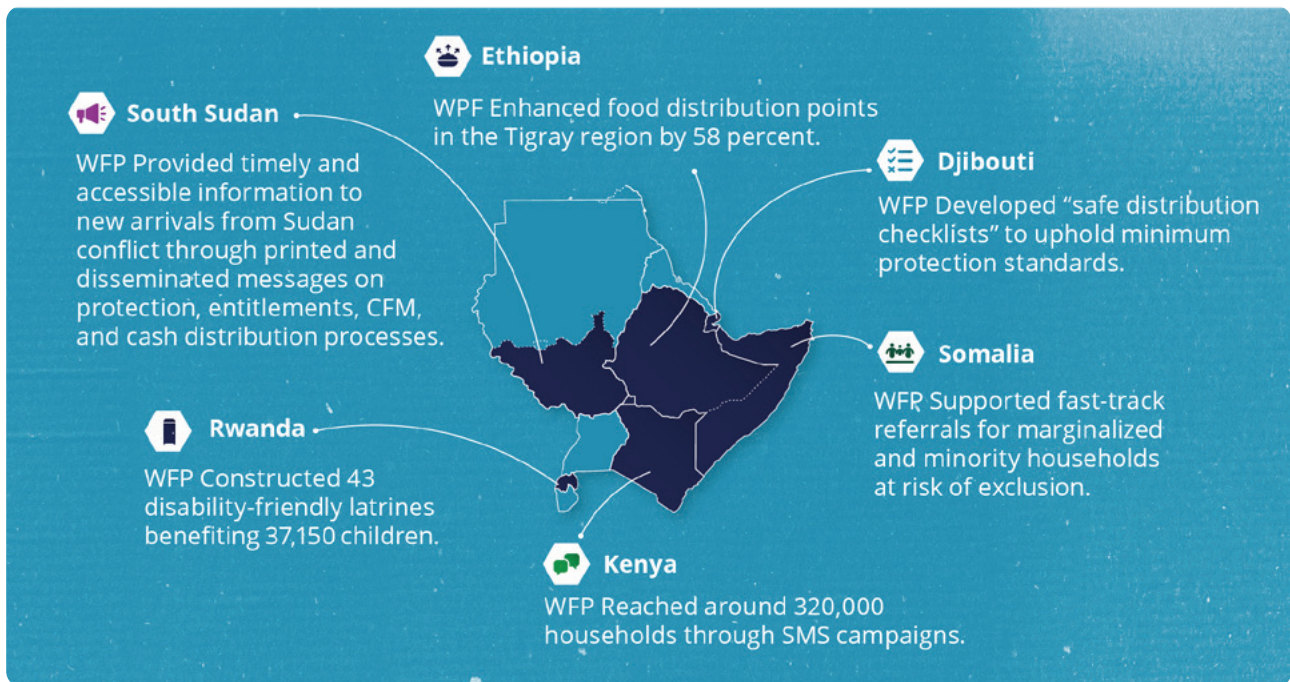
### IN THE FIELD BUBANZA, BURUNDI

Members of the cooperative dry the unhusked rice. WFP is working with the government to support production and increase incomes of small-scale farmers especially women.

WFP/Irenee Nduwayezu

# PROTECTION and ACCOUNTABILITY to Affected Population





The protection landscape in the Eastern African region is complex and characterized by a multitude of risks from various factors including conflict, political instability, humanitarian crises, and natural disasters. In conflict-affected areas, civilians face grave threats to their safety including displacement, violence, and abuse of human rights. Additionally, the region is prone to recurrent droughts and food insecurity, exacerbating vulnerabilities and leading to negative coping mechanisms resulting in children being taken out of school, gender-based violence, loss of livelihood and more.

To mitigate these risks, WFP is embedding the centrality of protection and AAP into its operations. This was done through various components, such as incorporating risk protection assessments, ensuring community engagement and enhancing the capacity of cooperating partners (CPS) and staff in mainstreaming protection.

## Protection for Affected Population

In 2023, in eight countries, WFP conducted various types of protection assessments, leading to the implementation of risk mitigation strategies. In addition, to further ensure we do no harm, "safe distribution checklists" were developed in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan, ensuring minimum protection standards are upheld.

**To ensure Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)**, WFP facilitated a UN partner capacity assessment on PSEA for several cooperating partners in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Rwanda and Uganda. Different outreach campaigns with materials tailored for frontline workers, cooperating partners and staff was conducted to ensure humanitarians have critical knowledge on PSEA.

**As part of ensuring no one is left behind**, unhindered access is a principle the region operates by. In Somalia, WFP supported fast-track referrals of unassisted marginalized and minority households at risk of exclusion. In Rwanda, WFP constructed 43 disability-friendly latrines benefiting 37,150 children; while in Ethiopia, WFP is committed to strengthen the capacity of local organizations of persons with disabilities.

## Empowerment and Accountability to The People We Serve.

In 2023, WFP had an increased focus on the importance of *empowerment and accountability to the people we serve*. As a result, all country offices in the region started **consultations for their community engagement action plans**, aiming to provide multiple pathways of engagement and to ensure that the people we serve remain at the center of our operations.

WFP uses a **wide range of diversified communication channels** to share crucial information on assistance, and create awareness of protection issues, and reporting mechanisms. For instance, In Kenya, short messages (SMS) campaigns reached around 320,000 households and in South Sudan, when new arrivals from the Sudan conflict reported challenges receiving important information, WFP and cooperating partners provided timely and accessible information by printing and disseminated 600 pictorial and textual messages on protection, entitlements, CFM and the cash distribution processes.

To enable affected individuals to assess the effectiveness of interventions and express concerns or provide feedback, **Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFMs)** have been established across all nine country offices. Across the region, a total of 134,309 feedback submissions were received and managed through various channels such as hotlines, suggestion boxes, helpdesks, and email addresses. Most of this feedback was addressed promptly, utilizing referral pathways when necessary.

In 2024, the region remains committed to reducing protection risks for the individuals we assist and adhering to protection principles, including those of do no harm and accountability. To facilitate this, finalization of country office community engagement action plans and the development of a regional protection strategy will be prioritized.



WFP/Eulalia Berlanga

# IMPROVED Assurance



As part of enhancing our programmatic accountability and efficiency, WFP strengthened its assurance measures across the region to ensure people who need assistance receive it safely, in full and without interference. This remained a core priority in 2023 and will continue to be eminent in 2024. These measures focused on strengthening targeting, improving management of cooperating partners, community engagements through community consultation, actively seeking beneficiary feedback and enhancing systems for greater visibility on who is receiving assistance.

WFP assurance measures were implemented in a challenging environment, with increased humanitarian needs, necessitating enhanced risk assessment and mitigation measures. 2023 presented funding challenges, indubitably calling for greater accountability and efficient use of limited resources to ensure eligible beneficiaries received assistance. In the region, five country offices were identified as high-risk: Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda. Consistent with WFP's global assurance project, these high-risk countries devised comprehensive plans to assess these risks and, where needed, implement mitigation measures.

## Assurance Components



## Improvement in Management of Cooperating Partners

WFP implemented the assurance measures and conducted a review of its cooperating partnership (CP) management process to ensure there is increased transparency and accountability and common understanding of expected delivery standards. Regionally, the CP Management team organized a series of partner briefings to sensitize partners on components of assurance measures, such as Anti-Fraud Anti-Corruption and Protection and PSEA. Additionally, regional CP onboarding guidelines were developed to improve the process of onboarding partners at country and field offices. All WFP Cooperating Partners were selected through the UN Partner Portal with proper due diligence observed.

In Ethiopia, as we started to partner more with CPs, there was an increased need for sensitization of partners on anti-fraud and anti-corruption and training on new assurance measures to ensure quality and efficiency in delivering assistance. WFP strengthened its engagement with the Government by reviewing roles and establishing a new Memorandum of Understanding.

In Somalia, a comprehensive assurance plan was developed to monitor progress against multiple control-strengthening actions including conducting regular spot checks on cooperating partners to ensure program quality and proper fund utilization.

In South Sudan, WFP organized sessions with partners focusing on measures to prevent food diversions, including partners' responsibilities. WFP also enhanced the tool for capturing partner performance and digitized the process for real time reporting and timely intervention.



WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

## Targeting

WFP enhanced its targeting approaches across the region to ensure food assistance gets to eligible populations in need of WFP assistance. This includes the use of geographical targeting informed by various assessments including IPC and household targeting through community approaches with certain vulnerability criteria put in place to identify people in need.

Community participation has been paramount in informing beneficiaries about their entitlement, and eligibility, getting community buy-in, commitment and satisfaction on the targeting process. WFP has also strengthened its verification protocols and digital registration protocols.

In Uganda refugee operations, targeting based on vulnerability was introduced where refugees are targeted and prioritised according to a data-driven and vulnerability-based model that assigns refugees into three categories – most vulnerable, moderately vulnerable and least vulnerable.

## Monitoring and Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)

As part of strengthening its monitoring system, WFP continued to implement its minimum monitoring requirements, leveraging technology and adapting as needed to monitor food assistance processes. Third-party monitoring was expanded to increase coverage, especially in hard-to-reach areas, while staff capacity was increased. Further, remote monitoring approaches were used in inaccessible areas.

WFPs CFM provided a safe, inclusive, and accessible channel which allowed beneficiaries to provide feedback and express their concerns or complaints and ask questions about WFP operations.

## Supply Chain

WFP put stronger controls in tracking and tracing food movements from the point of dispatch to when it gets to beneficiaries through use of the Last Mile Solution (LMS) mobile tool that allows WFP to have 'real-time' data on food movement and improved warehouse management processes.





WFP/Eulalia Berlanga






## Identity Management

Identity management is the standards and processes that WFP uses to identify the people we want to serve, collect their personal identity information, store this information in WFP digital systems, and use it to link each distribution of cash or food to the right registered people.

Identity management is a core pillar of the assurance in WFP, as it focuses on improving and digitizing WFP's processes when it comes to registering, enrolling, and verifying beneficiaries as well as making sure that the right amount of assistance has been distributed to the right person.

In line with this, under the Productive Safety net Programme (PSNP) in Ethiopia, WFP conducted a capacity needs mapping and created an inventory of the available staff and their skillsets, assets, Government and community infrastructures and functionality of taskforces essential for the resumption of PSNSP. Based on the findings, WFP and other key stakeholders developed a comprehensive capacity development plan and facilitated the training of 1,500 PSNP staff (12 percent female) on targeting, registration and enrolment, environmental and social management framework, monitoring and evaluation, community feedback mechanism, and resource management.

At the regional level, the IDM team devised a one-year roadmap aimed at supporting high-risk countries in enhancing their IDM practices. One primary objective is to enhance identity management for the in-kind portfolio, with a specific emphasis on ensuring thorough tracking and tracing of all commodities managed by WFP and its partners throughout the value chain, from sourcing to distribution to households. Some notable accomplishments at the regional level include:

- 
 In Sudan: Introduction of digital identity management to the in-kind portfolio post-conflict, enabling digital registration of beneficiaries and digital reconciliation of distributions.
- 
 In Ethiopia: Similar implementation of digital identity management to both the in-kind and CBT portfolios.
- 
 In Somalia: Review and approval of end-to-end IDM processes, along with the endorsement of an IDM roadmap for the next two years (2024-2025).
- 
 In South Sudan: Establishment of an emergency cash response for the Sudan returnees' crisis, featuring a digital biometric IDM system.
- 
 In Uganda: Deployment of data analytics to identify data irregularities and enhance identity management practices

# KNOWLEDGE Management



WFP in Eastern Africa continued to leverage knowledge and lessons from its programmes, communities, government and partners to inform programme design and implementation improvements while demonstrating WFP's impact in addressing food security challenges. Regional teams have embedded knowledge management within their work plans and engagements with country teams to identify, capture and share knowledge to support cross-country and cross-function learning to improve programme quality.

## Knowledge Curation

In addition, WFP staff from across the region shared knowledge and learning through region-wide webinars twice a month through Knowledge Cafés and Insight sessions. These are in-depth online sessions on a given topic highlighting key learning nuggets. Throughout 2023, the regional office coordinated almost 30 Knowledge webinars for staff across the region, covering key programmatic topics such as Food Safety and Quality, Anti-Fraud Anti-Corruption, How to Onboard Cooperating Partners and Lessons from the Uganda Ebola Response, among others.

In addition, the Knowledge Management team supported the creation of 10 multimedia products such as podcasts on the Somalia Warehouse Management systems and videos on topics such as Aflatoxin Awareness as part of increasing knowledge on food safety and quality. These sessions attracted over 6,000 attendees in total and an average of 220 listeners per session

The team also shares knowledge and good practices beyond the region to the rest of the organization through our Communities platform which allows for grassroots exchanges among individuals and teams and across functions and regions.

The region also coordinated external knowledge-sharing events with a specific emphasis on WFP's engagement with Cooperating Partners. Four regional online events were held to discuss and sensitise on topics such as the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) capacity assessment on the UN partnership portal and Data Protection in programme implementation.

In 2024 the region will continue to leverage knowledge and good practices to help us continuously improve our programmes to have the greatest impact to those most in need.

## Strategic Guidance

In 2023, the Regional Bureau finalized and disseminated its Regional Knowledge Management Toolkit which provides all staff with detailed "how to" guidance on implementing specific knowledge management actions. This Knowledge Management Toolkit complements the Regional Knowledge Management Strategy.

In 2023, the Regional Bureau started updating its regional Knowledge Management Strategy - the first regional Knowledge Management Strategy in WFP. Knowledge management within the region has matured and the updated strategy will reflect that maturity focusing on knowledge as an asset and the benefits of knowledge management for both advocacy, fundraising and thought leadership.

In 2024 the region will continue to leverage knowledge and good practices to help us continuously improve our programmes to have the greatest impact to those most in need. This includes updating the Knowledge Management Strategy in 2024 with a focus on Country Adoption and embedding knowledge management within the programme cycle.

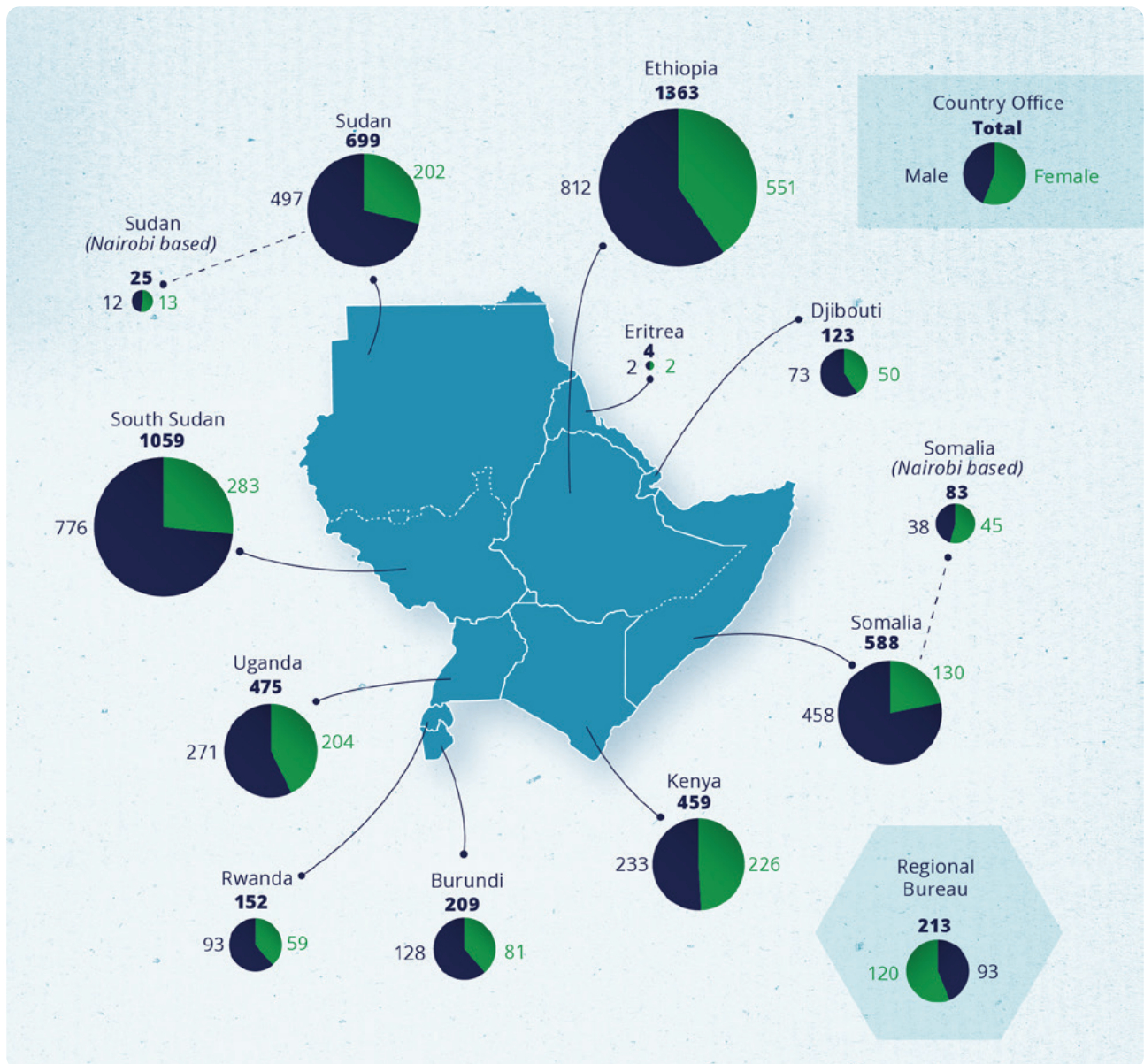
# FOCUS on WFP People



## Spotlight on the WFP People that Make it Happen

WFP has an extensive network of more than 5,000 staff across Eastern Africa who are working with partners and supporting the Government's efforts to eradicate hunger and malnutrition. In line with WFP's commitments to reach those in need of food assistance, and values on integrity, humanity, diversity, collaboration and inclusion WFP staff across the region ensured assistance reaches the most vulnerable, and programmes are managed and implemented effectively.

Diversity of WFP's staff, representing different backgrounds, expertise, and experiences, has strengthened the organization's ability to understand and respond to the diverse needs of the communities it serves. Hard work, resilience and commitment displayed by WFP people play a significant role in improving the lives of millions of people affected by food insecurity.



## STORIES FROM THE FIELD

# Ms. Brenda BOONABAANA

## Uganda Country Office

As you walk through the corridors, amidst the energy of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Uganda. Here, you'll find Ms. Brenda BOONABAANA, a Programme Assistant for Gender and Protection, shining brightly. Her journey with WFP began when she saw a job opportunity under the RBN WFP Uganda- **"Hiring beyond Labels"** Initiative.

Fresh out of university, Ms. BOONABAANA had a historic passion for gender, inclusiveness and specifically supporting women with disabilities and in applying for the job and then been successful, she found a perfect match in WFP's mission. Now, two years later, she looks back on her time with WFP, recognizing the impact of her role and the incredible support she's received.

### Navigating her role at WFP Uganda in Gender and Protection:

Her tenure with WFP has been marked by a sense of inclusion, a fact she is quick to affirm. In her words, "so far, so good." Ms BOONABAANA admires the inclusive atmosphere at WFP Uganda, with individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds converging harmoniously. This multicultural environment, representative of the UN culture, fosters personal growth and professional development. Since joining, she has undergone a transformative journey,



WFP/Uganda

broadened her perspectives and refined her work ethic. Despite busy workloads, particularly evident in units like gender where staffing may be limited, she finds the experience very enriching, especially with support from her line supervisor.

Interacting with a variety of individuals exposes her to new ideas and practices, facilitating continuous learning and self-improvement. She appreciates the opportunity to engage with beneficiaries during fieldwork, where she gains firsthand insight into their experiences and needs. Additionally, WFP Uganda organizes various employment engagement initiatives and events, providing much-needed relief from work-related stress and fostering friendship among work colleagues.



WFP/Uganda

Ms BOONABAANA (extreme-left) at a conference with WFP colleagues

### Ms. BOONABAANA speaks of a Project she is Proud Of:

During her service with WFP, she facilitated a training session on disability, which stood out for her, with great learning. The training was for WFP cooperating partners and staff to create awareness on disability, where knowledge gaps were unveiled. These sessions don't just teach; they spark change. By giving marginalized communities a voice, Ms. BOONABAANA is breaking down barriers and creating a more inclusive future.

In Ms. BOONABAANA story, we see the power of "**Hiring Beyond Labels**". This initiative advocates for a more inclusive approach to recruitment, emphasizing individuals' capabilities over predefined labels. It highlights her experience at WFP Uganda, where she has thrived in an environment that values diversity and inclusivity. This story emphasises the importance of creating spaces where everyone, regardless of background or perceived limitations, can contribute meaningfully.



Ms. BOONABAANA (extreme right) engages with the community.

WFP/Uganda



Ms. BOONABAANA in light blue jeans spending time with friends and colleagues.

WFP/Uganda

## Wellness Achievements



### One-to-one Staff Support

The wellness unit facilitated around 1,000 individual staff counselling sessions, offering confidential assistance to colleagues dealing with work-related challenges, personal matters, and family issues, thereby promoting well-being and resilience among staff members. The provision of counselling sessions to staff in the Region not only offers personal support but also contributes to a healthier, more productive, and more supportive work environment. This initiative underscores the organization's commitment to employee well-being.

### Building Mental Health Skills and Resilience

In the Region, 10,000 employees engaged in webinars covering a range of topics including stress management, self-care, the importance of mental health in emergency preparedness and response, adapting to change, and resolving conflicts within teams. These sessions not only enhanced the employees' understanding of these critical areas but also equipped them with practical skills to build mental resilience and improve their overall well-being.

### Response in Emergencies

Support for critical incidents and mental health was extended to individuals affected by the Sudan conflict, regardless of whether they evacuated to neighbouring countries by land, flew to Nairobi or other destinations, or chose to remain in Sudan. Family Liaison Outreach Community (FLOCK) – with or without Kids - facilitated tailored assistance for families impacted by the crisis, representing a significant achievement for WFP. Staff Counselling maintains close collaboration with colleagues across functions to ensure continuous support for WFP employees in Sudan.

### Providing Assistance to Field Personnel

Staff Counsellors conducted over 50 missions to various field locations, ensuring the provision of mental health and psychosocial support for WFP employees regionally, with particular attention given to the most remote and demanding duty stations. Collaborating closely with our medical team, Staff Counselling & Family Liaison extended support to colleagues encountering health issues, including those requiring medical evacuation or travel for medical purposes.

### Family Liaison Office

Through the Regional Family Liaison Officer, family support for staff members and their dependents across the region was made available. The FLOCK initiative was introduced in Rwanda, Uganda, South Sudan, and Kenya. This included various activities such as webinars on topics like 'Mental Health in the Family' and events designed for staff and their families.





**2023 Annual  
Country Reports**

Contact Information

**Michael Dunford**

Regional Director for Eastern Africa

**Ryan Anderson**

Senior Regional Programme Advisor

[RBN.reports@wfp.org](mailto:RBN.reports@wfp.org)

World Food Programme  
**Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa**  
[wfp.org](http://wfp.org)