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# **Final Evaluation of the Programme to Strengthen the Socio-Economic Resilience of Smallholder Farmers and Vulnerable Populations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (2018-2024)**

Decentralized Evaluation Report – Volume I (Main Report)  
WFP, FAO, and UNICEF offices in the Democratic Republic  
of Congo

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# Executive Summary

1. The Joint Resilience Programme (JRP) programme implemented by the World Food Programme (WFP); Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) aims to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the territories of Walikale, Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo in the province of North Kivu and the territories of Mwenga, Walungu, Uvira and Kalehe in the province of South Kivu in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The three agencies commissioned the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct an independent final evaluation of the JRP. The evaluation was led by WFP and used WFP processes and quality assurance procedures. The evaluation's objectives are to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and coherence of the JRP and offer actionable steps for programme improvement and adjustments in its next phase.
2. The intended audience of this report are WFP, FAO, UNICEF country, field and regional offices, BMZ Germany; United Nations Country Team; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Gender, Family and Children; Ministry of Health; and international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) acting as implementing partners, who can use the results to inform future multisectoral approaches to resilience programming in the DRC and similar contexts.
3. **Context:** Despite ongoing efforts of the Government and donors, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains one of the poorest countries in the world. From a population of over a 100 million people<sup>1</sup> about 74.6 percent lives below the poverty line<sup>2</sup> and over 25 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>3</sup> Deprivation levels are particularly high in North and South Kivu. Besides, households' inability to purchase basic goods or to fulfil basic food and nutrition needs are exaggerated by the risk of the protracted armed conflict, disease, and climate shocks leaving households with limited resilience to smooth consumption.
4. **Subject of the evaluation:** The JRP is designed to build the capacity of provincial and local government actors by designing and implementing interventions that improve social services access and stimulate agricultural development. Through this objective, the JRP aims to bolster the Government of the DRC's National Strategic Development Plan, which seeks to: (a) stabilize conflict-ridden areas, (b) promote economic growth, (c) create new jobs, and (d) support overall human development.
5. The JRP is targeted towards communities located in eastern DRC due to high levels of conflict, displacement, economic deprivation and exposure to weather-related shocks. Beneficiaries include households of smallholder farmers and community as well as provincial and local government actors. Local beneficiary organizations include farmer groups, women's groups, schools, and health facilities.
6. **Methodology:** The evaluation team (ET) used evaluation questions (EQs) (See Table 1) under relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, impact, and coherence, to guide this mixed-methods evaluation. Besides these key Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria, the analysis included an additional question on gender, human rights and inclusion to emphasize its importance and cross-cutting nature. The responses across evaluation criteria aim to contribute to the evaluation's two objectives: (a) analysing the progress toward the expected outcomes using the performance management framework, and (b) identifying potential barriers or success factors from the multisectoral JRP collaboration.

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. 2022. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report.' UNICEF.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/136736/file/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo-2022-COAR.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> World Bank. 2024. 'The World Bank in DRC.' World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview>

<sup>3</sup> IPC. 2023. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July - December 2023 and Projection for January - June 2024.' IPC. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156611/?iso3=COD>



**Table 1: Evaluation criteria and evaluation questions**

	Evaluation question
<b>Relevance</b>	To what extent and how do the programme objectives and design respond to the needs, policies, and priorities of beneficiaries at the national, provincial, community, household, and individual levels, and do they continue to do so if circumstances change?
<b>Effectiveness</b>	To what extent and how has the resilience programme achieved its objectives and results, including differential results between groups?
<b>Efficiency</b>	To what extent and how were financial resources, human resources, and supplies sufficient (quantity), adequate (quality), economically distributed/deployed, and timely?
<b>Impact</b>	To what extent and how has the programme generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?
<b>Sustainability</b>	To what extent do the net benefits continue, or are likely to be sustained, after programme closure?
<b>Coherence</b>	To what extent and how do the WFP, FAO, and UNICEF interventions produce results that are mutually reinforcing (cross-fertilizing)—internal coherence—and complementary to those implemented by other partners (NGOs, United Nations agencies) and government structures—external coherence?
<b>Gender, human rights, equity and inclusions</b>	How and to what extent has the programme contributed to the dimensions of gender, human rights, and equity?

7. For this evaluation the ET used a mixed-methods design. The quantitative approach comprised of a household survey among 578 beneficiary households in South Kivu. The analysis consists of descriptive analysis comparing endline indicators across territories and to baseline and targets. The qualitative approach conducted a total of 42 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 11 focus group discussions (FDGs) with internal stakeholders (i.e., staff from WFP, FAO and UNICEF field, country, and regional offices), implementing NGOs, governmental stakeholders, and program participants (i.e., men and women smallholder farmers, out-of-school youth, and key community-level stakeholders). Qualitative data were coded and analysed using elements of the Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol (QIAP) method. Together the methods focused on assessing JRP beneficiary and implementer experiences and analysing the achievement of outcomes. The primary quantitative and qualitative data were collected by AIR's partner Dalberg Research in South Kivu between June 14<sup>th</sup> and July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

8. The evaluation team took steps to mitigate the risks to the evaluation's validity but encountered several unavoidable challenges. Key limitations included: (1) The insecurity in North Kivu and some areas in South Kivu (i.e., travel was restricted for non-essential purposes including research and evaluation, even though in some cases, such as in Walikale, implementation continued) resulted in limited data collection; (2) Limited information was available on the convergence of programme activities; (3) The evaluation team experienced difficulties in recruiting organizational participants and community level respondents; (4) The lack of comparable baseline data limited the ability to assess changes over time in key indicators.

## Key findings

### Relevance

9. The JRP shows strong alignment with the strategic priorities of the country, donors, and implementing agencies. The JRP is implemented in a challenging environment but complements the mostly humanitarian and emergency focused programmes with its development-focused activities. Respondents highlighted the programme's focus on longer-term resilience, and its multisectoral approach as unique features and strengths of the programme.



10. JRP interventions were well-aligned to the needs of beneficiary smallholder farmers, particularly the provision of seeds, agricultural training, and market access activities which responded directly to the need for enhanced agricultural production and income generation as can be seen from the link in the theory of change (ToC).

## **Effectiveness**

11. There were continued concerns about food security and nutrition, whereby households on average show limited improvements in key food security and nutrition measures between baseline and endline. At endline both adults and children eat an insufficient number of meals per day with both consuming on average less than two meals. A minority of households have adequate scores on the food consumption scale (5 percent), the household hunger scale (20 percent) and the food security index (5 percent). However, quantitative and qualitative findings indicate some positive developments in dietary diversity. The percentage of children between 6 and 23 months consuming a minimum acceptable diet increased from 10 percent to 20 percent, and beneficiary farmers describe in their interviews that JRP taught them about the importance of dietary diversity and were in some cases they were even able to expand their gardens and consume more vegetables. Implementers mentioned school meals having a perceived positive effect on nutritional intake.

12. Participants reported that the livelihood training activities enabled them to switch from inconsistent income sources (i.e., day labour) to professional trades such as sewing/tailoring, soap-making, automobile working, basket weaving, and groundnut butter making. However, overall households reported a lack of income diversification, whereby households on average have 1.7 income sources and three-quarters have recently resorted to using severe coping mechanisms to address lack of income. Physical access to markets and storage was above the threshold of 50 percent for all territories except Uvira.

13. Most mothers and young children received basic health services such as antenatal care (86 percent), zinc (71 percent) and iron and folic acid (IFA) supplements (83 percent), and postnatal checkups (71 percent). This was confirmed by female beneficiary farmers with children who consistently reported taking them to the health centre when they were ill. While service access was overall positive, a few respondents reported distrust and dissatisfaction with treatment received at health centres.

14. Despite overall low rates of access to improved sanitation and water sources, interview respondents reported significant improvements to WASH facilities at health centres and schools that they attributed to the JRP.

15. When combining the various aspects of resilience such as food security, livelihoods and access to basic services, the households at endline scored an average of 20 on the resilience index, which is far below the target score of 50. The results of a comprehensive resilience index were mainly driven by high levels of food insecurity and low assets, which seem consistent across the findings in those areas. Qualitatively, beneficiaries widely reported facing persistent conflict and climate shocks, factors which undermine resilience.

16. According to the household survey, experiences with conflict, including community level disputes, and conflict resolution varied by territory, with households in Kalehe experiencing the highest exposure to conflict, including land disputes, ethnic and armed conflict. Survey respondents also reported a recent increase in the frequency of conflict exposure. JRP beneficiaries—both smallholder farmers and out-of-school adolescents—reported learning and practicing approaches to conflict resolution, including bringing disputes to the chief to be resolved and other methods of community de-escalation. Although the peacebuilding activities were perceived as effective, a few community stakeholders suggested they would be more helpful if they were targeted at the wider community and not just JRP beneficiaries.

## **Efficiency**

17. Despite staying within its budget, the JRP was described as a programme with high operating costs. The costs were partially attributed to contextual needs such as coping with rising prices due to insecurity (e.g. costs associated with additional needs for security, delays in implementation etc) and the need for emergency funds to respond to weather-related shocks. Despite the notion of high costs few respondents from implementing agencies and partners were able to suggest areas to reduce costs.

Efficiency gains were mostly recommended in terms of improving the timeliness of providing funding and/or approving expenditure to implementing agencies.

18. The three agencies led the monitoring of the JRP with dedicated Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) teams. They conducted regular field missions to observe implementation progress and measure results. Despite their robust systems, respondents described that there was limited coordination in monitoring efforts or alignment of monitoring plans. However, respondents across the three agencies provided examples of evidence-based adjustments.

### **Impact**

19. Perceived impacts of JRP activities were predominantly positive. For instance, the adoption of improved agricultural practices and training was reported to contribute to diversification of farming and income sources. While quantitative data did not show significant improvements in food insecurity or agricultural production for the overall sample, beneficiaries had positive stories of individual-level impacts. For instance, smallholding farmers mentioned the increase of their agricultural yield, allowing for both household feeding as well as market sale, which has given many households the opportunity to pay for basic needs like schooling and housing materials. Particularly, women and adolescents who participated in livelihood trainings reported an upward shift in starting new income generating activities and increasing savings. This pathway is consistent with the theory of change. They also noted a strengthening of confidence and self-esteem. The investments made in improving community infrastructure were overwhelmingly popular with community members as they benefited larger groups of people.

### **Sustainability**

20. The JRP utilized existing agriculture, health and education systems and infrastructure and collaborated closely with government partners to ensure sustainability. However, there was limited evidence of a clear operational plan or budget to sustain JRP activities without external funding. Despite challenges, several activities were promising in terms of longer-term sustainability: for instance, the Government had successfully taken over road rehabilitation, and several school gardens and literacy interventions were continued without the provision of external support.

21. Stakeholders identified three main risks to sustainability, including the Government's capacity to move this programme forward in the future, the dependence on external support, and the ongoing protracted armed conflict and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially North Kivu). While some of these threats are external and beyond the programme's control, the evaluation team did not find any mitigation strategies to respond to these threats as part of the programme's sustainability strategy.

22. The operational context of JRP in North and South Kivu has been extremely challenging due to the protracted conflict in the area, high prevalence of weather-related shocks, and low resources. Respondents identified several key factors that may affect the adoption and effectiveness of JRP interventions in the future, including climate and environmental challenges, health and education concerns, socioeconomic conditions, and gender norms.

### **Coherence**

23. JRP interventions in the areas of food security, livelihoods, access to basic social services, and peacebuilding were designed to be complementary and indeed seem to have successfully complemented one another in their implementation. Nevertheless, coordination of the many JRP activities at the community-level—and with government actors—proved more challenging and there were some redundancies and missed collaboration opportunities. For example, some implementing partners recalled working in the same communities as other organizations on similar activities without realizing both fell under the JRP and they could have united their efforts. Additionally, the different approaches and timelines for humanitarian versus development interventions sometimes created problems for JRP implementers in terms of meeting community and individual expectations. While humanitarian assistance modalities such as food or cash focus on immediate gains, development approaches such as the JRP focus on longer-term achievements and were perceived by some beneficiaries to deliver slow results requiring significant effort.

24. While there are indications that JRP activities contributed to the overall objectives of stabilization and peacebuilding, the extent to which peacebuilding activities reinforced resilience in other areas

(health, nutrition, education, agriculture, and livelihoods) is less clear. JRP participants offered some anecdotal evidence to suggest that peacebuilding activities, if sustained, may reinforce resilience in areas such as health, gender equality, and livelihoods. Beneficiaries also described perceived spillover effects of activities in other sectors on peace and resilience.

### **Gender, human rights, equity, and inclusion**

25. The implementing agencies undertook an integrated contextual analysis and gender assessment to inform the targeting of interventions under the JRP. Despite the detailed analyses that were undertaken, the rationale behind the programme's targeting criteria was not always clear to beneficiaries and stakeholders potentially reducing effectiveness of the programme.

26. The JRP proved successful in prioritizing women within the targeting of activities and integrating women in the implementation of the interventions. While beneficiaries and community level stakeholders confirmed that other vulnerable groups were also integrated as part of general targeting efforts, national level staff hinted at room for improvement to ensure the explicit integration of other vulnerable groups (such as persons with disabilities) in targeting and implementation practices.

27. Under the A-WEAI framework, overall empowerment of women in recipient households is quite low. Low empowerment in time and resource domains seem to be driving the overall empowerment score. Suggesting that women are having high workloads, limited ownership of assets and restrained access to and decisions on credit. Other domains such as leadership and production have high scores with 4 out of 5 women reaching a score of adequate empowerment.

### **Conclusions**

28. **Conclusion 1:** The JRP fills a gap by providing development-focused activities in a challenging environment where most other programming efforts respond to emergency and humanitarian needs. JRP interventions are aligned with the needs of beneficiary smallholder farmers, in terms of providing enhancements to their agricultural production and income generation, and most activities have a strong human capital strengthening character which is important to build up resilience. Nevertheless, the programme was implemented in an extremely low resource environment where household and community needs continuously exceeded what could be provided by JRP interventions.

29. **Conclusion 2:** There are continued concerns about resilience, food security and nutrition outcomes in the programme territories, even though outputs related to knowledge and practices indicate some improvements. The findings suggest that the pathway between nutrition-related outputs and outcomes may have been disrupted or not yet achieved due to risk factors such as the conflict, instability, low initial resources.

30. **Conclusion 3:** Two of the most salient achievements in the JRP are the increase in improved agricultural practices and perceived increase in outputs (i.e., crop production) which are attributed to the agricultural and livelihood trainings.

31. **Conclusion 4:** The exposure to the protracted armed conflict negatively affected the implementation as well as the effectiveness of the JRP. The experiences with conflict varied strongly by region, but the frequency of conflict has increased according to JRP beneficiaries. Although the peacebuilding activities were perceived as effective, they would be more helpful if they were targeted at the wider community. In addition, territories in North Kivu were not included in the evaluation due to travel restrictions and conflict-related concerns suggesting that any results from South Kivu are an underestimation of the remaining needs of peace-related outcomes.

32. **Conclusion 5:** While budgets were not overrun, the JRP has high operating costs which were partially attributed to the challenges operating in a rapidly-changing conflict context and the need for emergency funds to respond to weather-related shocks.

33. **Conclusion 6:** The three implementing agencies had dedicated M&E teams and robust systems, however there was a perceived lack of coordination in monitoring efforts and opportunities for improvement by aligning M&E plans. Despite challenges, the monitoring systems have led to evidence-based adjustments.

34. **Conclusion 7:** Perceived impacts of the activities of the JRP are predominantly positive especially when they are associated with the increase in improved agricultural practices, perceived increase in

outputs attributed to the agricultural trainings. Quantitative and qualitative analysis suggested support for the anticipated theory of change pathways between training activities and agricultural income generation outcomes.

35. **Conclusion 8:** The analysis identified three main risks to sustainability, including the government's ability to carry project activities forward, a mindset of reliance on external support, and the persistence of armed conflict, violence and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially in North Kivu due to active conflict).

36. **Conclusion 9:** The JRP interventions are complementary in nature, especially combining food security, livelihoods, access to basic social services, but the coordination of the many JRP activities proved challenging. Some of these challenges derive from issues in coordination and communication between agencies, which may affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

37. **Conclusion 10:** A coherence concern resulted from the inherent differences between humanitarian and development interventions especially with regards to timelines and approaches, which sometimes created problems for JRP implementers in terms of meeting community and individual expectations.

38. **Conclusion 11:** The JRP proved successful in prioritizing women, but there is room for improvement on ensuring the integration of other vulnerable groups within targeting and implementation practices. Moreover, beneficiaries were not always clear why they were targeted and why others were not, leaving potential for better understanding on how the programme targeted beneficiaries.

39. **Conclusion 12:** Women exhibited high levels of empowerment over agricultural decision-making and participation in community groups, which may attest to the success of the intervention in targeting female smallholder farmers. However, the household survey revealed low levels of women's access to credit, despite nearly half of households participating in VSLAs, which may indicate that the existing VSLAs are not sufficiently capitalized to function as credit mechanisms for members.

## Lessons Learned

40. The following lessons learned came forward from the findings which apply to joint programming, especially focused on resilience in a broader context:

- **Lesson 1:** Collaboration with government partners is key for sustainability and efficient implementation of the programme.
- **Lesson 2:** Convergence of programme interventions or "activity layering" is needed both in terms of implementation (to maximise effectiveness) and in terms of M&E efforts to capture the extent to which individuals have access to multiple relevant interventions.
- **Lesson 3:** Programmes operating in the humanitarian-development nexus should include mitigation mechanisms to manage the increased risks associated with the humanitarian context in their sustainability plans.

## Recommendations

41. Based on the key findings and conclusions the evaluation team formulated strategic and operational recommendations. Further detail on prioritization and responsibilities are incorporated in the main text.

Strategic recommendations:

- **Recommendation 1:** Consider the level of accessibility and stability needed for full implementation of activities.
- **Recommendation 2:** Consider focusing on a smaller number of interventions to ensure that all are implemented fully and that beneficiaries receive multiple complementary interventions as opposed to just one.

Select activities that are the most promising in terms of building resilience. While the evaluation did not assess all interventions, the ET observed that the following activities showed the most promise:

the agricultural and vocational trainings, support for IYCF and maternal nutrition, access to market and storage.

- **Recommendation 3:** Increase coverage of peacebuilding activities (beyond specific individuals or groups) or develop a protocol for wider dissemination across the community.
- **Recommendation 4:** Align evaluation strategies across agencies based on shared learning objectives and include elements of convergence to increase learning across organization.

Align M&E strategies and adopt unique identifiers across activities so that programme convergence can be tracked at the household level.

- **Recommendation 5:** Ensure sustainability of the JRP and other joint programmes by increasing government ownership and participation within the programme's sustainability strategy. Include further details within the sustainability strategy on how to mitigate the effects of shocks.

Operational recommendations:

- **Recommendation 6:** Select crops based on value chain analysis that identify those that are the most financially beneficial and viable for the region to promote in agricultural training.

Broaden the focus of livelihood and income generating activities by including more non-agricultural opportunities and ensure that vocational trainings align with the sectors/vocations perceived to be most accessible and profitable.

- **Recommendation 7:** Reinforce farmers' knowledge and practice in natural resource management and climate resilient agricultural production in South Kivu (and North Kivu if feasible).
- **Recommendation 8:** Adjust procedures to facilitate the timely flow down of funds for implementation and to accelerate the approval process for expenditures to NGO partners to avoid any delays and inefficiencies with financing the implementation of activities.
- **Recommendation 9:** Establish a coordination mechanism (for example, regular meetings or a WhatsApp group) for NGO partners at the community level to get to know one another, coordinate activities, and reduce duplication of effort.
- **Recommendation 10:** Increase communication and transparency around the JRP's targeting rationale at the community level including beneficiaries and other (non-beneficiary) community members.
- **Recommendation 11:** Develop a structured approach for including vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, elderly, extremely poor within programme and ensure that accommodations are provided if needed to guarantee equitable access to the activity.
- **Recommendation 12:** Continue efforts to increase women's access to credit through further supporting VSLAs to enhance women's resource empowerment.

# 1. Introduction

1. The World Food Programme (WFP) Country Office in the DRC contracted the American Institutes for Research (AIR) to conduct a final evaluation of the Joint Resilience Programme (JRP), implemented by the WFP; Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and coordinated by WFP. The programme aims to strengthen the socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the territories of Walikale, Masisi, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo in the province of North Kivu and the territories of Mwenga, Walungu, Uvira and Kalehe in the province of South Kivu. This report describes the final evaluation, including the evaluation features and methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## 1.1. Evaluation features

2. As defined in the evaluation Terms of Reference (ToR), (see the summary ToR in Annex 1),<sup>4</sup> the final evaluation assesses the results achieved by the JRP in DRC on the target population's well-being and resilience during the implementation period from 2018-2024. Throughout this period the JRP was funded by Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany. The results provide insight into success factors and barriers of the programme, and it provides an opportunity for lessons learned and recommendations. The final evaluation is an independent evaluation conducted with the oversight of WFP Regional Bureau for Southern Africa for quality guidance and review. The report gives insight into the workings of a multisectoral approach in advancing the country's progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially on resource efficiency, coordination, effectiveness and sustainability. The objective of the evaluation is to generate suggestive evidence on the overall effect of the programme and guide the design and implementation of new resilience projects based on the same model, either by scaling up or adjusting the original intervention. The evaluation took place from March until September 2024 (See further details on the timeline in Annex 2).
3. The main barriers to socioeconomic resilience targeted by JRP activities include chronic malnutrition and food insecurity, lack of access to water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) services, poverty, lack of market access, gender-based discrimination, and instability caused by conflict and displacement. Activities targeted smallholder farming households; community health workers; teachers; children; members of parents' committees (COPA); and pregnant and breastfeeding women.
4. The two main objectives of the JRP evaluation are accountability and learning, with an emphasis on learning, with the goal of promoting resilience among smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations.
  - **Accountability:** The evaluation assessed the performance and results of the JRP programme in the DRC, both in terms of its multisectoral approach as a whole and its specific components in promoting resilience.
  - **Learning:** The evaluation draws lessons from reasons why certain results occurred or did not occur to provide insights on promising practices. The evaluation provides evidence-based findings and recommendations to inform operational and strategic decision-making by different stakeholders. Findings will be actively disseminated, and the final report will discuss the intended and unintended effects of the intervention on gender equality and other equality dimensions, as well as the programme's ability to meet the needs of vulnerable populations, including young people and women. The evaluation will contribute to the evidence base on best-practices in resilience programmes and the potential of such programmes to support vulnerable populations in line with the strategic objectives of the WFP, FAO, and UNICEF, specifically the aim to promote multisectoral approaches to supporting resilience for vulnerable populations. Therefore, this evaluation offers a unique opportunity to learn from the joint implementation of household resilience programmes by WFP, FAO, and UNICEF.

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<sup>4</sup> All the Annexes are presented in a separate volume (Volume 2) of this report.

5. The final evaluation is designed to investigate the achievement of outputs and outcomes, and to examine the assumptions and moderators illustrated in the ToC (see [Section 1.4](#)). The quantitative analysis assesses the extent to which the project met its objectives and produced measurable positive changes in food security, livelihood outcomes, and coping strategies. The qualitative analysis provides insights into the components that were perceived as most effective for successfully overcoming barriers to resiliency and increasing households' productive capabilities and livelihoods, as well as aspects of the initiative that helped or hindered the implementation and institutionalization of the programme.

6. This evaluation covers programme implementation from 2018-2024. The geographic scope of the evaluation intended to capture all programme territories; however primary data collection was not feasible in North Kivu. The ET discussed the accessibility of North Kivu with WFP, the local team and security advisors prior and during the data collection process and concluded that the programme communities were not accessible for the purpose of the evaluation (i.e., travel was restricted for non-essential purposes including research and evaluation, even though in some cases, such as in Walikale, implementation continued). The sampling frames were adjusted to reflect these restrictions. Both the qualitative and quantitative samples did not reduce in overall preciseness (see [Section 1.5](#)), however it did limit the reporting on programme performance in the affected areas. The ET tried to complement the primary data with available secondary data which included North Kivu, but due to the situation recent results in these areas were severely limited. The consequences of not being able to include North Kivu in the primary data collection are further discussed in the [limitations section](#).

7. The intended audience of this report are WFP, FAO, UNICEF country offices in DRC; WFP, FAO, UNICEF field offices in Eastern DRC; WFP (Johannesburg, South Africa), FAO (Accra, Ghana), and UNICEF (Dakar, Senegal) regional offices; WFP, FAO and UNICEF Headquarters divisions; WFP, FAO and UNICEF evaluation offices; BMZ Germany; German Development Bank (KfW); United Nations Country Team; Ministry of Education; Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Gender, Family and Children; Ministry of Health; and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs) acting as implementing partners, who can use the results from this evaluation to inform future multisectoral approaches to resilience programming in the DRC and similar geographic contexts.

## 1.2. Context

8. Despite ongoing efforts of the government and donors, the DRC remains one of the poorest countries in the world. From a population of over a 100 million people<sup>5</sup> about 74.6 percent lives below the poverty line<sup>6</sup> and over 25 million people face high levels of acute food insecurity.<sup>7</sup> Households' inability to fulfil basic food and nutrition needs are exaggerated by the risk of protracted armed conflict, disease, and climate shocks leaving households with limited resilience to smooth consumption.

9. Nearly 75 percent of the population lives in extreme poverty<sup>8</sup> and its incidence is unequally distributed across the country. In 2019, 61.1 percent of women lived below the poverty line compared to 51.3 percent of men.<sup>9</sup> Poverty is higher in rural areas at 84.9 percent, compared to urban areas at 62.6 percent.<sup>10</sup> Income inequality in the country is fairly high-as of 2020, the country's Gini coefficient was 44.1.<sup>11</sup> On the 2022 Human Development Index, the DRC ranked 180 out of 193 on the countries indexed, with a score of 0.481.<sup>12</sup> Poverty is also shown in other aspects of well-being, as of 2023, one in five

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<sup>5</sup> UNICEF. 2022. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report.' UNICEF.

<https://www.unicef.org/media/136736/file/Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congo-2022-COAR.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> World Bank. 2024. 'The World Bank in DRC.' World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/drc/overview>

<sup>7</sup> IPC. 2023. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July - December 2023 and Projection for January - June 2024.' IPC. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156611/?iso3=COD>

<sup>8</sup> UNICEF, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2022.

<sup>9</sup> World Food Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo country strategic plan (2021–2024).

<sup>10</sup> Observatoire Congolais du Développement Durable. 2021. 'Rapport National sur la Mise en Œuvre des ODD.' Observatoire Congolais du Développement Durable. <https://ocdd.cd/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Rapport-National-sur-la-Mise-en-Œuvre-des-ODD-version-digitale.pdf>

<sup>11</sup> World Bank. 2024. 'Gini index- Congo, Dem. Rep.' World Bank. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI?locations=CD>

<sup>12</sup> UNDP. 2022. 'Human Development Index (HDI).' Human Development Reports. <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center/human-development-index#/indicies/HDI>



primary-aged children are not enrolled in school, and over 2,000 schools in North Kivu and Ituri provinces have stopped operating because they were in areas controlled by armed groups, impacting around 750,000 children.<sup>13</sup>

10. Conflict has not only disrupted education but also health systems in Eastern DRC. Since 2018, the country has experienced two Ebola epidemics, specifically in the North Kivu and Equateur provinces. The country has also been impacted by COVID-19 in 2020, an extreme increase in measles cases (+162 percent) since 2022, and a sharp increase in the incidence of cholera (+55 percent) since 2021.<sup>14</sup> The weak health and WASH infrastructure has limited the capacity to respond to these health emergencies. Households lack access to healthcare due to conflict related disruptions and high fees, and only half of the population has access to improved water facilities while less than one third of the population has access to improved sanitation services.<sup>15</sup>

11. The country is heavily affected by protracted conflict, disease (e.g., COVID-19, Ebola, cholera), and climate shocks (e.g., flooding and droughts). Government forces clash frequently with armed groups such as the March 23 Movement (M23) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) primarily in North and South Kivu and other parts of eastern DRC resulting in attacks against civilians, killings, gender-based violence and other atrocities, and the situation in North Kivu has deteriorated since the general elections in December 2024. As a result of this conflict, social and public infrastructure, such as school and healthcare sites, have deteriorated<sup>16</sup> and ongoing attacks have rendered it difficult for agencies to provide humanitarian support.<sup>17</sup> Since 2016, 6.6 million people have been displaced, and 15.4 million children have been affected by the conflict.<sup>18</sup>

12. Outcomes in health and conflict have negatively affected resilience in the Lake Kivu region: Shocks have caused severe disruptions in agriculture production, threatening the livelihoods of farmers across the country. The inability to transport goods due to the risk of attack and interruptions in global supply chains have limited farmers' access to inputs, such as seeds and fertilizer. For the same reasons, access to markets were limited.<sup>19</sup> Extreme and unpredictable weather has caused additional destruction of crops and the population's limited adaptive capacity has left many communities with hampered agricultural yields.<sup>20</sup>

13. The threats to agriculture production increased food insecurity across the country, which limits the country's ability to achieve SDG 2: eradication of hunger. The Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC) showed that the proportion of the population in a crisis or emergency situation increased to 25.4 million in the DRC between July and December 2023. Most impacted are displaced people, returnees, host families and populations living in conflict zones or areas affected by natural disasters. Within North and South Kivu, 2.6 million and 1.5 million experienced acute food insecurity respectively<sup>21</sup> In particular, in North Kivu this is a strong increase since earlier reports between July 2020 and June 2021 indicated 1.8

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<sup>13</sup> GPE Secretariat. (2024). Democratic Republic of Congo's Pathway to Education System Transformation. *GPE*. <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/democratic-republic-congos-pathway-education-system-transformation>; UNICEF DRC. (2023). Conflict in eastern DRC is having a devastating impact on children's education. *UNICEF DRC*.

<https://www.unicef.org/drcongo/en/press-releases/conflict-eastern-drc-having-devastating-impact-childrens-education>

<sup>14</sup> UNICEF, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2022.

<sup>15</sup> World Bank Group. (2017). WASH Poor in a Water-Rich Country: A Diagnostic of Water, Sanitation, Hygiene, and Poverty in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *World Bank Group*.

<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/651601498206668610/pdf/116679-22-6-2017-12-42-8.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> World Food Programme. 2022b. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Annual Country Report 2022.' World Food Programme. [docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000147935/download/? ga=2.242865537.2015753226.1712161387-1451300769.1702951470](https://docs.wfp.org/api/documents/WFP-0000147935/download/?ga=2.242865537.2015753226.1712161387-1451300769.1702951470)

<sup>17</sup> World Food Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Annual Country Report 2022.

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2022.

<sup>19</sup> World Food Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Annual Country Report 2022.

<sup>20</sup> World Food Programme. 2023. 'Climate Crisis and Action in DRC.' World Food Programme.

<https://reliefweb.int/attachments/b4dd7391-3d83-41af-b7fa-7a2febe05021/Climate%20Crisis%20and%20Action%20in%20DRC%20-%20WFP%20December%202023.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> IPC Analysis: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for July-December 2023 and Projection for January-June 2024. <https://www.ipcinfo.org/ipc-country-analysis/details-map/en/c/1156611/?iso3=COD>

million people with acute food insecurity.<sup>22</sup> Women and children are particularly impacted by food insecurity and malnutrition. Women are 27 percent more likely to experience food insecurity than men and 1.7 million out of the 4.2 million malnourished people are pregnant/lactating women.<sup>23</sup> More than 15 million children under 5 live in severe/moderate food poverty and an estimated 3.4 million children are acutely malnourished.<sup>24</sup> Malnutrition contributes to almost half of the deaths of children under the age of 5 and an estimated 42 percent of children under 5 experience stunting.<sup>25</sup>

14. Besides in food security, gender inequality also persists in other areas. On the gender inequality index in 2022, the DRC ranked 152 out of 164 countries, with an index of 0.61.<sup>26</sup> Women are susceptible to gender-based violence and are economically disempowered. Even though 72 percent of smallholder farmers/agricultural entrepreneurs are women, less than 10 percent of these women own land.<sup>27</sup> Women and girls face greater risk of violence by living in conflict-prone areas. As of 2020, almost one-third of women and girls aged 15-49 and living in conflict-affected provinces reported being survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>28</sup>

15. Overall, the 2024 Sustainable Development Report<sup>29</sup> described that the DRC is struggling to make progress towards various SDGs, including negative trends on SDG 2 on 'Zero Hunger' and SDG 16 on 'Peace, justice and Strong Institutions' and stagnant trends on for instance SDG 1 'No Poverty', SDG 3 'Good Health and Well-being', SDG 5 'Gender Equality' and SDG 6 on 'Clean Water and Sanitation'. The results are confirmed by the country's Voluntary National Report (VNR), a more in-depth analysis by the government on the progress of the SDGs, which was submitted once in 2020.<sup>30</sup> The VNR explains that the government has taken steps to decentralize the SDGs by integrating them into the country's strategic plans. For instance, the country established a Zero Hunger Strategy Plan as part of its work to achieve SDG 2, even though it has decreased its public spending and investment in the agriculture sector. While progress has been made towards more intentionally addressing the SDGs, the ongoing lack of resources limits the government's ability to implement policies and programme implementation.

16. Even before the creation of the JRP, WFP, FAO, and UNICEF have been providing technical assistance and programmes such as cash transfers, in-kind food assistance, and trainings on feeding and finance to vulnerable populations such as women and smallholder farmers. For example, the WFP has been providing food relief in North Kivu since 2016 through the forms of food for work programmes, vouchers, school feeding programmes, and direct food distribution. WFP's assistance in eastern DRC has also included emergency food provisions- for example, it targeted over 11,000 survivors of floods in the Kalehe territory in South Kivu in 2023.<sup>31</sup> Supporting SDG 15, life on land, and SDG 2, FAO has worked with farmers across the DRC, including in North and South Kivu, to improve value chains of their products by promoting new processing techniques and infrastructure and to improve the management of natural resources. It has also been collaborating with the government to create sectoral policies that would

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<sup>22</sup> WFP, FAO, and UNICEF. 2020. Joint Project Document: Strengthening socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> UNICEF, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2022; World Food Programme. 2022. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo.' World Food Programme. <https://www.wfp.org/countries/democratic-republic-congo>

<sup>25</sup> World Bank, The World Bank in DRC.

<sup>26</sup> Human Development Report Office. 2022. 'Gender Inequality Index.' Human Development Report Office. [https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhdr.undp.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2023-24\\_HDR%2FHDR23-24\\_Statistical\\_Annex\\_GII\\_Table.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhdr.undp.org%2Fsites%2Fdefault%2Ffiles%2F2023-24_HDR%2FHDR23-24_Statistical_Annex_GII_Table.xlsx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK)

<sup>27</sup> World Food Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo country strategic plan (2021–2024).

<sup>28</sup> World Food Programme. 2020. 'Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2020.' World Food Programme. [https://www.wfp.org/operations/annual-country-report?operation\\_id=CD01&year=2020#/20429](https://www.wfp.org/operations/annual-country-report?operation_id=CD01&year=2020#/20429)

<sup>29</sup> S Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G. (2024). The SDGs and the UN Summit of the Future. Sustainable Development Report 2024. Paris: SDSN, Dublin: Dublin University Press. Pp. 160-161.

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/sustainabledevelopment.report/2024/sustainable-development-report-2024.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> Republique Democratique du Congo: Ministère du Plan. (2020). Rapport d'Examen National Volontaire des Objectifs de Développement Durable. Ministère du Plan.

<sup>31</sup> WFP. 2023. 'WFP's emergency response to the Kalehe floods, South Kivu - Flash Report #2.' <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/wfps-emergency-response-kalehe-floods-south-kivu-flash-report-2-19-may-2023>

strengthen the governance of the country's agricultural and environmental sectors.<sup>32</sup> Finally, UNICEF's work in the country has included strengthening education systems, working towards SDG 4 (quality education); implementing widespread vaccination and nutritional supplement campaigns, supporting SDG 3 (good health and wellbeing), and building water infrastructure to promote better WASH practices, contributing towards the attainment of SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation for all). Within North Kivu, UNICEF also implemented the Participatory, Empowering community-based Approaches for Resilience (PEAR+) programme, which comprised of peacebuilding activities and basic service provision.<sup>33</sup>

17. These three agencies are not the sole, or necessarily the primary, providers of aid in the DRC; the country also receives assistance from other governments, local and international NGOs, and other multilaterals. For instance, the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan in North Kivu is targeting over 2 million people through the collaboration of 143 operational actors including 7 UN agencies, 94 national NGOs and 40 international NGOs and 2 public services.<sup>34</sup> The plan includes MONUSCO the UN organizations' stabilization mission, agencies such as WFP, FAO and UNICEF, and other agencies providing humanitarian assistance such as locally led Kivu International and Action Kivu.

18. In terms of response to these multi-sector issues, the government of the DRC has outlined priority policies for implementation in the National Action Plans (NAPs).<sup>35</sup> For the agricultural sector the 2021-2023 NAP proposes to promote the value of agriculture production by introducing farmers to more efficient agricultural practices, increasing women and young people's access to finance and land, and convening these vulnerable demographics to develop their own livelihoods. In response to frequent epidemics, the plan also supports the idea of "one health", which would increase coordination between national healthcare services with local systems to better respond to health emergencies and better equip decentralized systems of healthcare with resources for treatment. Some of the outlined activities to address gender inequality include stronger enforcement of punishment for those who commit gender-based violence, increased access to maternal and infant healthcare resources, and promoting institutional capacity to serve victims of sexual and gender-based violence. Further, the government of the DRC is a signatory of a number of international frameworks and conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW; 1986) and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (2017).

### 1.3. Subject being evaluated

19. The JRP is a joint programme between WFP, FAO and UNICEF aimed at promoting the resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable communities in selected territories in North and South Kivu by building the capacity of provincial and local government actors to design and implement policies that improve social services access. Through these two objectives, the JRP aims to bolster the Government of the DRC's National Strategic Development Plan, which seeks to: (a) stabilize conflict-ridden areas, (b) promote economic growth, (c) create new jobs, and (d) support overall human development.

20. The JRP is targeted towards communities located in eastern DRC (i.e., North and South Kivu provinces) due to the high levels of armed conflict and violence, displacement, and refugee resettlement. Beneficiaries include households of smallholder farmers and community organizations within the Walikale, Masisi, Rutshuru, and Nyiragongo territories in the North Kivu province and Mwenga, Walungu, Uvira, and Kalehe territories in the South Kivu province as well as provincial and local government actors. The eight territories included in the JRP include six health zones: Nyiragongo, Rwanguba and Walikale in North Kivu, and Kaniola, Mwenga and Ruzizi in South Kivu. Local beneficiary organizations include farmer groups, women's groups, schools, and health facilities. Although farmer groups were the main vehicle for delivering JRP's agricultural activities, other activities such as literacy and income-generation trainings

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<sup>32</sup> FAO. (n.d.) FAO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. FAO. <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/fr/>

<sup>33</sup> IHfRA. 2020. 'Evaluation sommative du projet PEAR Plus III mis en oeuvre sur la période (2017-2020) dans les provinces du Nord Kivu (Zone de santé de Rwanguba) et de l'Ituri (Zones de santé de Komanda et Nyakunde) en République Démocratique du Congo.'

<sup>34</sup> OCHA (2024). Democratic Republic of the Congo – North Kivu: Overview of the Humanitarian Situation – January 2024.

<sup>35</sup> Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. 2021. 'National Action Plan 2021-2023.' Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. <https://economie.gouv.cd/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PROGRAMME-DACTIONS-DU-GOUVERNEMENT-DE-LUSN-2021-2023-Final.pdf>

were delivered through women's groups and aimed to support the unique needs of women in JRP communities.

21. The JRP seeks to attain four main outcomes with a set of comprehensive activities: (i) increase agricultural production and productivity through sustainable and nutrition-sensitive approaches, (ii) strengthen the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households, (iii) improve family health, and (iv) strengthen community structures and organizations. Table 1 presents a summary of the main activities by outcome and agency. Further detail into the associated outputs and activities are in Annex 9. In addition, Annex 10 provides an overview of the broader spectrum of the stakeholders involved in the JRP beyond WFP, UNICEF and FAO, such as relevant line ministries from among others Ministry of Agriculture; Ministry of Gender, Women and Children; Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Primary, Secondary and Vocational Education which participated in the design and implementation and the 73 non-governmental organizations which supported activity implementation on the ground.

22. In the programme design, the implementing agencies outlined their plan to reach sixty thousand smallholder farmer households (approximately 360,000 individuals) in the six health zones and eight territories as direct beneficiaries of the JRP.<sup>36</sup> JRP also aimed to provide 524,000 individuals with nutrition assistance, and an additional 70,000 school children with home-grown school feeding services. Finally, the programme planned to reach 800,000 indirect beneficiaries located in the targeted areas through the peace building and WASH components of the JRP programme.

23. Reported programme achievements from 2018 to 2023 are reported in Annex 8. For instance, a key project activity was seed distribution, and the project reportedly distributed seeds to a total of 10,450 households in 2020; 24,932 households in 2021; 21,638 households in 2022; and 17,949 households in 2023, in both North Kivu and South Kivu. Monitoring data for other JRP activities, such as cash transfers or food distribution, was inconsistently reported.

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<sup>36</sup> WFP, FAO, and UNICEF. 2023, March 30. Strengthening socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) [Project Document]. WFP, FAO, and UNICEF.

**Table 2: Summary of main activities by outcome and agency**

Implementing agency	Outcome 1: Vulnerable smallholder farmers increase their agricultural production and productivity through sustainable and nutrition sensitive approaches	Outcome 2: Strengthened livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households, particularly households headed by women through improved market access and income diversification	Outcome 3: Improved family health and wellbeing through increased access to basic social services for households and communities (Quality nutrition, essential WASH)	Outcome 4: Enhanced community structures and organizations to promote gender equity, peace, and social cohesion
WFP	Facilitate access to conservation techniques	<p>Support market rehabilitation and value promotion of agriculture production through the dissemination of post-harvest best practices, infrastructure (roads, warehouses, markets), and post-harvest tools.</p> <p>Facilitate access to food processing and preservation techniques (with FAO).</p> <p>Facilitate market linkages between farmers groups and commodity buyers.</p> <p>Provide skills training (e.g., literacy) and creation of income-generating activities for women, including the rehabilitation of women's training centres.</p>	<p>Provide treatment and prevention for moderate acute malnutrition, by supporting children aged 6 to 23 months and pregnant and breastfeeding women.</p> <p>Promotion and strengthening of school-feeding interventions, including through supporting school and health facility gardens, training the school feeding personnel, and awareness raising (with FAO and UNICEF).</p> <p>Promote food preparation, storage, and consumption best practices for behaviour change.</p> <p>Awareness campaign to promote school enrolment, especially for girls (with UNICEF).</p>	<p>Promote peace and reconciliation through community dialogue for farmers' and women's groups as well as schools (with FAO and UNICEF).</p> <p>Establish early warning and conflict mitigation system at community-level.</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of farmers organizations and cooperatives (with FAO).</p>
UNICEF	N/A	Technical and life skills training for out-of-school adolescents related to agriculture and food production/processing to promote their socio-economic reintegration (with FAO).	<p>Strengthen healthcare facility and community capacity to provide community-based nutrition assistance, nutrition supplements, and to manage severe acute malnutrition, including by providing supplies to health facilities.</p> <p>Support the PNEVA (National Healthy Villages and Schools Programme)</p>	<p>Promote peace and reconciliation through community dialogue for farmers' and women's groups as well as schools (with FAO and WFP).</p> <p>Promote social cohesion and conflict resolution among</p>

Implementing agency	Outcome 1: Vulnerable smallholder farmers increase their agricultural production and productivity through sustainable and nutrition sensitive approaches	Outcome 2: Strengthened livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households, particularly households headed by women through improved market access and income diversification	Outcome 3: Improved family health and wellbeing through increased access to basic social services for households and communities (Quality nutrition, essential WASH)	Outcome 4: Enhanced community structures and organizations to promote gender equity, peace, and social cohesion
			<p>certification process for villages, health centres, and schools. The PNEVA certification process for schools, villages, and community health facilities promotes the nutritional and overall health status of women and children by helping these institutions meet the hygienic and sanitary standards established under the PNEVA programme.</p> <p>Promotion and strengthening of school-feeding interventions, including through supporting school and health facility gardens, training the school feeding personnel, and awareness raising (with FAO and WFP).</p> <p>Awareness campaign to promote school enrolment, especially for girls (with WFP).</p>	<p>teachers, parents, and students through training, teaching materials, and school peace clubs.</p> <p>Support for community radio stations (with FAO).</p>
FAO	Facilitate access to agricultural inputs (land, seeds, and tools), including through the rehabilitation of storage warehouses, the provision of supplies, and support for seed multiplication.	<p>Facilitate access to food processing and preservation techniques (with WFP).</p> <p>Technical training for out-of-school adolescents related to agriculture and food production/processing to promote their socio-economic reintegration (with UNICEF).</p>	Promotion and strengthening of school-feeding interventions, including through supporting school and health facility gardens, training the school feeding personnel, and awareness raising (with UNICEF and WFP).	<p>Promote peace and reconciliation through community dialogue for farmers' and women's groups as well as schools (with WFP and UNICEF).</p> <p>Establish "Dimitra" community listeners clubs to strengthen</p>

Implementing agency	Outcome 1: Vulnerable smallholder farmers increase their agricultural production and productivity through sustainable and nutrition sensitive approaches	Outcome 2: Strengthened livelihoods of vulnerable communities and households, particularly households headed by women through improved market access and income diversification	Outcome 3: Improved family health and wellbeing through increased access to basic social services for households and communities (Quality nutrition, essential WASH)	Outcome 4: Enhanced community structures and organizations to promote gender equity, peace, and social cohesion
	Capacity strengthening of farmer organizations (FOs) in agricultural and livestock production, beekeeping, food processing/conservation, and participation in markets. Capacity strengthening of government and private sector entities to promote input networks (e.g., seed networks).	Creation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) and providing income-generating support to women in VSLAs.  Strengthen rural livelihoods through support for wetland rehabilitation, sustainable natural resource management, landscape restoration, and erosion control.		conflict prevention and mitigation and promote social cohesion among farmers.  Support for community radio stations (with UNICEF).  Strengthen the capacity of farmer organizations and cooperatives (with WFP).



24. The programme is funded by the BMZ through the German Development Bank (KfW). The total project budget for the current phase (2021 to 2024) is estimated at 120 million Euros and is split evenly between the implementing agencies and project outcomes. For instance, an estimated 37 percent of the budget (EUR 44,603,940.34) is allocated to WFP; 33 percent (EUR 39,584,442.45) for FAO; and 30 percent (EUR 35,811,617.21) for UNICEF (see Table 2). The budget breakdown from the first phase of the programme (2018 to 2020), in which UNICEF was not involved, indicates the implementers' emphasis on Outcome 2, strengthened livelihoods of vulnerable communities by promoting market access and income diversification; as well as their consistent spending from 2019 to 2021 (see Tables 3 and 4). The ET is unable to report actual expenditures due to the unavailability of financial reports for these years.

**Table 3: Planned budget breakdown for second phase of JRP (EUR), by year.**

	2020	2021	2022	2023	TOTAL
<b>WFP</b>	12 919 370	2 730 729	3 970 702	2 193 539	<b>21 814 340</b>
<b>FAO</b>	9 111 296	2 263 109	3 293 246	1,816 792	<b>16 484,443</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	6 469 334	1 606 162	2 336 051	1,289 669	<b>11 701 216</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28 500 000</b>	<b>6 600 000</b>	<b>9 600 000</b>	<b>5 300 000</b>	<b>50 000 000</b>

**Table 4: JRP expenditures (USD) by FAO and WFP from 2018 to 2021, by outcome.**

	Outcome 1	Outcome 2	Outcome 3	Outcome 4	Project support costs	TOTAL
<b>WFP</b>	3 390 706	12 415 982	0	4 284 608	6 818 287	<b>26 909 583</b>
<b>FAO</b>	1 337 709	3 375 244	4 475 554	0	2 011 543	<b>11 200 050</b>

**Table 5: JRP expenditures (US\$) by FAO and WFP from 2018 to 2021, by year.**

	2018	2019	2020	2021	TOTAL
<b>WFP</b>	1 545 481	7 921 439	6 530 199	10 912 464	<b>26 909 582</b>
<b>FAO</b>	1 487 207	4 451 112	4 211 011	1 050 720	<b>11 200 050</b>

25. The design of the current phase of the programme (2021-2024) is informed by existing evidence on the context within DRC and North and South Kivu in specific, and preceding efforts of the three agencies, including technical assistance and implementation support in e.g. the field of rural development and agriculture for WFP<sup>37</sup> and FAO,<sup>38</sup> and education and health for UNICEF.<sup>39</sup> The three agencies also used the 2019 analysis from the Integrated Food Security Classification (IPC) which revealed that around 15.9 million people in the DRC were at IPC Phase 3 (crisis) or IPC Phase 4 (emergency) with 1.8 million in North Kivu and 1.5 million people in South Kivu. The numbers rose significantly compared to the previous year and were anticipated to deteriorate further.<sup>40</sup> As described in the context section of this report, these numbers have only increased since 2020. The programme was also informed by the 2018-2019 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey which revealed that, in North Kivu, the most pressing issue was to end the use of surface water and that in South Kivu, more than a third of the limited access to clean water was due to distance from the water point.<sup>41</sup> The WFP, FAO, and UNICEF also reviewed the 2019 Sustainable Development Report, which discussed the DRC's struggle to make progress towards SDG 2 (end hunger and promote sustainable agriculture), SDG 5 (achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls), SDG 6 (ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation), SDG 16 (promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build

<sup>37</sup> World Food Programme, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Annual Country Report 2022.

<sup>38</sup> FAO. n.d. 'FAO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.' FAO. <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/fr/>

<sup>39</sup> UNICEF, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report 2022.

<sup>40</sup> WFP, FAO, and UNICEF. 2019. WFP-FAO-UNICEF Joint Project Document: Strengthening socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels), and SDG 17 (strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships).<sup>33</sup> As a result, the activities designed under the JRP are particularly focused on these SDGs. Another key evaluation that informed the WFP's work and involvement in the multi-sectoral programme was the 2020 evaluation of the WFP's country strategic plan (2018-2020) for the DRC.<sup>34</sup> While the evaluation had revealed that the WFP was able to respond to emergencies within the country, it was limited not only by funding constraints but also by the failure to make progress on forging partnerships with the Government (in large part due to the geopolitical situation) and other relevant donors and stakeholders. This lack of resources limited WFP's ability to provide any assistance to vulnerable populations, which is why the recommendation of forging stronger multisectoral partnerships emerged from the evaluation. The JRP thus represents an attempt for WFP to coordinate with other agencies and partners to leverage their resources as well as promote a more robust definition of resilience within the DRC.

26. The most relevant programme to the JRP was an earlier collaboration between WFP and FAO that aimed to strengthen the resilience of smallholder farmers. The pilot of this WFP-FAO programme was launched in 2009 in the Kabalo territory in Tanganyika province and Bikoro and Ingende territories in Equateur province, and the second phase expanded to North and South Kivu provinces in 2018.<sup>42</sup> Under the programme, WFP and FAO established farmer organizations, promoted income-generating activities among women, created infrastructure to promote market and input access as well as storage of production, and capacity building to promote agricultural and other livelihood best practices. However, throughout programme implementation, beneficiaries expressed a need for WASH interventions and strengthened WASH services. WFP and FAO also learned the importance of joint communication and coordination of activity monitoring and implementation and the need for community ownership of programming. Taking these lessons learned and acknowledging the demand for WASH services, WFP brought in UNICEF, which had been providing ongoing WASH interventions across the country, into a newly restructured multi-sectoral partnership known as the Joint Resilience Programme (JRP).

27. The agencies have drawn further lessons from their work in other conflict-affected contexts outside of the DRC. WFP has also implemented a multi-sectoral approach in the Sahel G5 countries and after the first year of implementation, it brought in UNICEF to complement its work. UNICEF and FAO have also collaborated to implement similar resilience social protection programming in the Sahel region. UNICEF has also been implementing the Participatory, Empowering community-based Approaches for Resilience (PEAR+) programme since 2015, a multi-sectoral programme that provides basic services to post-conflict affected communities, which includes providing peacebuilding in the North Kivu and Ituri provinces of the DRC.<sup>43</sup> This preceding work has contributed to the design of the peacebuilding component, captured in Outcome 4, of the JRP. In summary, the JRP was designed to meet the needs of a growing number of displaced persons in eastern DRC. The design is based in the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, which asserts that to respond to humanitarian crises and prevent a crisis from worsening, institutions ought to implement activities and create mechanisms that promote peacebuilding and overall development and economic empowerment.

## 1.4. Theory of change

28. Based on document review and consultations with key stakeholders and existing theories of change (ToCs) from comparable programmes, the evaluation team reconstructed the ToC to guide the evaluation (see Figure 1). The ET incorporated specific JRP activities in the ToC to highlight the causal links between the project activities and the intended outputs. This, in turn, enabled the evaluation team to identify how implementation challenges might affect the project outcomes and impact.

29. **Initial conditions and assumptions:** The ToC hypothesizes that the combined activities target vulnerable populations and address their nutritional, economic, and social needs in a contextually appropriate manner. The ToC makes the following implicit assumptions: target beneficiaries take part in the activities, no significant shocks will take place that will displace target beneficiaries or impede access to target communities, and disease epidemics will not inhibit existing capacities and any resilience-

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

building activities. Lastly, the ToC assumes that the initiative will fit into the various existing policy, data, government, and implementing partners' structures.

30. **Activities:** The programme provides an integrated package of activities, which are also further described in Table 1. The programme can be divided into activities that aim to address immediate needs, such as the purchase of agricultural tools and nutritional assistance, and activities that aim to build long-term resilience, such as technical assistance and training to diversify income sources, improve agricultural production, and promote healthy feeding practices, paying particular attention to vulnerable groups such as women and children.

31. **Outcomes:** To strengthen the resilience of households in crisis-affected regions, the JRP covers household food security and livelihood needs. In the short term, the programme can achieve outputs that include household members participating in nutrition assistance, livelihood training, and cash-for-work initiatives. In the longer term, household members would realize improved outcomes in: (a) health and nutrition (e.g., reduced malnutrition amongst infants and improved food security); (b) economic resilience (e.g., increase in average income, crop diversification); and (c) women's empowerment by promoting women's decision-making capacity and their livelihoods.

32. **Pathways:** The link between activities and the programme's key outcomes and impacts relies on their relevance and coordinated implementation. Relevant activities address the most immediate nutrition and livelihood needs and target the most significant barriers to households' resilience against common shocks and stressors. If the activities are relevant and delivered to target beneficiaries through a coordinated and convergent approach, then the JRP is expected to result in the following final outcomes:

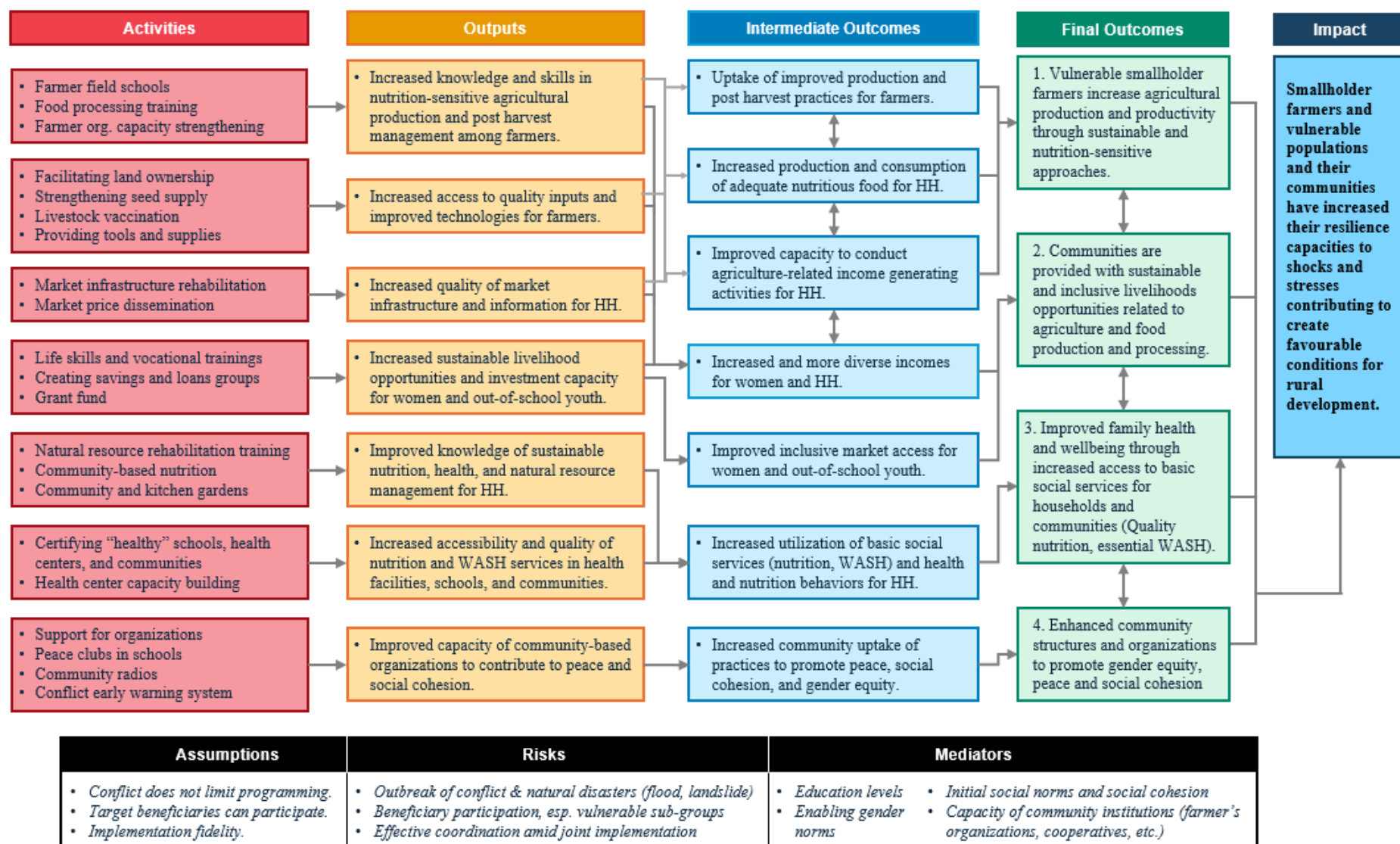
- Increased agricultural production and productivity of vulnerable smallholder farmers through sustainable, nutrition-sensitive approaches.
- Strengthened livelihoods of vulnerable communities, such as households headed by women through promotion of market access and income diversification.
- Improved household and community health through improvement of access to social community services.
- Promoted community structures that support gender equity, stabilization, and social cohesion and therefore support peace efforts.

33. Each of these outcomes on its own is expected to affect the programme impact, however there may also be feedback loops between outcomes which may strengthen the overall pathways. For instance, increased stabilization may open up markets and trade and therefore help to promote income diversification. These types of interactions are essential in a joint programme and highlight the potential value added of programme convergence.

34. **Impacts.** Provided that the multifaceted activities target all relevant constraints hindering food security and resilience in the target population, improvements in the intermediate outcomes should enable households, particularly women and children, to improve food security and to develop resilient livelihoods. In addition, the strengthened knowledge, capacity, and coordination on gender-sensitive resilience programming at the national level should translate into more coherent, coordinated, and impactful future resilience programming.

35. **Mediators and moderators.** The JRP ToC assumes that investments in agricultural skills and resources, market linkages, health and nutrition services, and community institutions will achieve the overall objective of strengthening community resilience. However, it will be important to consider that factors such as existing gender norms and power dynamics, the capacity of community institutions and social cohesion, which may affect the strength of the relationship between activities, outputs and outcomes (i.e. mediators). In addition, the background and context of the JRP highlights the risks of final outcomes and impacts being affected through external contextual factors such as, outbreaks of conflict, and occurrence of climate shocks.

Figure 1: Reconstructed Theory of Change



## 1.5. Evaluation methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

### 1.5.1. Evaluation methodology

36. For the evaluation of the JRP, the AIR team focused on the two following objectives (a) analysing the progress toward the expected outcomes using the performance management framework, and (b) identifying potential barriers or success factors from the multisectoral JRP collaboration. In order to conduct this programme evaluation, the team used evaluation questions (EQs) which reflect the six main Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development – Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria to guide the analysis: (a) relevance, (b) efficiency, (c) effectiveness, (d) sustainability, (e) impact, and (f) coherence. The ET also added a separate category for cross-sectional questions regarding gender, equity and inclusion to emphasize the importance of including a gender-sensitive and equitable approach to evaluation process.

37. The ET designed a mixed methods approach to answer all EQs, creating synergies in the process. The design is a concurrent approach, whereby quantitative and qualitative data were collected and assessed simultaneously. Table 5 summarizes the EQs by category, and Annex 4 provides further detail on sub-questions, indicators and analytical methods in a comprehensive evaluation matrix.

**Table 6: Evaluation question by evaluation criteria**

	Evaluation question
<b>Relevance</b>	To what extent and how do the programme objectives and design respond to the needs, policies, and priorities of beneficiaries at the national, provincial, community, household, and individual levels, and do they continue to do so if circumstances change?
<b>Effectiveness</b>	To what extent and how has the resilience programme achieved its objectives and results, including differential results between groups?
<b>Efficiency</b>	To what extent and how were financial resources, human resources, and supplies sufficient (quantity), adequate (quality), economically distributed/deployed, and timely?
<b>Impact</b>	To what extent and how has the programme generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?
<b>Sustainability</b>	To what extent do the net benefits continue, or are likely to be sustained, after programme closure?
<b>Coherence</b>	To what extent and how do the WFP, FAO, and UNICEF interventions produce results that are mutually reinforcing (cross-fertilizing)—internal coherence—and complementary to those implemented by other partners (NGOs, United Nations agencies) and government structures—external coherence?
<b>Gender, human rights, equity and inclusion</b>	How and to what extent has the programme contributed to the dimensions of gender, human rights, and equity?

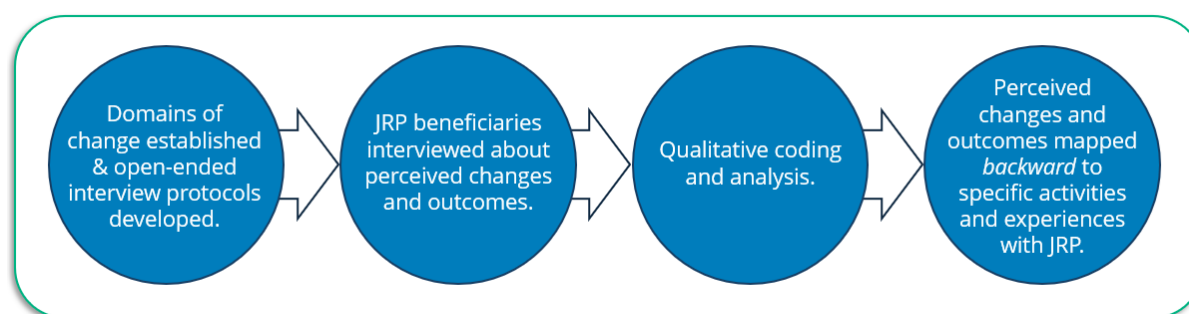
38. In the inception phase, the ET conducted an evaluability assessment, a thorough desk review and validated the research design in conjunction with stakeholders from WFP, UNICEF and FAO. This included the production and revision of an inception report; an inception workshop with key external stakeholders (e.g., KfW); the production and validation of a stakeholder map; and the production and validation of an activity map. The stakeholder map proved useful for ensuring participation from individuals implicated in various aspects of JRP, while the activity map ensured that the ET was correctly probing about JRP activities in the research tools. (See Annex 10 for the final stakeholder mapping and Annex 9 for the result of the activity mapping.)

39. During the data collection (June 14-25, 2024), the ET's partner Dalberg Research conducted a household survey among 578 households in South Kivu for the quantitative component (See Annex 5 for

the Fieldwork agenda). The sample was evenly divided among the four JRP territories in South Kivu (Kalehe, Mwenga, Uvira, and Walungu). The sample was constructed with beneficiary data from WFP that had proportional representation of households headed by women and households headed by men (60 percent vs 40 percent). However, the proportion of households self-reporting as headed by women on the survey was lower than recorded in the beneficiary data (25.8 percent). The survey focused on topics such as food insecurity, agricultural production, conflict, women's empowerment, maternal and child health, which were aligned with the baseline indicators and performance framework. The analysis consisted of descriptive analysis comparing endline indicators across territories to baseline and targets, where feasible, and descriptive analysis by gender (following United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN-SWAP) criterion 2a and 2b on the need of gender-focused analysis). The evaluability assessment conducted during the inception phase indicated that a full impact analysis was unfeasible, due to: (1) a lack of a comparison group identified at baseline, (2) evaluability issues which derived from different baseline samples being used that compromised possible comparability at endline for all indicators (see Annex 3 for further details on the methods). The evaluability assessment also highlighted a lack of gender-specific indicators, which has been addressed by including the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) in the survey following UN-SWAP criterion 1a on including at least one indicator on women's empowerment.

40. The qualitative component explored the experiences of participants and implementers, including which components were perceived as most effective and exploring the barriers and facilitators to implementation and institutionalization of the programme. The qualitative approach involved 14 key informant interviews (KIIs) and 2 focus group discussions (FDGs) with internal stakeholders (i.e., staff from WFP, FAO and UNICEF field, country, and regional offices), implementing NGOs, and governmental stakeholders (See Annex 12 for the data collection tools). The evaluation team also conducted 28 KIIs and 9 FDGs among programme participants (i.e., men and women smallholder farmers, out-of-school youths, and key community-level stakeholders) during the period between June 14 and July 19, 2024 (See Annex 7 for the Key informants' overview). The evaluation employed elements of the Qualitative Impact Assessment Protocol (QuIP) method (see Figure 2). The QuIP method is designed to elicit narrative accounts of change from programme participants and reduce bias in the focus group and interview process through "blindfolding" interviewers and participants. The QuIP methodology was especially appropriate for the evaluation of the JRP because of its time and cost efficiency advantages.<sup>44</sup> See Annex 3 for a detailed explanation of the qualitative approach).

**Figure 2: Incorporation of QuIP methodology in evaluation**



41. The results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses were triangulated and are presented in an integrated manner by evaluation criteria and The two methods were designed to be complementary and deepen the understanding of topics surrounding the implementation of the JRP. In case any of contradicting results, the ET sought further evidence to explain responses and contextual differences. Nevertheless, quantitative and qualitative methods have been weighted equally within this evaluation, so the results from both methods are valued equally in their contribution to assess the JRP. The direct quotes included in the finding's sections illustrate key themes that were uncovered through the coding and analysis of interview and focus group transcripts.

<sup>44</sup> INTRAC. 2021. 'The Qualitative Impact Protocol.' INTRAC. <https://www.intrac.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/QUIP.pdf>

### 1.5.2. Limitations

42. The ET took every step possible to mitigate the risks to the evaluation's validity, however, there remain several unavoidable factors which limit the representativeness and strength of the findings. The limitations and mitigation measures are highlighted in Table 7 below:

**Table 7: Limitations, mitigation strategies and research implications**

	Limitation	Mitigation strategies and Implications for Findings
1	Insecurity in the DRC limited data collection within the country, in particular North Kivu and some areas in South Kivu.	<p>Security officers of WFP advised the ET that non-essential travel to North Kivu was not possible, which is why North Kivu was excluded from the sample.</p> <p>In addition, the ET's data collection partner, Dalberg Research, discussed with the WFP team the feasibility of visiting proposed participating communities. Based on this discussion, additional adjustments to the sampling frame were made to ensure the safety of participants and field team. Data collectors still visited all of the participating territories in South Kivu (i.e. Mwenga, Walungu, Uvira and Kalehe), hence the evaluation managed to adhere to the intended sampling frame.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the exclusion of North Kivu from the sample limited the ET's ability to answer the evaluation questions for beneficiaries in North Kivu as their experiences with the programme likely do not align with beneficiaries in South Kivu.</p>
2	Limited information and data available on convergence of programme activities	There is a large variety of activities implemented, and the existing monitoring and baseline data lack information on the joint participation of beneficiary households within multiple activities. Without this information, it is difficult to assess the extent to which multiple needs have been addressed and whether there have been additional benefits or spillovers from the effects of one activity to others.
3	The lack of comparable baseline data limits the ability to assess changes over time in key indicators.	While monitoring and baseline data were collected by the programme, some of the indicators of interest, such as women's empowerment, were not collected. Other indicators, such as maternal and child health indicators, were collected from health facilities instead of households, which complicates the comparability of the baseline and endline sample. Finally, the aforementioned data collection challenges resulted in only about 50 percent of the final sample coming from the original randomization, and while the data collection partner, Dalberg, made every effort to preserve random selection from the replacement lists, it is possible that the final sample is less comparable to baseline as a result. However, the evaluation team made comparisons to baseline where feasible and conducted additional descriptive analyses.
4	Difficulties in recruiting organizational participants for qualitative data collection.	The ET encountered difficulties recruiting key informants from the three implementing agencies to participate in virtual interviews and FGDs. Ultimately, some sessions that were intended to be focus groups were converted to individual interviews. This limited the ET's access to implementer perspectives, but after many follow-ups from both the ET and WFP's evaluation manager, the team received sufficient engagement to gather an indicative array of perspectives.
5	Lack of quantitative	While overall budget data was available, the ET was not able to disaggregate the budget by year/phase and did not have access to programme-specific



	data for assessing efficiency	expenditure documents. Without programme-specific cost information or the ability to disaggregate across agencies by year, the ET could not assess the efficiency of JRP components in achieving outcomes. Thus, the ET relied on qualitative data collected from key stakeholders to address questions of efficiency.
6	The high prevalence of food insecurity reduced the statistical validity of food security indicators.	A high proportion of survey respondents reported 'extreme' values on the food security indicators. This is a problem for the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), in particular, which provides a summary statistic for 'reliability' with a threshold value of 0.7 and also requires that the number of complete, non-extreme responses be at least 100 observations. The territory-level data fail these metrics, rendering the FIES estimation inappropriate for analysis disaggregated by territory.
7	Challenges recruiting respondents due to insecurity, unreliable respondent lists, and heavy rains.	<p>Due to the risk of insecurity, data collectors were advised to leave most villages in the early afternoon. Furthermore, they were present during some "tip-off" incidents, when a person was publicly accused of instigating crime was apprehended. At such times, a whole village would become deserted and tense, forcing the team to stop data collection. In addition, the provided lists of JRP beneficiaries' names and telephone numbers were not very reliable, and many of the randomly selected respondents were not known in the communities in which they were listed. Finally, it rained every day during data collection, leading to deteriorating roads which posed a challenge both to the data collectors and to the targeted respondents (e.g., for their travel to a FGD). The final sample fell short of the proposed 600 (N=578) but retained the geographic diversity specified in the sampling frame.</p> <p>While these factors were barriers to meeting the evaluation's proposed sampling frame, data collectors persevered by spending extra time in villages to conduct surveys, interviews, and focus groups. To validate and recruit respondents, data collectors relied on village guides who knew the targeted beneficiaries personally and helped find and convince them to participate in the survey.</p>

### 1.5.3. Ethical considerations

43. This evaluation conforms to the 2020 United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Ethical Guidelines. American Institutes for Research (AIR) safeguarded ethical standards throughout every stage of the evaluation cycle. This included ensuring informed consent, protecting privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of participants, ensuring cultural sensitivity, respecting the autonomy of participants, ensuring fair recruitment of participants (including women and socially excluded groups) and ensuring that the evaluation resulted in no harm to participants or their communities.

44. **Ethical approval.** All AIR staff and consultants involved in collecting data from human research participants have adhered strictly to the requirements of the AIR Institutional Review Board (IRB). The AIR IRB (IRB00000436) is registered with the U.S. Office of Human Research Protection as a research institution (IORG0000260) and conducts research under its own Federalwide Assurance (FWA00003952). The IRB approved all research activities and protocols involving human subjects, as well as an information security plan to protect the confidentiality of data obtained from research participants, prior to the start of data collection. The ET checked requirements to obtain local ethical clearance and confirmed with WFP that this was not necessary for this evaluation in addition to the AIR IRB and general UNEG guidelines that are being followed.

45. AIR complied with the UNEG Pledge of Ethical Conduct and followed the UNEG Code of Conduct, which requires both a conflict- and gender-sensitive approach to research; adherence to the do-no-harm principle; and transparency, confidentiality, accuracy, accountability, and reliability, among other key

principles. With regard to the protection of vulnerable individuals and communities, AIR respected and adhered to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Refugee Convention, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as national legal codes that respect local customs and cultural traditions, religious beliefs and practices, personal interaction, gender roles, disability, age, and ethnicity.

46. Before conducting the evaluation, AIR and its local partner, Dalberg, trained all data collectors in research ethics and standards for the evaluation. All potential evaluation participants were asked to provide active, informed consent for their participation in human subject research and any individuals captured in photos, videos or other media were asked to provide consent in a separate media release form.

## 2. Evaluation findings

47. This section includes the evaluation findings presented by evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, coherence and gender, human rights, equity and inclusion. Each section has one main evaluation question and various sub-questions which are answered by the mixed-methods analysis of qualitative key informant interviews and focus groups and the quantitative household survey. The analysis is further complemented with information from the document review based on programme documentation (e.g., annual reports) and other relevant literature (See details of reviewed documents in Annex 13 Bibliography). Where appropriate, multiple evaluation sub-questions were answered together in the interest of conciseness.

### 2.1. Relevance

**EQ 1: To what extent and how do the programme objectives and design respond to the needs, policies, and priorities of beneficiaries at the national, provincial, community, household, and individual levels, and do they continue to do so if circumstances change?**

- The JRP is well aligned to the strategic priorities of the DRC, BMZ, and the three implementing agencies.
- The use of community-level committees to identify specific needs enhanced the relevance of JRP activities, which also aligned with community-level priorities and attempted to complement existing activities.
- The JRP's multisectoral approach was perceived as comprehensive and appropriate given the many needs of vulnerable communities in North and South Kivu, but the large number of activities and partners made the programme logistically difficult to deliver and not all activities were implemented as intended (of the 79 planned activities, 38 were implemented as planned, 8 were not implemented, and 33 were partially implemented).
- JRP interventions were well aligned to the needs of beneficiary smallholder farmers, particularly the provision of seeds, agricultural training, and market access activities.

#### **1.1 To what extent are the project results relevant to the strategic priorities of the country, the donor, and the implementing agencies?**

48. **The JRP is well aligned with the strategic priorities of the DRC, BMZ, and the three implementing agencies.** At the country level, the JRP supports DRC's efforts toward achieving the SDGs, specifically those related to ending poverty, hunger, and malnutrition and ensuring access to education. Respondents from collaborating ministries (agriculture, education, and social affairs) confirmed that the JRP aligned with their respective ministries' priorities.<sup>45</sup> For example, in the case of education, the school meals provided under the JRP directly supported the ministry's objective of increasing student retention.<sup>46</sup> Additionally, the programme aligned with community-level priorities and attempted to complement or complete existing activities. As one respondent from an implementing agency explained, *"In North Kivu...at the community level, there are certain activities and plans that have already been established. The JRP tries to respond to community needs and state needs expressed through these plans and projects. For example, we*

<sup>45</sup> République Démocratique du Congo: Ministère du Plan. 2020. 'Rapport d'Examen National Volontaire des Objectifs de Développement Durable.

<sup>46</sup> These priorities expressed by agency officials are consistent with ministry directives as outlined in Axe 50 and 51 of: Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. 2021. 'National Action Plan 2021-2023.'

have managed to complete certain projects that already existed on site.” The use of community-level committees to identify specific needs also contributed to the relevance of JRP activities.

49. JRP activities and results are also aligned with BMZ’s priorities, which include, “the global realization of human rights, the fight against hunger and poverty, the protection of the climate and biodiversity, health and education, gender equality, fair supply chains....”.<sup>47</sup> Respondents from WFP, FAO, and UNICEF consistently reported that the JRP aligned with their respective organizational goals and mandates, and the evaluation team’s document review also confirmed this alignment.<sup>48</sup> In the case of WFP, a respondent noted that WFP’s strategic plan includes support for smallholder agricultural producers, support for nutrition and treatment of malnutrition, and support to school canteens, all of which are intervention areas under the JRP.

**1.2 To what extent and how has the multisectoral approach to implementing the resilience programme helped to achieve the objectives (outputs, outcomes, and impacts) assigned to the programme?**

**1.3 To what extent is the programme as a whole (multisectoral approach) and its various components aligned with building resilience at the community and household levels?**

Questions 1.2 and 1.3 are answered together below in the interest of succinctness, as both pertain to the multisectoral approach and its contribution toward programme objectives and resilience-building.

50. Respondents of all types commended the JRP’s holistic, multisectoral approach, but some individuals from implementing agencies also noted that the large number of activities made the programme difficult to manage. The JRP represents a significant departure from other programming in North and South Kivu which has largely been emergency and humanitarian response. Many respondents applauded the longer-term nature of the JRP and its emphasis on building resilience at the individual, household, and community levels. For example, for implementing staff, the comprehensiveness of interventions along the agricultural value chain and the multisectoral nature of the programme were perceived to be uniquely beneficial. One implementing official reported that,

“[JRP] addresses many aspects of the value chain, starting from seed multiplication to agricultural production, post-harvest management, transport via tricycles, processing through processing units, and market access via complexes. This project truly covers almost the entire agricultural value chain while incorporating livestock aspects, such as the provision of breeding stock and community-wide activities like vaccination. Moreover, there are activities that benefit the entire community, such as school feeding programmes, which you won’t find in other programmes.”

51. While evidence indicates that some bilateral (e.g., USAID, Norway) and multilateral (e.g., IOM) actors, international organizations (e.g., Danish Refugee Council, International Fund for Agricultural Development), and DRC civil society actors are also active in the Lake Kivu regions, **there are still gaps in development and humanitarian assistance.** This is evidenced by the JRP planning document, from 2019, which establishes as a targeting criteria that JRP beneficiaries will “not [be] benefiting from other humanitarian or development assistance.” Project analysis indicated that at least 30,000 smallholder farmer households met this criterion, suggesting a crucial programming shortfall into which JRP entered.

52. Beneficiaries themselves also appreciated the multisectoral nature of JRP interventions. For example, one beneficiary reported learning a trade, having their children supported at school and receiving plumpy nuts at the health centre, and learning improved cultivation techniques. Many other beneficiaries recounted similar experiences with multisectoral interventions, such as the male farmer from Uvira who said, “*Projects included road rehabilitation, food security, tree planting, maintaining vegetable gardens, and caring for malnourished children. We benefited from all of these.*” Respondents consistently reported that people in North and South Kivu have enormous needs that span many sectors. NGO

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.bmz.de/en/issues>

<sup>48</sup> FAO. n.d. ‘FAO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.’ FAO. <https://www.fao.org/republique-democratique-congo/fr/>; UNICEF. 2022. Democratic Republic of the Congo: Country Office Annual Report. UNICEF; World Food Programme. 2020. ‘Democratic Republic of the Congo country strategic plan (2021–2024).’ World Food Programme.

partners argued that the diversity of activities was a key strength of the programme, given the many needs in different sectors.

53. Despite the perceived strength and comprehensiveness of the JRP's multisectoral approach, the sheer number of activities made the programme challenging to implement (and indeed, not all activities were implemented) and some respondents felt it "overwhelmed" communities at times. For example, one implementing agency field office staff member reported that *"there were a lot of activities, and sometimes the community found this a bit overwhelming. For example, if someone has literacy training at 8 a.m., and then has to rehabilitate roads by 10 a.m., and attend a [farmers organisation] meeting for a group sale at 2 p.m., it can become too much."* Additionally, not all activities were implemented as planned: of the 79 planned activities, nearly 50 percent were implemented as planned and another 42 percent were partially implemented. Most of the activities that were not implemented as planned were meant to take place in North Kivu, which suggests that while the interventions themselves may have been relevant to the needs of households and communities (as we saw clearly in South Kivu), they may not have been entirely relevant to the context in North Kivu since they could not be safely implemented. Unfortunately, there are no M&E data available on convergence (i.e., activity layering) within the programme, so we are unable to quantify the extent to which JRP beneficiaries who were in need of multiple activities received the full package of relevant interventions. Please see the coherence section for further information on coordination and the delivery of JRP activities.

**1.4 To what extent and how does the programme address the needs of beneficiary households and communities in terms of capacity-strengthening for agricultural production, improved access to markets, agricultural technologies and inputs, basic social services, instruction for women (literacy), and development of income-generating activities?**

54. **According to programme beneficiaries, JRP interventions were well aligned to the needs of beneficiary smallholder farmers**, particularly the provision of seeds, agricultural training, and market access activities. Agricultural trainings were especially relevant for female farmers, who were less familiar with approaches such as fertilization, plot devising, and fallowing. The support given to schools and health centres under the JRP was also quite relevant to their self-reported needs and the needs of the surrounding communities. The population served by the JRP reported struggling to meet their basic needs and clearly needed additional ways to generate income, and therefore the income generating activities were highly relevant. That said, JRP beneficiaries at the household and community level clearly have needs (e.g. agricultural, education, health, financial needs) that extended beyond what was provided under the programme.

55. **Agricultural needs:** Beneficiary farmers overwhelmingly expressed a desire to increase their agricultural production, and to this end they appreciated the provision of seeds (which were previously lacking), training on cultivation techniques, and market activities under the JRP. The seed fair activity was perceived as especially relevant because it allowed beneficiaries to select the seeds that met their specific needs. To this end, one NGO partner reflected, *"The seed fair activity was a success and stood out so far as beneficiaries were free to choose what they wanted according to their needs. This marks the difference with other programmes which provide pre-selected assistance for the beneficiary."* Beyond what was provided under the JRP, farmers said they needed more seeds (sometimes the quantity provided was insufficient) and tools, fertilizer, and insecticides. Concerning specific tools, a male farmer from Walungu commented, *"Finding work tools is not always easy. You might have a hoe for cultivating and find a place to sow amaranths, but you might lack a watering can, which is essential. Similarly, you could have a watering can but run out of fertilizer,"* while others mentioned tractors and other technologies to enhance their productive capacity.

56. While the agricultural training was useful to farmers, beneficiary smallholders indicated they need additional support to maximize their yields. As a female farmer from Kalehe said, *"I need more information and farming skills...I'm open to receiving them to improve farming at home. I'm ready to cultivate any type of crop that's made available to me, whether it's tomatoes or onions, eggplants."* Similarly, a male farmer from Kalehe said the JRP training was helpful but not enough, saying he would like additional training *"...to know how to fertilize the field, training to learn how to combat pests, training to learn how to protect the fields against flooding and erosion."*

57. **Education and health needs:** Beneficiary farmers, teachers, COPA members, and programme implementers reported many poverty-related barriers to education in North and South Kivu. While primary school education itself is technically free, many households still struggle to send their children to school. The school meals provided under the JRP were perceived to encourage attendance and support children's nutrition, both of which were identified as critical needs. A COPA member from Uvira shared that "[children] no longer slept during the lessons because of hunger," underscoring the prevalence of hunger for school-going children prior to the JRP. The JRP's support to improve school latrine facilities (and create separate latrines for boys and girls) was also highly relevant to the needs of students and schools. Beyond the scope of the school-level support provided under the JRP, schools continued to suffer from overcrowded classrooms, insufficient desks and benches, and a lack of classroom supplies including books and chalk.

58. Literacy activities for women were perceived as highly relevant and needed, and women reported greater participation and leadership in community groups (VSLAs and producer organizations), greater autonomy, and more active participation in household income generation. For example, a female farmer from Kalehe reflected on how she used to wait for her cassava trees to grow to earn money, but after joining the VSLA she borrowed money to start growing bananas and avocados and earned income while waiting for the cassava to grow. Other women reported being less dependent on their husbands and appreciating the opportunity to make new acquaintances.

59. Health centres in all four territories reported shortages of medicine, equipment, and other supplies that the JRP helped to address. JRP interventions to treat malnutrition and train caregivers on child nutrition were perceived as highly relevant and needed. Mothers reported learning about exclusive breastfeeding, dietary diversity, and vaccination for the first time, and health workers reported learning how to better treat malnutrition and malaria and how to better care for pregnant woman. Despite these successes, health workers noted that supplies delivered under JRP were sometimes delayed and many were still lacking.

60. **Income generation needs:** The income-generating activities under the JRP were highly relevant to the needs of beneficiaries, who universally reported struggling to meet their basic needs. Specifically, the vocational training for adolescents and the cash-for-work activities allowed beneficiaries to pay for necessities. For example, a male farmer from Uvira shared, "I paid for my healthcare and my children's school fees thanks to [the JRP]. At a certain point during this period, I was not able to honour my various bills. But after the four months' salary received, I achieved it. In these four months I worked on roads." During focus groups with adolescents who participated in JRP's vocational training activity, participants ranked common income generating activities in terms of their perceived accessibility and profitability (See Figure 3). This exercise identified several jobs perceived to be the most accessible and profitable, which included several of the ones JRP provided training in such as baking, sewing/tailoring, retail/trade, and animal breeding. These findings suggest that the vocations selected for the vocational training activity were highly relevant for the context and the situations of adolescent participants.

**Figure 3: Results of livelihood opportunity ranking activity with out-of-school adolescents**



61. Despite its overall relevance to the strategic priorities of the country, the donor, and implementing agencies, some aspects of the JRP were deemed less relevant by respondents. For example, several respondents noted that people in North and South Kivu—especially young people—were less interested in agriculture as an income source. As one key informant stated simply, *“Young people are not into [agriculture]”*, and another said that *“People [in North and South Kivu] don’t like farming...farming is like punishment.”* Additionally, some informants noted that the types of crops supported under the JRP were not the most viable or profitable and that a more thorough value chain analysis should have been conducted prior to designing the programme. Lastly, some respondents pointed to difficulties with government collaboration and potential duplication of efforts.

62. Data from beneficiary respondents show that the execution of JRP activities was particularly challenged in Luvungi, Uvira Territory. Compared to other communities, beneficiaries in this community reported a notably high incidence of programmatic failures. For example, female smallholder farmers from Luvungi reported receiving poor quality rice and groundnut seeds, which they maintained wasted precious land resources. Reports from this community also suggest shortcomings in market access activities. When asked about the feasibility of cultivating for income generation, one female smallholder in Luvungi insisted that the input costs of renting land, hiring labour, and renting equipment were too high to make a profit. She noted that the market price of goods was too low, and *“comparing this price to the expenses you have made in the fields, all the effort you put into production, you find that it results in a loss.”* This respondent suggested that promises of crop fairs and market construction were never executed; *“They did not keep their promise.”* In the absence of these activities, respondents engaging in agribusiness reported persistently poor market pricing and limited buyer reach. There were other examples of disillusionment with JRP activities in Luvungi as well, including a road project led by Groupe Milima that was advertised to last five months, but was cut short at two months, leaving participants at a loss of three months of anticipated income. Participants in other communities did not report shortcomings to this degree, suggesting organizational shortcomings on the part of implementing partners in Luvungi. Despite this, most participants from Luvungi reported positive impacts from JRP cultivation training and livelihood training activities.



## 2.2. Effectiveness

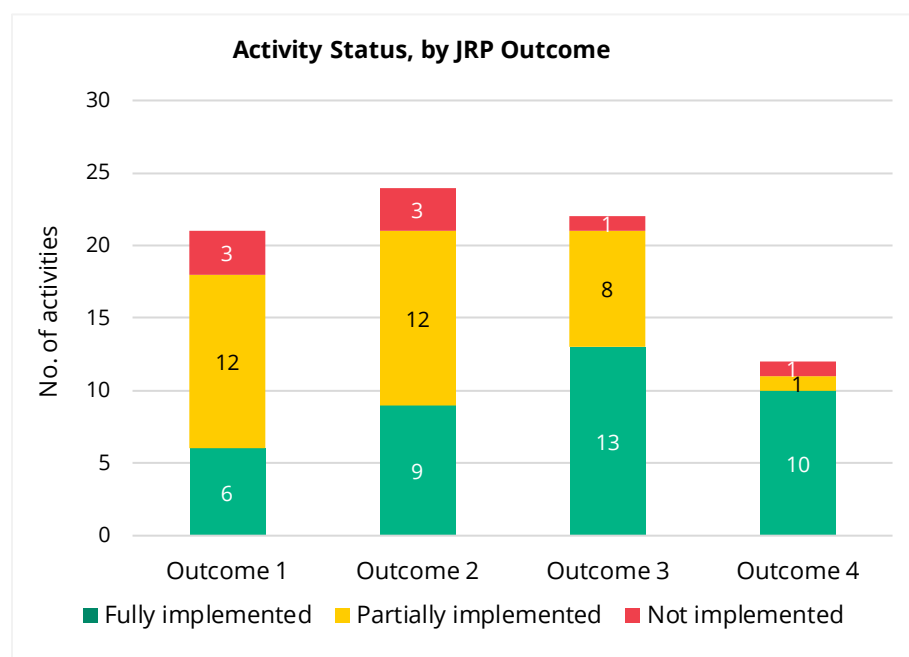
### EQ 2: To what extent and how has the resilience programme achieved its objectives and results, including differential results between groups?

- Nearly half of JRP activities encountered implementation challenges; delivery of interventions was particularly challenging in North Kivu due to outbreaks of conflict.
- Although household food security and dietary diversity did not show improvement over baseline, the proportion of young children achieving the minimum acceptable diet (MAD-C) increased and the majority of mothers in three of the territories practiced exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) for children less than 6 months.
- Utilization of maternal and child health services was quite high, which likely contributed to the achievements in EBF and MAD-C.
- Despite overall low rates of access to improved sanitation and water sources, interview respondents reported significant improvements to WASH facilities at health centres and schools that they attributed to the JRP.
- The activity mapping highlighted that IGA trainings were limited only to South Kivu. Qualitatively, participants reported that the livelihood training activities managed to address some concerns around unreliable income as it enabled them to switch from inconsistent income sources (i.e., day labour) to professional trades.
- Qualitatively, JRP beneficiaries—both smallholder farmers and out-of-school adolescents—consistently reported learning and practicing approaches to conflict resolution, including bringing disputes to the chief to be resolved and other methods of community de-escalation.
- Just over half of the quantitative sample engaged in farming activities and many adopted improved farming techniques. Walungu households had higher rates of adoption of preservation techniques and agricultural output at endline compared to baseline.
- Qualitative respondents did not frequently report changes to natural resource management practices that they attributed to the JRP. However, a handful of farmers said they had been trained in drainage techniques, composting, reforestation, and other methods to combat erosion which have been helpful.
- JRP activities led to perceived improvements in community and institutional capacity by growing the skills and knowledge of health centre staff and farmer organization leaders, and by creating VSLAs. Activity mapping showed that VSLAs were only developed in South Kivu.

#### 2.1 To what extent has the programme achieved its objectives of strengthening the socio-economic resilience of smallholder farmers and vulnerable populations in targeted communities in the provinces of North and South Kivu in the areas of (a) food security, (b) livelihoods, and (c) access to basic social services?

63. According to implementing agency staff, **almost half of JRP activities encountered implementation challenges**. Of the 79 planned activities, 38 were implemented as planned, 8 were not implemented, and 33 were partially implemented. JRP's four key outcomes were differently affected by implementation challenges, as depicted in Figure 4. Note that the four outcomes targeted different populations and may have experienced different challenges to reach the intended populations. While outcome 1 and 2 are focused on smallholder farmers, outcome 3 is focused on children who may have been approached through school or health care systems and outcome 4 is concentrated at the community level. A full list and descriptions of activities can be found in Annex 9.

**Figure 4: JRP activity status, by outcome (as of May 2024)**



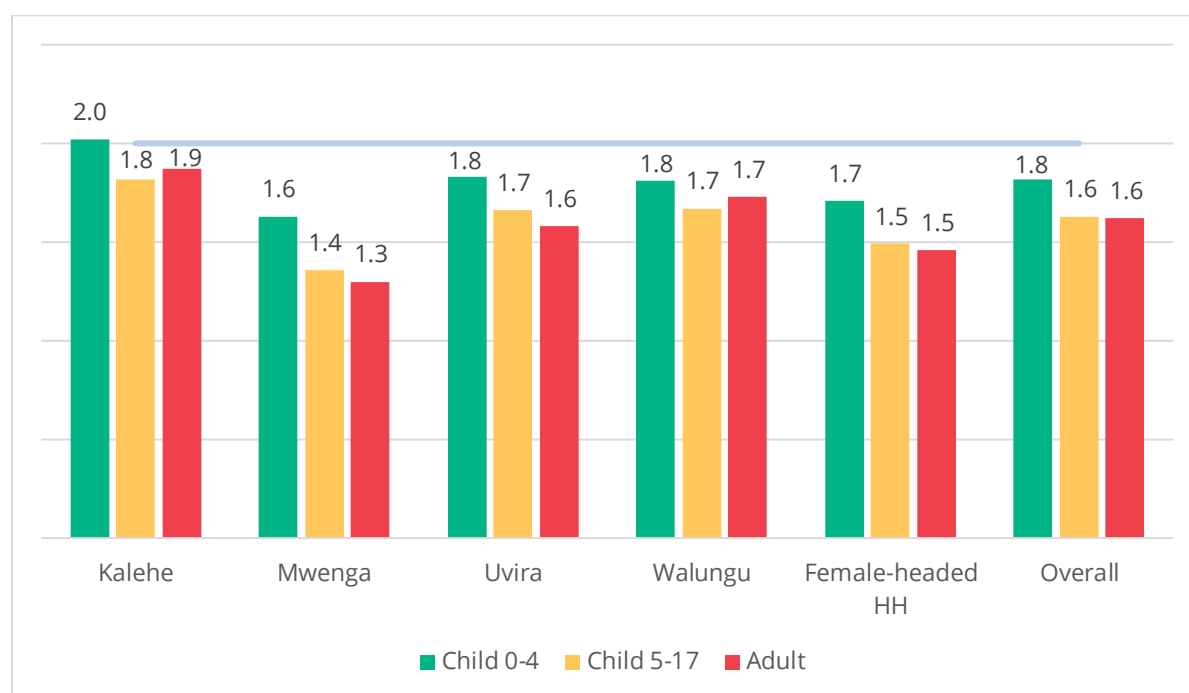
64. Importantly, of the 33 partially implemented activities, implementing agency staff reported that 13 were fully implemented in South Kivu but faced limitations in North Kivu. In the activity mapping exercise, they highlighted reasons for this—namely, outbreaks of conflict in North Kivu which led to looting, mass displacement, the abandonment of productive assets, and limited implementer access to the territories (e.g., Walikale and Masisi). While the ET was unable to access North Kivu during data collection and lacks extensive data to report outcomes for the province, the activity mapping highlights that the effects of JRP may be more constrained in North Kivu due to the more limited implementation of JRP activities and heightened obstacles to resilience.

65. The remainder of this section describes achievements in food security and nutrition, livelihoods, access to basic services and resilience, and it attempts to link these outcomes to relevant JRP activities.

66. **Food security and dietary diversity:** Several key JRP activities intended to contribute to food security and dietary diversity outcomes. These included farmer field schools; PNEVA (National Healthy Villages and Schools Program) certification of health centres, schools, and villages; capacity building with health centre staff (e.g., on the treatment of severe acute malnutrition); school meals; community-based nutrition trainings; and health centre and school gardens. Most activities were successfully implemented, with the notable exception of school meals. According to the activity mapping completed by the implementing agencies, school meals targeted Masisi and Nyiragongo in North Kivu, and due to increased insecurity in North Kivu, canteens only remained functional in Nyiragongo. Below, the report outlines key outcomes in food security and dietary diversity observed in JRP zones in South Kivu where the ET conducted the household survey.

67. Respondents to the household survey reported an average of 1.62 meals per day for adults and 1.82 meals per day for young children, falling short of the target of at least two meals per day (Figure 5). In households headed by women, older children and adults ate significantly fewer meals per day than in households headed by men. Meals per day varied somewhat across territories, with Mwenga reporting the lowest average meals per day. Kalehe is the only territory to meet the target of 2 meals per day, but this target was only met for children aged 0-4 years.

**Figure 5: Average meals per day**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that daily meal consumption differs significantly across territories.

68. When comparing key food security indicators, households at endline were substantially less food secure than the baseline sample, possibly due to recurrent conflict and climate-related challenges that disrupted intervention activities and prevented the translation of improved farming practices into improved food security outcomes (see EQ 5.3 and 5.4). Table 8 reports indicators from the Food Consumption Score (FCS), Household Hunger Scale (HHS) and the Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators – Food Security (CARI-FS). The Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES) was also calculated, but an analysis of fit statistics and a preponderance of extreme cases (i.e., the vast majority of households scored the max score) render the results insufficient for statistical validation.

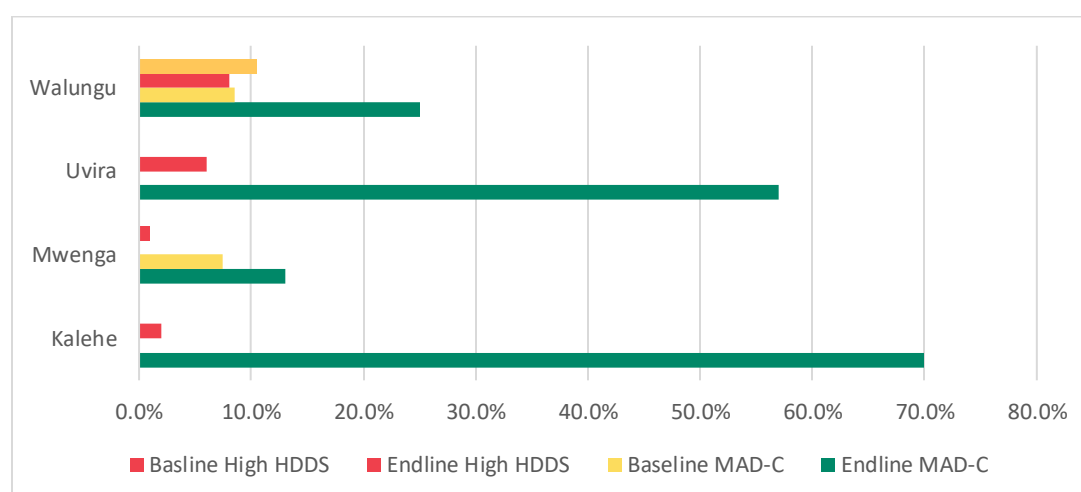
**Table 8: Food security indicators, by territory**

Indicator	Kalehe	Mwenga	Uvira	Walungu	Overall
Food consumption score: Percentage of households with acceptable FCS	5.5%	1.4%	10.5%	4.2%	5.4%
<i>Baseline FCS</i>	--	17.5%	--	47.3%	28.1%
Household Hunger Scale (HHS): Percentage of households with little to no hunger in the household	19.2%	11.0%	23.8%	27.8%	20.4%
<i>Baseline HHS</i>	--	64.9%	--	73.8%	66.3%
Food Security Index CARI: Proportion of households in food security	5.5%	2.8%	17.5%	6.3%	8.0%
<i>Baseline CARI-FS</i>	--	20.9%	--	47.3%	29.0%

Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that food security indicators differ significantly across territories and that HHS differs significantly according to sex of household head. Raw FCS also differs significantly by sex of household head, but this significance disappears when the variable is collapsed into the binary indicator of acceptable FCS.

69. Even though household dietary diversity did not show improvement over baseline, there were increases in the proportion of young children achieving the minimum acceptable diet (MAD-C). Dietary diversity was measured at the household level and for infants and young children 6-23 months of age (n = 60 households). Figure 6 reports the percentage of households achieving a high household dietary diversity score (HDDS) and the percentage of young children consuming an adequate diet according to the MAD-C and compares these outcomes to baseline values where available. The proportion of households with high dietary diversity is lower than at baseline, but there is marked improvement from baseline in the percentage of young children consuming an adequate diet. This positive finding is consistent with the high level of reported access to maternal and child health services (discussed below) and supports the theory of change pathway between utilization of health services and improved nutrition. Overall, 20 percent of young children achieved adequate MAD-C scores, compared to less than 10 percent at baseline, and in Uvira more than half of children (57 percent) had adequate consumption. It should be noted that the infant and young child results are based on a relatively small sample.

**Figure 6: Dietary diversity, by territory**



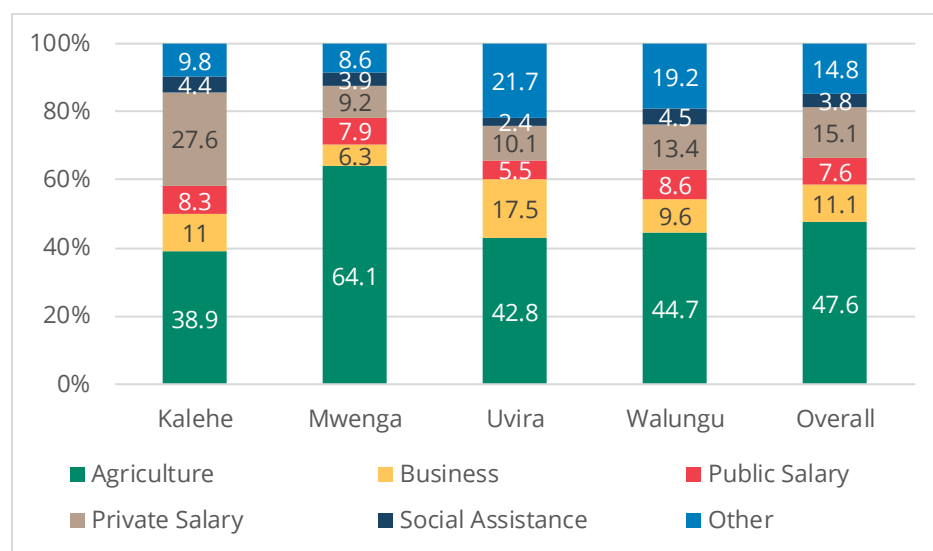
Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that endline HDDS differs significantly across territories but does not differ according to sex of household head.

70. Qualitatively, project implementers and stakeholders reported two main successes related to food security and dietary diversity: school meals were perceived by implementers to improve the nutritional status of children, while implementing partners and health workers also reported improvements in the identification and treatment of acute malnutrition. At the household level, beneficiary farmers said they learned about the importance of dietary diversity (see EQ 2.4) and in some cases were able to expand their gardens and consume more vegetables thanks to JRP interventions. For example, a female beneficiary farmer from Kalehe said, “Previously I didn’t know how to grow vegetables or create a small garden. Through joining a group, I learned these skills, including growing eggplants and other vegetables. Now, I can produce my own vegetables at home, which I use for eating” while a male beneficiary farmer from Uvira shared, “Before I didn’t know that it was necessary to diversify the plants. We rushed to meat, however, there are other foods necessary for our health. [The JRP partner NGO] showed us that vegetables also help us maintain good health. We received money to grow vegetables in gardens and we ate well.”

71. **Livelihoods:** Key JRP activities intended to support livelihood outcomes included the provision of agricultural inputs; agricultural trainings; beekeeping and aquaculture support; construction of post-harvest storage facilities; adolescent vocational training; cash/food for work projects; and IGA training among VSLAs – activities intended to strengthen existing income sources while introducing additional channels for revenue. While most of these activities cover both North and South Kivu, the activity mapping highlighted that VSLA creation and IGA trainings were limited only to South Kivu. Further, the project aimed to connect farmers with microcredit institutions, but this activity could not be implemented due to the lack of microcredit institutions in rural areas, according to implementing agency staff. Below, the report examines key livelihood outcomes connected to these activities.

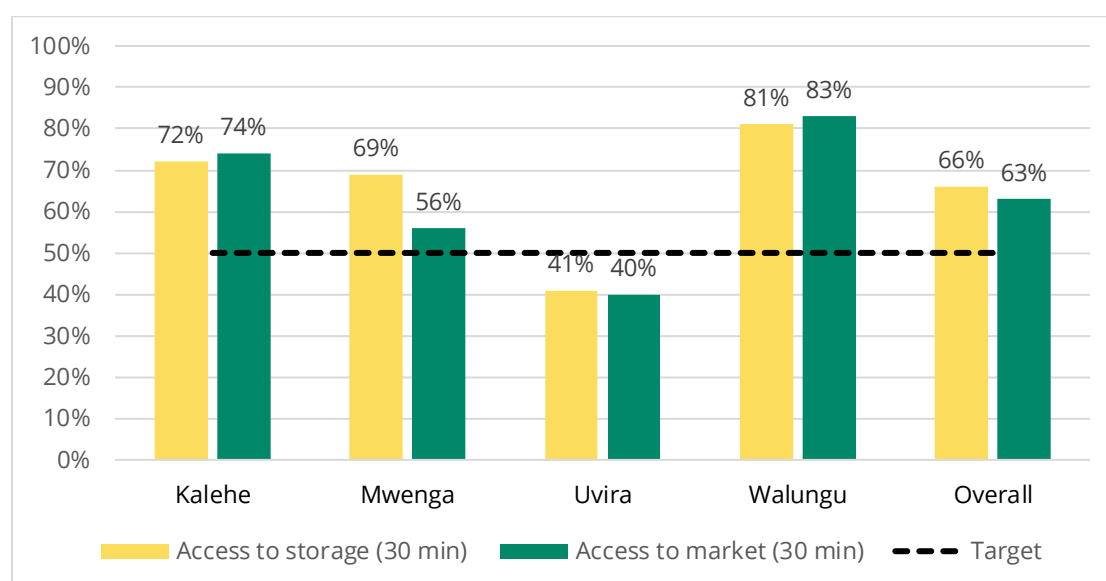
72. According to survey respondents, the average number of income sources at endline was 1.57, falling short of the target of at least two income sources. However, it should be noted that 'home business' was asked in the survey as a single income source but could include multiple income generative activities (e.g., soap making, basket weaving, etc). The average number of income sources ranged from 1.5 in Kalehe and Mwenga to 1.6 in Walungu and 1.7 in Uvira. Figure 7 illustrates the distribution of income sources by territory. Households in Mwenga tend to rely on agriculture for a larger proportion of their total income, on average, while households in Kalehe earn more income, on average, from a private sector salary.

**Figure 7: Distribution of income sources, by territory**



73. Most households reported having access to both market (63 percent) and storage infrastructure (66 percent) within a 30-minute walk, indicating a relatively good connectivity to potential areas for additional livelihood activity and an achievement of the overall target of 50 percent (see Figure 8). The lack of access reported from households in Uvira is corroborated by qualitative interviews described in EQ 1.4.

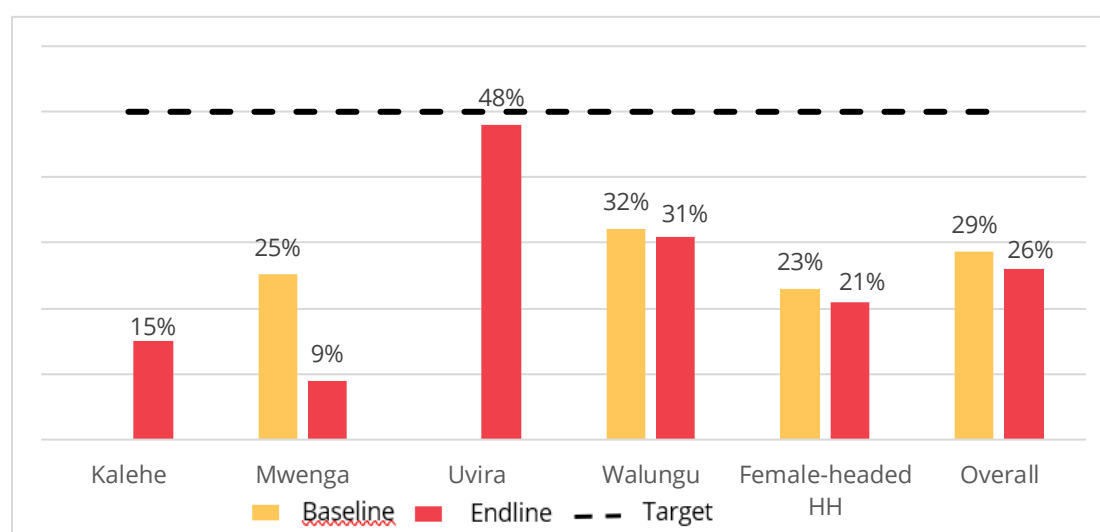
**Figure 8: Access to market and storage infrastructure, by territory**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that access to storage and markets differs significantly across territories but does not differ according to sex of household head.

74. Households at endline employed a higher proportion of severe coping strategies (e.g., withdrawing a child from school due to a lack of food, begging or scavenging, etc) compared to the baseline sample. According to the Livelihoods Coping Strategies for Food Security (LCS-FS), which discerns whether households resorted to coping mechanisms to respond to a lack of food or money to buy food and the level of severity associated with each coping mechanism, 74 percent of households in the sample had used severe coping measures (i.e. crisis or emergency strategies) in the last 30 days (91 percent in Mwenga; 85 percent in Kalehe; 69 percent in Walungu; 52 percent in Uvira). The index has a target of having fewer than half of the population employing crisis or emergency coping strategies, suggesting a continued need for livelihood diversification and strengthening of resilience. Figure 9 depicts the percentage of households who did not employ severe coping strategies in the last 30 days, compared to available baseline values and the target of less than 50 percent.

**Figure 9: Percentage of households not applying severe (crisis or emergency) coping strategies**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that LCS-FS results differ significantly across territories but do not differ according to the sex of the household head.

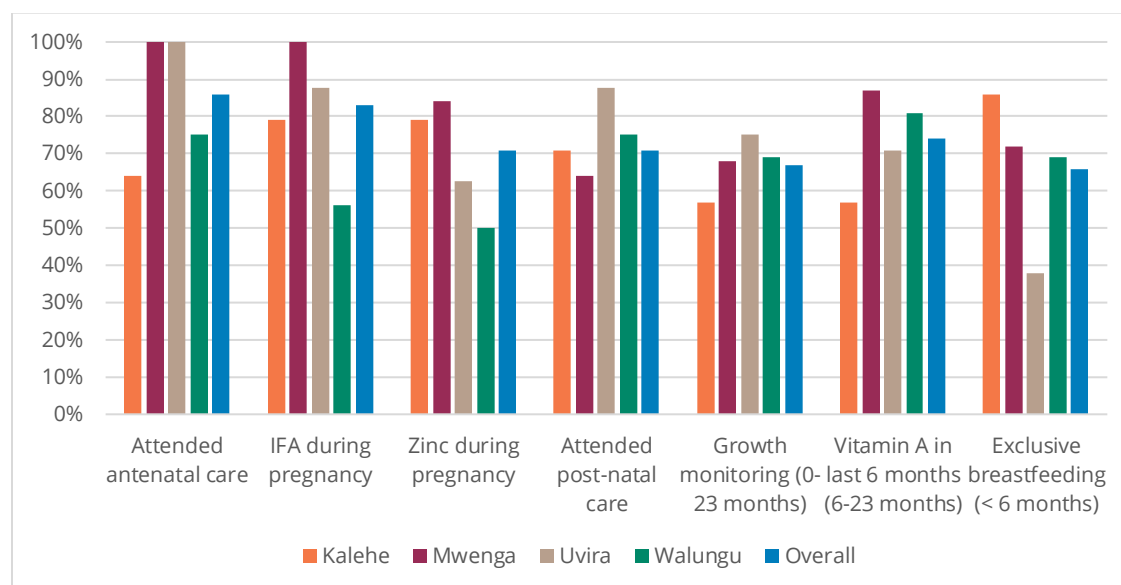
75. Qualitatively, participants reported that the livelihood training activities managed to address some of these concerns around unreliable income as it enabled them to switch from inconsistent income sources (i.e., day labour) to professional trades. These activities, targeted at adolescents and adults, primarily engaged individuals who were financially dependent on a family unit and who lacked reliable streams of income. Those who participated in JRP livelihood trainings reported success in establishing income-generation through sewing/tailoring, soap-making, automobile working, basket weaving, pastry/bread baking, palm oil collecting, and groundnut butter making, all of which were skills they attested to learning through IGA training activities. Participants overwhelmingly expressed gratitude for the IGA training activities, and many identified that they have used these skills to both sell goods and services on their own, as well as being able to market their talents to teach others as an additional trade. One key informant reported that many households, particularly women-led ones, have successfully added new streams of income through trade skills acquired through IGA activities.

76. **Access to basic social services:** The JRP sought to improve uptake of health and nutrition services by investing in community WASH infrastructure and by building the capacity of healthcare providers through training and supplies. These activities were broadly implemented as planned across all JRP catchment areas. While it is expected that such investments will require more time to lead to marked changes in demand for health services, some qualitative and quantitative results further described below indicate that households make use of the provided basic services and they appreciate the investments in them.

77. Most mothers and young children in the endline sample reported receiving basic health services, which likely contributed to the increase in young child dietary diversity discussed above. Figure 10 presents the results of the maternal and child health module administered to the 63 sampled households with a child aged 0-23 months. The majority of mothers (86 percent overall) received antenatal care, with

100 percent attending at least one antenatal appointment in Mwenga and Uvira. During pregnancy, 83 percent received IFA supplements and 71 percent received zinc supplements. Nearly three-fourths (71 percent) received post-natal care, and 67 percent brought their child to at least one growth monitoring session to screen for malnutrition. Among children aged 6-23 months (n = 60), 74 percent had received a vitamin A supplement in the past six months. Households in Mwenga tend to report receiving the most care and supplements during pregnancy, while Walungu households report receiving the least. Additionally, the majority of mothers in all territories except Uvira report exclusive breastfeeding (EBF) until the infant reaches six months of age. Mwenga households exceed the EBF target of 80 percent by six percentage points.

**Figure 10: Percentage access to maternal and child health services, by territory**



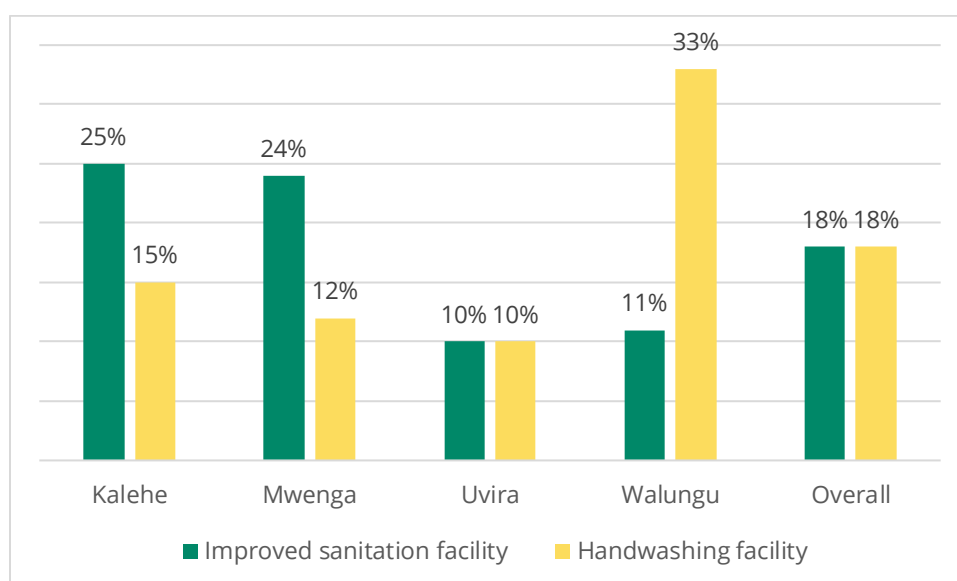
Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that EBF does not differ significantly across territory nor according to sex of household head.

78. Qualitatively, women beneficiary farmers with children consistently reported taking them to the health centre when they were ill and encouraging them to go to school, but it is not clear whether and how these behaviours have changed since the introduction of JRP activities. Although not widely reported, one health worker from Walungu said that men have gotten more involved since JRP trainings and sensitizations took place and now sometimes accompany their wives to the health centre with their children or to the Child Protection Network (CPN): *“In the past, men here could not accompany their children to the CPN or the Community Health Services or support their wives, but with the training we received, we have raised awareness among men, and now some do accompany their wives to the CPN. There has been a significant change.”* (See also EQ 2.3 for healthcare staff perceptions.) Despite these apparent positive developments, some beneficiary farmers reported distrust of nurses and dissatisfaction with the treatment received at community health centres, which could compromise uptake of community health services.

79. **WASH:** While the JRP included several WASH-related interventions, such as actions toward Open Defecation Free (ODF) status, awareness raising, and construction of school and community WASH facilities, at endline only 18 percent of households surveyed reported using a sanitation facility characterized as an “improved facility” such as an improved pit latrine (Figure 11). Rates of improved sanitation facility usage were markedly higher in Kalehe (25 percent) and Mwenga (24 percent) than in Walungu (11 percent) and Uvira (10 percent). Nearly half of all households (45 percent) reported using an unimproved hanging latrine. Handwashing facilities are similarly lacking—just over 18 percent of the 554 households that granted enumerators permission to observe where members wash their hands had either a fixed or mobile handwashing place near the dwelling. Water was available for 70 percent of these handwashing stations, and soap, detergent, or ash/mud/sand was present at 63 percent of handwashing stations. Nearly all handwashing places (84 percent) are not shared with other households. The presence

of handwashing places was highest in Walungu (33 percent), followed by Kalehe (15 percent), Mwenga (12 percent), and Uvira (10 percent).

**Figure 11: Percentage of households using improved sanitation and handwashing**



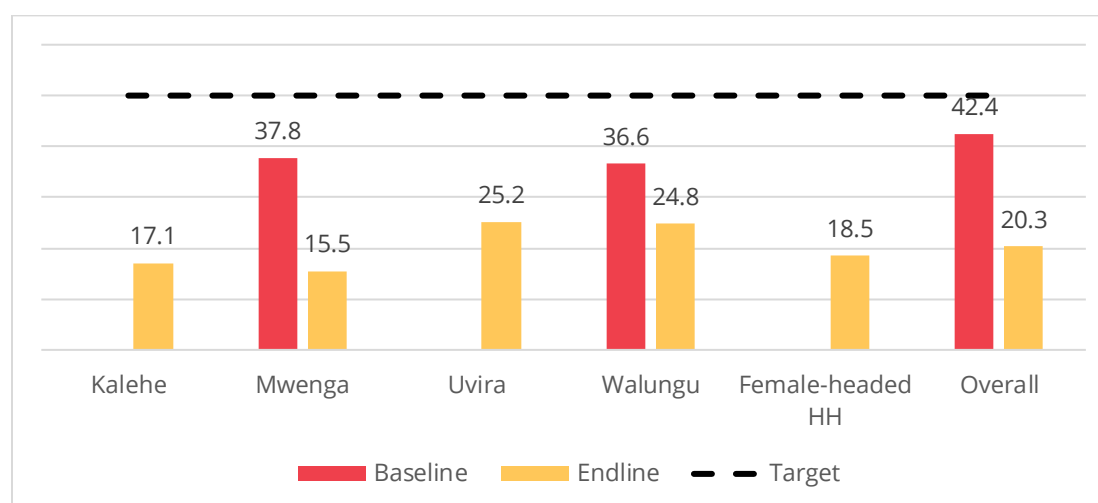
Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that WASH indicators differ significantly across territories but do not differ according to sex of household head.

80. Despite the overall limited access to improved sanitation facilities and a dedicated handwashing station, some qualitative respondents reported significant improvements to WASH facilities at health centres and schools that they attributed to the JRP. To this end one teacher from Mwenga said, “...before [JRP] our schools were dirty, which is different from now, even when you look at our toilets, they are clean,” while a COPA member from Walungu said, “...they built us good latrines in our school. The latrines were made of wood, but now there are good latrines, modern latrines.” Others said the construction of separate latrines for boys and girls increased students’ safety and comfort, and the sanitation and hygiene trainings that accompanied the improved latrines helped improve WASH practices. A smaller number of respondents reported improved access to clean water and improvements in waste management.

81. **Resilience:** When combining the various aspects of resilience such as food security, livelihoods and access to basic services the households at endline scored far below the target. The household survey contained the Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis (RIMA), a comprehensive resilience measure that comprises assets, access to basic services and social safety nets, food security, and adaptive capacity of the household. The overall RIMA score for the baseline sample was 42.4, and an overall end of programme target was set at 50. The overall RIMA score for the endline sample is 20.34, largely due to high levels of food insecurity and very few household assets. For example, more than 40 percent of the sample reported owning none of the non-agricultural assets from the Short RIMA questionnaire, and 57 percent owned two or fewer agricultural assets. It is possible that the protracted conflict in the region resulted in a reduction of assets due to theft and/or the inability of displaced populations to transport productive assets. Territory-level RIMA scores include Kalehe (17.1), Mwenga (15.5), Uvira (25.2), and Walungu (24.8). Households headed by women had a lower score than households headed by men, and sub-sample analysis showed that education level and literacy of the household head was positively associated with RIMA score.



**Figure 12: RIMA scores**



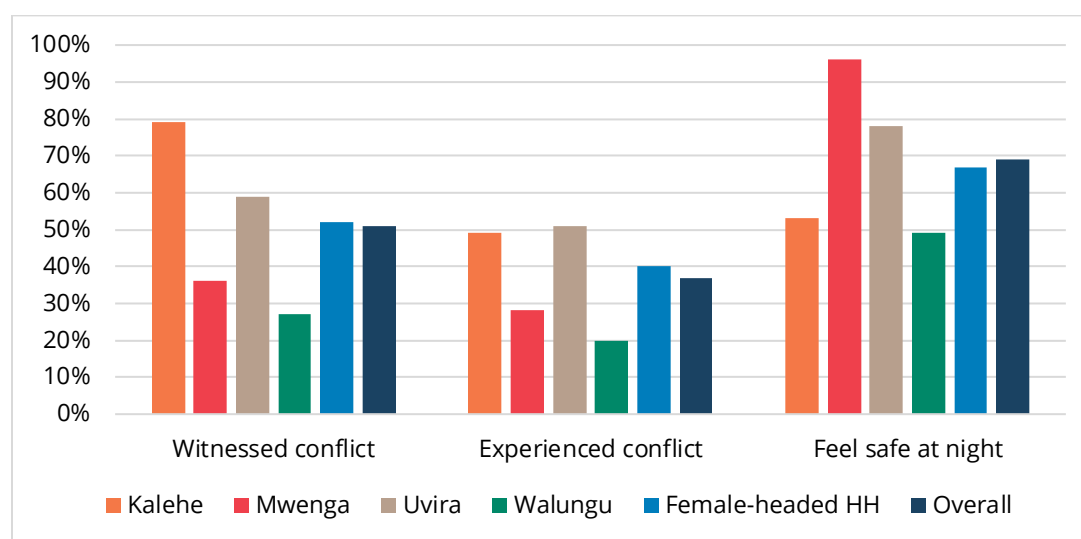
Note: ANOVA F-tests for significant differences cannot be computed as there is no household-level RIMA score (and thus no variation component to assess). Additionally, comparability of baseline and endline indicators could not be ascertained, thus comparisons over time should be made with caution.

## 2.2 To what extent and how has the programme contributed to the overall objective of peace and stabilization?

82. According to the household survey, experiences with conflict and conflict resolution varied by territory, with households in Kalehe experiencing the highest conflict exposure in the past 12 months. Conflict was defined using various types of inter-household, community and wider conflict such as water and land disputes, ethnic conflict, armed conflict. When households were asked if they have been negatively affected by conflict in the community in the last year, 22 percent of households in Kalehe reported being negatively affected by conflict while fewer than 5 percent of households in Walungu, Mwenga, and Uvira responded in the affirmative. When households were asked if they had witnessed various types of conflicts in the past 12 months, 51 percent had witnessed at least one type of conflict (27 percent in Walungu; 36 percent in Mwenga; 59 percent in Uvira; 79 percent in Kalehe), and 37 percent of households had experienced at least one type of conflict (20 percent in Walungu; 28 percent in Mwenga; 51 percent in Uvira; 49 percent in Kalehe). Experiencing conflict was not significantly correlated with food security outcomes or coping strategies in the full sample analysis. The most common conflicts were land disputes. In Kalehe, more than 20 percent of households reported witnessing ethnic conflict, and more than 30 percent had witnessed armed conflict.

83. Of the households that reported experiencing conflict (n=215), 57 percent did nothing in response, while 13.5 percent contacted either a community leader or other formal official (3.4 percent in Walungu, 5.6 percent in Kalehe, 12.2 percent in Mwenga, 26 percent in Uvira). When asked about the frequency of interactions with other communities, about 37 percent of households responded that these interactions had increased in the past months (23 percent in Kalehe, 26 percent in Walungu, 42 percent in Mwenga, 56 percent in Uvira). According to the overall endline sample, about 69 percent of households feel safe in their community at night: 49 percent in Walungu, 53 percent in Kalehe, 78 percent in Uvira, and 96 percent in Mwenga. This high perception of security in Mwenga is consistent with high rates of group participation (over 70 percent of households in Mwenga reported belonging to at least one community group), and perceptions that group membership fosters unity.

**Figure 13: Household experience with conflict and perceptions of safety**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that conflict indicators and perceptions of safety differ significantly across territories but do not differ according to sex of household head.

84. Qualitatively, JRP beneficiaries—both smallholder farmers and out-of-school adolescents—consistently reported learning and practicing approaches to conflict resolution, including bringing disputes to the chief to be resolved and other methods of community de-escalation. Following the JRP, respondents reported that conflicts were resolved more locally—often through peace committees established under the JRP—as opposed to involving authorities, which also saves money. To this end one implementing agency staff member said that *“communities now manage to resolve conflicts peacefully, reducing the need for financial penalties. This is particularly crucial in conflict or post-conflict contexts where local solutions prevent escalation to higher authorities.”* Many other respondents echoed the importance of avoiding escalation and said disputes were kept more localized than they had been prior to the JRP.

85. Community organizations that were strengthened under the JRP also provided physical space for dialogues to resolve disputes. A male beneficiary farmer from Kalehe shared, *“We [now] invite the parties to the conflict to a peaceful dialogue and we help them resolve this conflict. We didn't have a place for dialogue or meetings, but thanks to this project, this literacy centre has been built and it serves as a framework for exchanges.”* Additionally, JRP beneficiaries reported that being part of community groups increased their sense of unity and belonging, which also contributed to peacebuilding and stabilization objectives. As a male beneficiary farmer from Mwenga shared, *“What attracts me the most [to MAMAVI, a group that deals with agriculture and livestock] is unity and we learn how to live well in society, because before that many people did not talk to each other, but it allowed us to get closer and reduce conflicts.”* Therefore, it was not only the explicit peacebuilding activities that were perceived to contribute to conflict reduction, but also the strengthening and expansion of community groups that forged relationships and gave farmers a shared purpose. Another example of this is increased agricultural production following the introduction of seeds and improved cultivation techniques: according to one NGO partner,

*“[Before], every time there was an argument between two families because one neighbour was stealing the other's crops because the other wasn't farming. With the arrival of the project, most of the population who had benefited from the activities became involved in agriculture, and each family began to produce for itself. This reduced conflicts and reinforced stability at community level.”*

86. Despite the perceived effectiveness of the peacebuilding activities, some respondents mentioned it would have been more helpful to target the wider community and not just JRP beneficiaries.

### **2.3 To what extent has the programme strengthened organizational, individual, and institutional capacities to achieve results?**

87. The JRP efforts to build capacity at the organizational, individual, and institutional levels appeared broadly successful, with beneficiaries particularly appreciating investments in health centres,

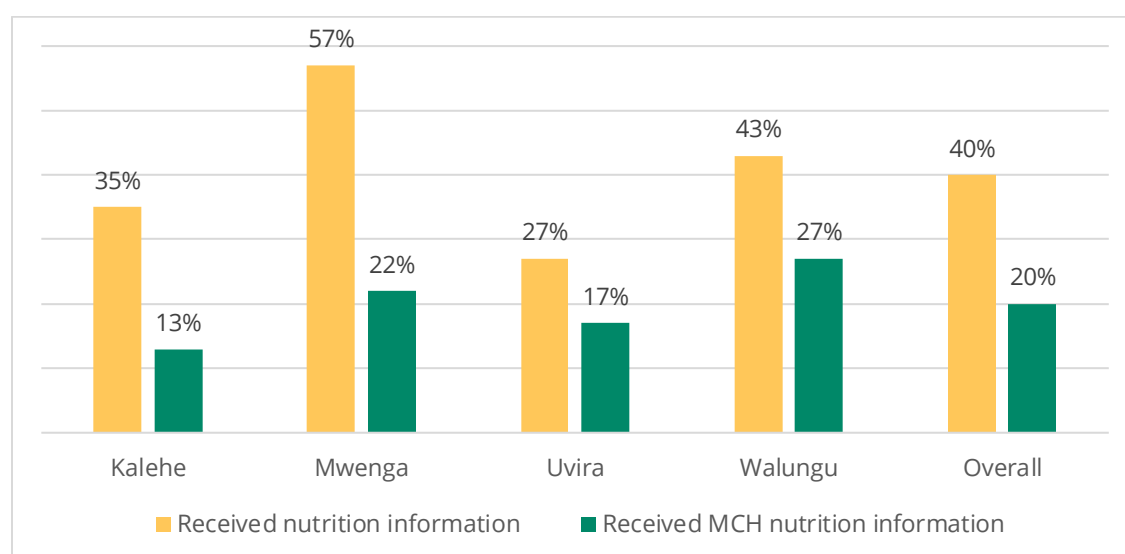
farmer organizations, and VSLAs. Institutional capacity building was identified as a key factor supporting livelihood, peace and stability, health, and nutrition outcomes. Efforts to strengthen institutional capacity were embedded in several project activities, including agricultural inputs and training, peace clubs, strengthening conflict early warning systems, PNEVA certifications, VSLA creation, and support for farmer organizations. In this way, the project targeted an array of community level institutions: farmer organizations (FOs), cooperatives, community radios, schools, health centres, VSLAs, and agricultural input suppliers.

88. Qualitatively, beneficiaries noted some emerging effects related to the increasing capacity of VSLAs, FOs, and health centres. Female farmers in three territories reported that VSLAs established by the project were still operational and, moreover, they had grown more useful thanks to the trainings on VSLA operations provided through JRP. This was corroborated by an NGO staff member who explained, *“We have set up VSLAs, and after 4 years, they are transformed into small structures such as associations with small projects around them.”* Similarly, several male farmers noted that the capacity of FOs had grown thanks to JRP efforts to help FOs maintain records and formally register with the government. In addition, the health service providers interviewed by the ET cited that JRP inputs helped to grow their knowledge in antenatal and IYCF services such as identifying and treating cases of malnutrition. For instance, a health care worker in Mwenga said, *“In nutrition, we did things without reference points, but when we were taught, we knew the admission criteria and the discharge criteria, but also the exact quantity to give to a malnourished person.”* Health care providers also cited the resources provided by the project (e.g., Plumpy nut, enriched flour) which increased their capacity to treat malnutrition. Overall, the capacity-building efforts of JRP seem to have been most potent for VSLAs, FOs, and health centres; there were few reports of changes at the level of schools or agricultural input suppliers.

**2.4 Have the programme’s interventions led to improved knowledge and the adoption of practices conducive to a diversified diet, health, natural resource management, improved farming practices and diversification of income sources?**

89. **Nutrition information and practices:** According to the endline household survey, 49.6 percent of households reported receiving nutrition advice and/or services in the last 12 months. Just over 40 percent of the sample (and over 80 percent of those receiving advice/services) were instructed on healthy diets and diet diversity. Nutrition information was most prevalent in Mwenga (57 percent), followed by Walungu (43 percent), Kalehe (35 percent), and Uvira (27 percent). Nutrition advice specific to mothers, infants, and young children was received by 20 percent of the endline sample (13 percent in Kalehe; 17 percent in Uvira; 22 percent in Mwenga; 27 percent in Walungu).

**Figure 14: Percentage of households receiving nutrition information**



90. Qualitatively, both male and female beneficiary farmers reported increased knowledge of infant and young child feeding practices and the importance of dietary diversity. The concept of “4-star meals” was particularly salient and referenced by many respondents. In Walungu, for example, a male farmer

shared, “We had been taught about nutritional health, how to prepare 4-star food.” In Uvira, a female farmer explained what she had learned about dietary diversity: “In the trainings with FAO...we were shown that a parent must have a small garden at home, the child cannot eat without vegetables...the child can eat fish or meat but there [must be] vegetables next to it for the good health of the child.”

91. **Natural resource management:** Natural resource management was not captured within the available baseline or monitoring data. Qualitative respondents did not frequently report changes to natural resource management practices that they attributed to the JRP. However, a handful of farmers said they had been trained in drainage techniques, composting, reforestation, and other methods to combat erosion which have been helpful. One example of this is a male smallholder farmer from Uvira who said reforestation efforts were his favourite intervention under the JRP because “...these plants have helped a lot with the production of oxygen, and it also helps us during the rainy season. Two years ago, we planted a shrub and today it has become very big.” Altogether, JRP included only three activities focused on natural resource management, and these activities were implemented relatively late in the implementation timeline. This despite the fact that beneficiaries highlighted many challenges related to the increasing incidence of natural resource scarcity and environmental shocks due to climate change (see EQ 5.4 for further details). Thus, there is a need for additional support on climate-adaptive agricultural approaches and further guidance on natural resource management in future iterations of JRP.

92. **Improved farming practices:** The household survey indicated slightly lower rates of adoption of four specific food preservation techniques but much higher rates of food marketing techniques when compared to baseline. Table 9 reports the percentage of household survey respondents adopting each of the techniques. The majority of the endline sample (60 percent) adopted at least two preservation techniques, with higher rates of adoption in Walungu and lower rates in Mwenga, compared to baseline. Overall, 29 percent adopted at least two food marketing techniques, and both territories realized a substantial increase from baseline values.

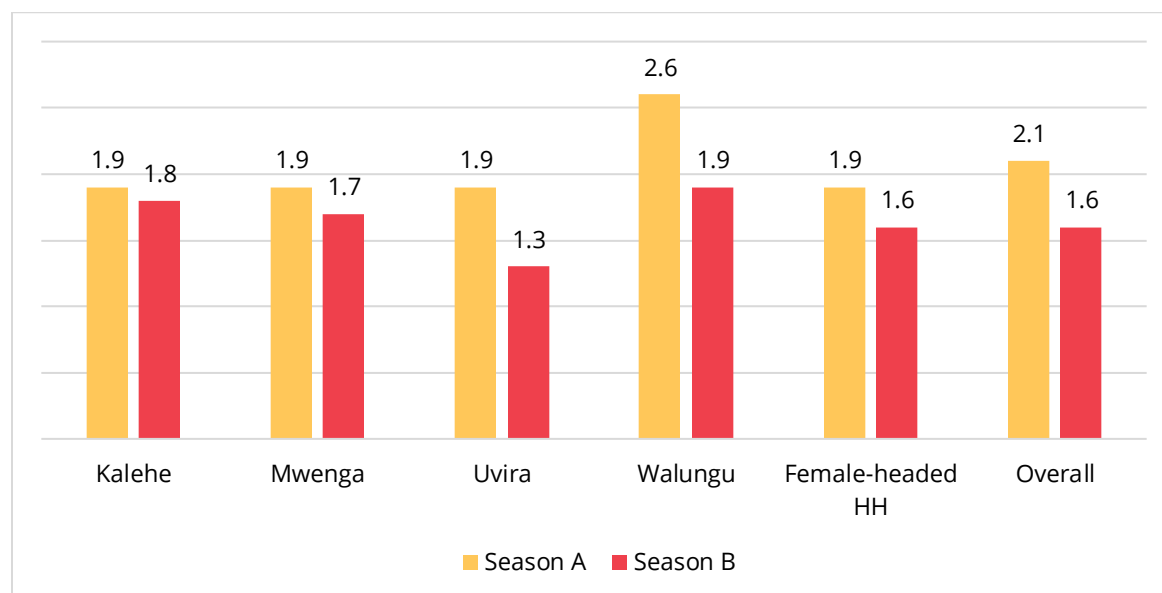
**Table 9: Adoption of farming techniques**

	Kalehe	Mwenga	Uvira	Walungu	Overall
<b>Adopted at least two preservation techniques</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>67%</b>
Drying	74%	73%	55%	77%	70%
Milling	32%	17%	19%	19%	22%
Triage	58%	30%	51%	31%	43%
Storage	71%	48%	46%	48%	53%
<b>Adopted at least two marketing techniques</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>31%</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Baseline</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>11.3%</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>8.2%</b>	<b>12.1%</b>
Collective selling	38%	25%	36%	31%	33%
Quality control	19%	7%	24%	20%	18%
Transformation	31%	30%	42%	9%	28%
Temporal speculation	9%	3%	10%	12%	8%
Use of pricing information	10%	10%	15%	22%	14%

Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that the adoption of at least two preservation or marketing techniques differs significantly across territories but does not differ according to sex of household head.

93. Just over half of the household sample (53.3 percent) reported that they had engaged in farming activities in the past year. The DRC has two growing seasons, with the first crop cycle called season A and the second season B. Figure 15 depicts the average number of crops grown in seasons A (the primary growing season) and B for each territory and for households headed by women, while Table 9 reports the average annual harvest in kilograms for five key crops, comparing to similarly derived baseline values where available. Agricultural production for households in Walungu exceeds baseline production, while production in Mwenga falls short.

**Figure 15: Average number of crops grown in seasons A and B**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that the average number of crops grown in each season differs significantly across territories but does not differ according to sex of household head.

**Table 10: Annual agricultural production (kg)**

	Kalehe	Mwenga	Uvira	Walungu	Overall
Cassava	214.43	146.42	277.57	251.19	211.36
<i>Baseline Cassava</i>	--	195.22	--	127.7	--
Maize	104.5	52.41	267.25	111.04	160.85
<i>Baseline Maize</i>	--	211.52	--	89.87	--
Rice	0	100	403.57	0	365.62
<i>Baseline Rice</i>	--	165.62	--	--	--
Beans	63.35	35.39	216.25	111.89	96.56
<i>Baseline Beans</i>	--	130.8	--	101.85	--
Nuts	30	49.17	121.43	83.33	83.82
<i>Baseline Nuts</i>	--	103.16	--	37.54	--

94. Qualitatively, many participants reported to have applied knowledge gained from group-led agricultural training activities into their farming practices. Respondents widely characterized these newly adopted techniques as improvements to their agricultural capacity. The techniques beneficiary farmers most positively referenced were the introduction of new crops (respondents identified over ten new types of vegetables generated from seed distribution efforts), knowledge of how to create naturally derived fertilizer, insecticide solutions, fallowing and tilling techniques, plot division techniques, seasonal crop rotation knowledge, and the implementation of anti-erosion landscaping. Nearly all of those who reported learning new techniques from training activities confirmed that they were still practicing at least one of these new techniques on their own land. Several female heads of household attested to the JRP trainings encouraging them to begin new garden plots, prior to which they were not producing any crops. One female smallholder from Kalehe reported that previously she *“did not know how to grow vegetables or create a small garden. Through joining a group, [she] learned these skills...now, [she] can produce [her] own vegetables at home for eating.”* By far, female farmers were the most eager to voice the effectiveness of these programmes. Most said the trainings had been carried out by members of their community's peasant organizations which received JRP cultivation training materials, rather than directly from NGO officials, suggesting strong levels of community participation and willingness to share technical knowledge. Nearly all respondents who received livestock, either as a household or as part of a community group, spoke to the effectiveness of breeding techniques acquired through JRP trainings in increasing livestock headcount.

95. Participants and officials broadly reported increased engagement in agricultural activities for income generation, rather than just for subsistence purposes. Many beneficiaries noted the positive impact of JRP training activities which taught marketing skills, instructed farmers on price-setting, and encouraged traveling to markets in towns (including the construction of roads and markets and liaising of buyer relationships through trade groups). Several of these reports mentioned new knowledge acquired on how to divide crop yields between allotments for household consumption, market sale, and seed retention, with some beneficiaries mentioning specific ratios for each vegetable that they were taught to plant. Many beneficiary farmers identified that the practices of sorting grain and vegetable harvests and performing quality checks have improved their ability to set prices and generate income from harvests; when asked where these practices were learned, all referenced JRP training activities. One FAO field officer attributed these market changes in part to the increased engagement in VSLAs for agricultural development, which *“fostered an entrepreneurial mindset.”* Several officials and participants perceived an uptick in the quantities of goods per individual sale, crediting this to an increase in purchasing power and a movement towards bulk buying within communities and at larger markets.

96. **Interest and participation in community organizations.** Respondents to the household survey were asked if anyone in the household participates in a formal group, and 58.5 percent of households responded in the affirmative (Kalehe 42.5 percent, Uvira 58.7 percent, Walungu 61.1 percent, Mwenga 71.7 percent). When a subset of women (n = 537) was asked specifically about participation in credit/microfinance groups, 70 percent reported that these types of groups exist in their community and about 44 percent are active members. More details about women's group participation can be found in EQ 7.4.

## 2.3. Efficiency

**EQ 3: To what extent and how were financial resources, human resources, and supplies sufficient (quantity), adequate (quality), economically distributed/deployed, and timely?**

- Indicators of perceived efficiency were derived from qualitative interviews with key stakeholders, as a lack of disaggregated expenditure data precluded a quantitative assessment of efficiency.
- Implementing agencies and partners successfully adapted JRP activities to the dynamic security situation, especially in North Kivu. For example, FAO scaled up home gardening activities and pivoted to local markets as opposed to larger centralized markets in response to insecurity in North Kivu.
- Some respondents—especially NGO partners and implementing agency field office staff—perceived a lack of coordination in monitoring efforts.

**3.1 To what extent did partnerships reduce programme implementation costs?**

**3.2 Were there alternative strategies that could have been implemented to achieve the same level of results, but at a lower cost?**

*Questions 3.1 and 3.2 are answered together below in the interest of succinctness, as both pertain to programme implementation costs.*

97. Detailed expenditure data that can be linked to specific activities/outcomes is necessary to produce a quantitative estimate of programme efficiency. The evaluation team obtained summary budget data and partial expenditure data from one agency, which was not sufficient to conduct a quantitative analysis of programme efficiency. Rich qualitative data from key stakeholders, however, provides insight on perceived indicators of efficiency:

98. Partnerships clearly facilitated the implementation of the JRP, but respondents did not contend that those partnerships reduced the cost of implementing JRP activities. Respondents from the three implementing agencies and their NGO partners mostly reported that there were no budget overruns but did not identify ways the activities could have been implemented at lower cost. In fact, many respondents noted the high cost of operating in North and South Kivu due to the rapidly changing security context. Specifically, implementing partners noted additional costs incurred by needing to change the timing of JRP activities (e.g., from dry season to rainy season) and the higher cost of some inputs due to the rising insecurity. Some NGO partners reported that activities required funding beyond what was provided and complained that implementing agencies did not provide funds upfront. For example, one NGO partner said *“There were certain budget lines that were underestimated and that were borne by the organization”* while another shared, *“One challenge we faced...was the requirement for pre-financing. This meant that we had to spend our own money upfront and then wait for reimbursement.”* Several NGO informants mentioned facing the pre-financing challenge particularly when contracting with FAO, indicating that the agency has less-flexible funding mechanisms for such contexts. An FAO respondent echoed this sentiment, noting the difficulties of updating budgets in real time as the implementation context changes. On the other hand, implementing partners working with UNICEF and WFP reported receiving their funds in a timely manner. This led one NGO respondent to suggest that FAO – and all implementing partners – adopt procedures to approve more efficiently expenditures and transfer funds to their NGO partners.

**3.3 Were the various monitoring and evaluation strategies adapted to measure the results of the approach, enabling adjustments to be made to programme implementation? And how could they be improved?**

99. The program had a structured approach to monitoring and evaluation, though these plans were difficult to coordinate in the field for some implementing partners. JRP monitoring activities were informed by a joint result framework, intended to compile information from multiple joint initiatives implemented in the resilience realm in DRC. The three implementing agencies had dedicated M&E teams

that led the monitoring of the JRP and conducted regular field missions to observe implementation progress and measure results. Despite their robust systems, some respondents—especially NGO partners and implementing agency field office staff—perceived a lack of coordination in monitoring efforts. As one implementing agency field staff shared,

*"...each agency had a rigorous monitoring system in place, with dedicated personnel ensuring effective tracking. However, one downside we observed was the lack of strong coordination within the overall M&E system. While each agency managed its monitoring activities efficiently, the coordination at the global level seemed to be limited."*

100. Besides monitoring efforts, at the headquarters and regional levels, the three implementing agencies initially disagreed on the best evaluation approach for the JRP. While some advocated for an impact evaluation, others felt a different evaluation approach would better suit their learning needs.

101. Other significant constraints to M&E efforts included access and resources. In terms of access, insecurity in certain areas (especially in North Kivu territories) inhibited monitoring activities: as one implementing agency respondent shared, *"Due to the insecurity in Rutshuru, we couldn't monitor the activities that our partners were conducting to see the results."* In other areas, impassable roads (exacerbated by rainy season) also impeded monitoring efforts. Finally, some NGO partners maintained they were constrained by limited human and financial resources for monitoring.

102. **Despite the constraints, numerous strategies were employed to adapt programme implementation.** For example, NGO partners referenced a toll-free line that individuals could call with complaints about the programme that were then routed to the relevant implementing agency to address. An NGO partner mentioned doing joint monitoring missions to assess progress which included *"...field visits and visits to the structures. There are recommendations that we gave and after three months we had to go back to the field to see if they had applied the recommendations."* FAO staff highlighted several adaptations to their approach which resulted from monitoring data, including delivering seeds directly to households as opposed to producer organizations and holding seed fairs rather than delivering seeds through a service provider which had initially led to delays. A WFP staff recalled observing lower levels of community participation in certain areas and responded by the following adjustment:

*"...holding general meetings with parents and parent committees to re-explain the project and clarify any misunderstandings. There was also confusion regarding the meals provided to the children at school. Some community members were dissatisfied with the lack of variety in the meals, which led to some issues. These concerns were reflected in the evaluation results. To address these problems, we undertook awareness campaigns to explain the project's goals and its impact."*

103. In addition to these programmatic adjustments, implementing agencies and partners made numerous adjustments based on the dynamic security situation. For example, a respondent from FAO said they scaled up gardening activities and pivoted to local markets as opposed to larger centralized markets in response to the insecurity in North Kivu.

104. Based on the feedback from these implementing partners, it appears that better coordination of monitoring activities and providing more resources for these activities can improve the usefulness of the M&E system. It would be beneficial for the three implementing agencies to agree to an evaluation strategy based on shared learning objectives from the outset of the next phase of the programme specifying the need for impact and/or process evaluations as well as monitoring. M&E efforts across the three agencies could be further streamlined, including a centralized reporting structure (as opposed to individual reports from the three agencies) and a centralized mechanism for responding to information requests from the donor or government counterparts.



## 2.4. Impact

### EQ 4: To what extent and how has the programme generated significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects?

- Quantitative data support the anticipated theory of change pathways between training activities and agricultural income generation outcomes.
- Households that received post-harvest training were more likely than untrained households to adopt at least two of the techniques, but there is no significant association between receiving training and agricultural output.
- Households with women belonging to VSLAs scored higher on the food consumption score (FCS) and the household dietary diversity score (HDDS), and farming households with VSLA members grew higher numbers of crops during the primary growing season.
- Qualitatively, smallholders who received cultivation training reported increased agricultural yields and in some cases the ability to use crops for both household feeding and market sale.

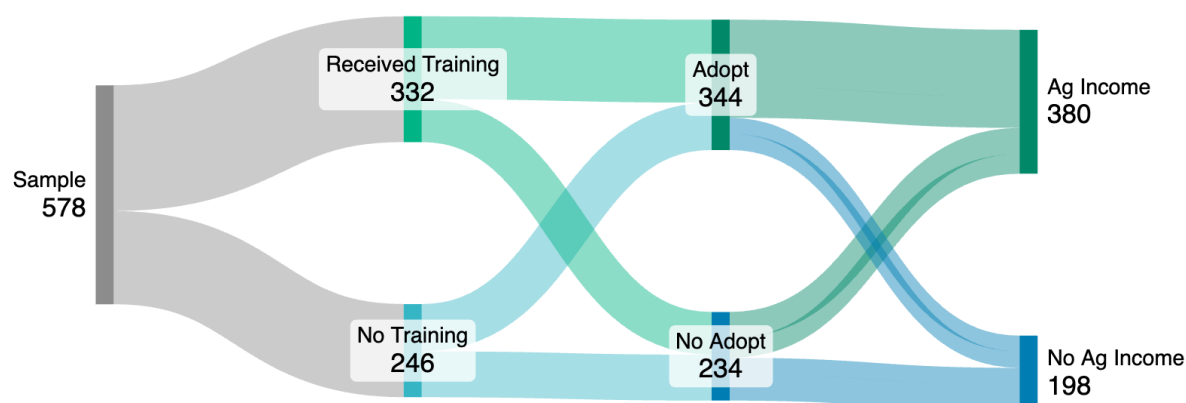
**4.1 Has the programme made a significant contribution to the results observed?**

**4.2 Why did the result(s) occur? And how is this linked to the influence of the programme?**

Questions 4.1 and 4.2 are answered together below in the interest of succinctness, as both pertain to programme results achieved.

105. **Suggestive impacts of agriculture trainings:** Survey respondents who reported receiving any agricultural training were more likely to adopt preservation techniques and subsequently more likely to have earned income through agricultural sources in the past six months. The figure below depicts the flow of respondents through the theory of change, from receiving training (58 percent), implementing the training (66 percent of trained respondents), and participation in agricultural income-generating activities (81 percent of trained respondents who adopted at least two techniques). A similar percentage of households headed by women received the training, but a higher proportion of trained households headed by women implemented the training (79 percent) and participated in agricultural income-generating activities (89 percent). This analysis provides support for the linkages between activities and outcomes in the theory of change, and it also suggests that there may be positive spillover effects as 51 percent of untrained respondents also adopted at least two preservation techniques.

**Figure 16: Flow of respondents receiving training, adopting techniques, and generating income**



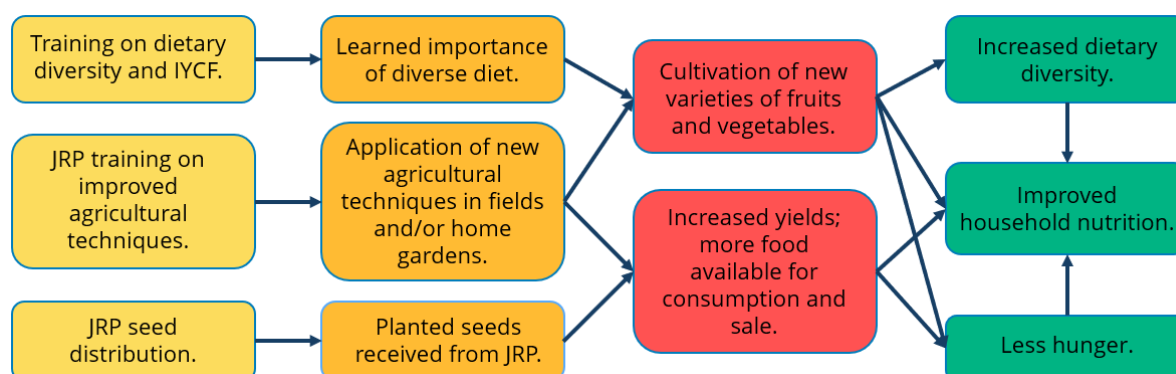
106. With regard to post-harvest training in particular, household survey respondents who reported receiving specific training on preservation techniques (35 percent) were 14.8 percentage points more likely to have adopted at least two of these techniques than households who did not receive the training ( $p<0.01$ ). Fewer households reported receiving training in marketing techniques (18 percent), and these households were about 9 percentage points more likely to adopt at least two marketing techniques, though this association is not significant at  $p<0.05$ . Of households engaged in agriculture ( $n = 308$ ), approximately 62 percent reported receiving training in farming techniques, but there was no significant association between receiving training and agricultural output.

107. **Suggestive impacts of VSLAs:** Households with women belonging to VSLAs scored, on average, 2.33 points higher on the FCS ( $p<0.05$ ) and 0.35 points higher on the HDDS ( $p<0.05$ ). Households belonging to VSLAs also tended to have lower scores on the coping strategies scales, higher literacy rates, and a higher number of income sources, but these associations were not significant at  $p<0.05$ . For the subsample of households with women involved in farming activities ( $n = 287$ ), being an active member of a VSLA is significantly and positively correlated with the number of crops grown during the primary growing season. VSLA membership is also associated with a higher proportion of farmland ownership, but the association is not statistically significant. This evidence supports the assumptions embedded in the theory of change linking the creation of savings and loans groups to food security and resilience outcomes.

108. In a subgroup analysis of households by sex of household head, households headed by women scored an average of 3 points lower on the FCS ( $p<0.01$ ). However, there was no significant association between sex of household head and dietary diversity or the CARI-FS score. At baseline, households headed by women were significantly associated with poorer metrics on all three indicators. Thus, it is possible that some relative progress in food security has been accomplished among households headed by women.

109. **Perceived food and agriculture impacts:** Among those who engaged in JRP cultivation training activities, many beneficiary farmers spoke to the benefits accrued from employing these new practices. An NGO official in Bukavu attested that *“the impact [of JRP agricultural activities] is palpable to this day,”* noting that many smallholding farmers have increased their agricultural yield, allowing for both household feeding as well as market sale, which has given many households the opportunity to pay for basic needs like schooling and housing materials. Several participant reports confirm this sentiment. While these reports do not overwhelmingly suggest that food insecurity has been mitigated at large, they do identify several cases that link engagement in JRP agricultural activities with improvements in agricultural yield. The introduction of new vegetables through JRP seed disbursement efforts, which proved to be a widely popular activity, impacted the diversity of crops available for home consumption and commercial sale. Several smallholders began producing crops which carry different harvest seasons, allowing for year-round income and nutritional benefit. One female beneficiary in Kalehe discussed how she borrowed enough cash from a VSLA to begin trading bananas, avocados, and tomatoes, which generated income and food while waiting for her cassava patch to grow. In terms of cultivation for sale, participants who were able to access agricultural fairs generally found success in marketing their produce for higher prices than they would locally. This is especially the case for farmer beneficiaries who cultivated more non-conventional produce (e.g. eggplants and carrots), the seeds of which had been provided by the JRP. However, market access proved difficult for many seeking to sell their yield, and several respondents (primarily concentrated in more remote, inland communities) felt disillusioned with their inability to generate income from their produce due to unprofitably low prices, far distances to markets, and lack of buyer connections.

**Figure 17: Visualization of causal mechanisms identified through QuIP methodology**



Note: While qualitatively some smallholder farmers reported less hunger, food security scores suggest this was not broadly true for JRP beneficiaries.

110. The agricultural training activities demonstrated perceived positive impacts on household resilience in several ways. Many smallholders who were trained in livestock breeding through group-led trainings reported success in increasing their holdings of poultry, pigs, and goats. Several participants spoke about their livestock in resilience-minded terms, characterizing them as potential sources of emergency funds or nutritional protection during famine. One male smallholder from Kasheke praised his livestock for its insurance value, that *"if [his] child falls ill, [he would] sell the goat to get money to treat [his] child."* Furthermore, some evidence suggests that increased production of staple crops (attributed, in these cases, to new practices resulting from training activities) led to some communities being less market reliant. We find this to be an unintended positive outcome of the agricultural activities. One key informant from Mwenga noted that, in the face of famine in the area, the JRP cultivation trainings boosted individuals' crop production such that *"those who buy cassava flour are no longer numerous because we have already started to cultivate."*

111. Many participants reported that the investments made in improving community infrastructure were overwhelmingly popular with community members, and several participants and key informants credit these activities with a diverse array of positive impacts. Beyond the crucial role that JRP-initiated transportation infrastructure efforts played in facilitating market access, accounts from men, women, and adolescents noted that income generated from construction activities improved their ability to accumulate savings and make capital purchases in land and agricultural equipment. For instance, one beneficiary farmer from Luvungi was able to purchase two plots of land "through [her] own efforts" working on a JRP-led road project. One smallholder from Luvungi reported relieving his debts and paying for his healthcare using construction income. According to several smallholding farmers, JRP efforts to construct storehouses, granaries, crop processing facilities, and market centres produced crucial infrastructure for allowing commercial sale of agricultural products. However, some participants reported that access to these facilities ended once JRP officials exited the community, with women farmers from Mwenga reporting that the storehouse was no longer accessible after the programme ended.

112. **Perceived livelihoods impacts and improved coping:** Adolescents and women who participated in JRP livelihood trainings reported positive impact to their wellbeing stemming from a boost in earning potential and financial security. Beneficiaries reported improvements to material wellbeing due to this gained income, including improved home food supply, land purchases, school fee payments, marriage payments, and healthcare access. One officer reported that, in leading a focus group in Moja, all participants who engaged in JRP livelihood training declared personal savings between U\$50 and US\$100 each. A handful of participants reported additional impacts of JRP livelihood activities, including the ability to train others in a trade and foster apprenticeships. One female smallholder from Walungu learned how to bake bread, *"to give to [her] children then sell the leftovers for money."*

113. Additionally, women and adolescents who participated in livelihood trainings reported an upward shift in their confidence and self-esteem. This impact was attributed to several factors, primarily the acquisition of marketable trade skills, the acquisition of property or land, a sense of belonging fostered in professional and community organizations, and newly developed financial self-reliance. Adolescents interviewed were more confident moving beyond financial reliance on their parents, while

women reported being satisfied with improvements in financial self-sufficiency from their husbands or other family members. One key informant perceived the psycho-social benefits of the IGA trainings led to fewer cases of youth crime in that community. When asked further about such psychosocial outcomes, respondents were able to directly link these unintended impacts to JRP activities. A small number of adolescent participants identified a lack of tool provision for specialized trades (e.g. carpentry and welding) as a shortcoming of the programme, demonstrating some capacity to have accrued further impact

**4.3 Are there indications that factors/interventions other than those of the resilience programme contributed to improving the resilience of the smallholder food system and of agricultural production, guaranteeing good nutrition?**

114. Unfortunately, there are few factors or other interventions contributing to resilience in North and South Kivu and many doing just the opposite. As discussed in greater detail under EQ 5.4, there are many constraints facing smallholder farmers including access to land, climatic shocks, natural disasters, and recurring conflict and insecurity. Humanitarian responses are frequent in these areas but are typically short-term in nature and limited to the provision of emergency food or cash.

## 2.5. Sustainability

### EQ 5: To what extent do the net benefits continue, or are likely to be sustained, after programme closure?

- The JRP worked through existing structures and closely with government partners to ensure sustainability, but there was no evidence of a clear operational plan or budget to sustain JRP activities without external funding.
- Strengthened community structures (CACs, POs, and VSLAs), improved infrastructure (such as WASH infrastructure), and the adoption of enhanced cultivation approaches appear to be some of the more sustainable programme achievements.
- Respondents identified several key risks to sustainability, including the government's ability to carry project activities forward, a mindset of reliance on external support, and the persistence of conflict and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially North Kivu).
- Quantitative analysis explores the pathways between agricultural trainings and nutrition impacts, finding a significant association between the adoption of training techniques and crop sales and suggestive evidence of sustainable change in food security indicators attributable to increased crop revenue.

**5.1 Has the programme implemented measures and mechanisms (strategic, budgetary, and operational) to ensure that activities requiring financial resources can continue in the future without BMZ-KfW support?**

**5.2 How have beneficiary communities and institutional partners appropriated the programme and its achievements?**

*Questions 5.1 and 5.2 are answered together below in the interest of succinctness, as both pertain to the perceived sustainability and appropriation of the programme.*

115. The JRP adopted intentional approaches to ensure sustainability and respondents indicated that individual activities all had sustainability strategies. The programme aimed to work through existing structures and closely with government partners to ensure sustainability, however, there was limited evidence of a clear operational plan or budget to sustain JRP activities without external funding. This lack of a clear plan could be due in part to the likelihood of receiving funding for another phase of the JRP (design and funding discussions were underway as of this report writing) but is likely also tied to the extremely limited resources available at the household, community, and government levels. That said,

several activities and approaches (detailed below) were particularly promising in terms of longer-term sustainability.

116. Respondents emphasized collaborating with government counterparts was essential to ensure the sustainability of JRP interventions. For example, one respondent noted that government had successfully taken over road rehabilitation. Additionally, working through and strengthening existing community structures (such as CACs, POs, and VSLAs) was a core element of JRP's approach. As one implementing agency staff member shared, working through these community structures was *"...the basis of sustainability because they are empowered to manage activities independently once the project is withdrawn."* Indeed, some organizations have continued providing literacy support without external funding. Respondents consistently reported that, *"infrastructures that were built are still being used by beneficiaries"* (implementing agency staff member) and that management committees were formed to sustain WASH structures. Others reported that community fields and farmer field school fields were still being maintained and cultivated and that seed sharing continued after the interventions ended. At the individual level, respondents largely agreed that beneficiary farmers continued to produce using enhanced methodologies and equipment. For example, an NGO partner commented, *"As far as agriculture is concerned, I know that the beneficiaries are continuing to produce, and all those who benefited from the equipment have not sold it; they are continuing to produce, and this proves the continuity of the activities."* Lastly, at the school level, there are indications that school gardens are being used to continue the provision of school meals without external support. As one implementing agency staff member shared, *"We've seen that in some schools, even when funding decreased, they continued to provide meals because they had established vegetable gardens. They kept cultivating these gardens, selling their vegetables, and using the proceeds to buy meals. While it didn't cover all six school days, they were able to manage meals for three days a week."* While not a seamless continuation of activities, these are strong signals that some elements of JRP activities can and will be sustained beyond the funding period.

### **5.3 Has the programme identified the major risks that could threaten sustainability and put in place conditions and mechanisms to manage these risks?**

117. Respondents identified several key risks to sustainability, including the government's ability to carry project activities forward, a mindset of reliance on external support, and the persistence of conflict and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially North Kivu). Despite respondents readily reporting these risks, there was no clear evidence that the JRP put in place conditions or mechanisms to manage them.

118. While collaboration with government partners was a key element of the JRP's sustainability strategy, some respondents felt the partnership with government counterparts should have started earlier and been stronger. Respondents expressed concerns about the government's ability to carry things forward and suggested government involvement was not as pronounced as it should have been. An implementing agency respondent reflected, *"The way the JRP worked did not involve the state strongly from the start in project management...at times, it seemed like the project was solely managed by the three agencies, with the state being consulted only for specific reasons rather than being a true stakeholder."* Others expressed concerns about the government's limited resources, capacity, and "will" to continue with JRP interventions without external support.

119. A few respondents mentioned a mindset of reliance on external support, both at the individual and community levels as well as on the part of implementing agencies and partners. Regarding the former, an implementing agency field staff shared the concern that, *"Some activities are still seen by the communities as tasks that need to be done for them, expecting full support at all times. The project has a fixed timeline and specific funding, which brings about challenges."* Programme officials—both from NGOs and the three implementing agencies—also emphasized the need for additional funds to sustain JRP activities rather than concrete plans to sustain activities without further funding.

120. Finally, respondents referenced the extreme needs and vulnerability of individuals and communities in North and South Kivu as potential barriers to sustaining JRP activities and their benefits. Recurrent conflict and insecurity exacerbate these needs, and even though the JRP was perceived to strengthen community structures, concerns remained about the vitality of these structures. As one implementing agency respondent commented that *"basic structures, although strengthened, remain*

rudimentary. Despite our efforts to build capacity, these grassroots structures still face challenges.”

#### 5.4 Are internal and external factors influencing the adoption of the resilience programme and its components by beneficiaries and other stakeholders?

121. Respondents identified several key factors that may constrain the adoption and effectiveness of JRP interventions, including those related to climate and the environment, health, socioeconomics, and gender norms. These factors are elaborated below.

- **Climate and environmental challenges.** Smallholder farmers reported plant and animal diseases that negatively influenced their crop production. As one farmer shared, *“The banana trees used to produce a lot, but with the wilt bacterium and other diseases attacking them, this is no longer the case.”* Other farmers referenced using animal excrement for fertilizer but said they could not do so when animals fell sick. Shortages of water and arable land also present challenges for farmers, challenges which are compounded by the lack of agricultural inputs and tools such as hoes, seeds, fertilizers, animal medicines, and so forth. Finally, deforestation, land degradation, and natural disasters such as floods and landslides further compromise the already fragile livelihoods of smallholder farmers in North and South Kivu.
- **Health challenges.** Beneficiary farmers reported numerous serious health challenges for themselves and their children. Commonly cited illnesses include intestinal worms, malaria, lung diseases, diarrhoea, fever, vomiting, flu, and other complications from malnutrition such as skin rashes. Access to health care is inconsistent, and clinics are often understaffed and undersupplied. Despite the Congolese government’s push to provide free healthcare (i.e., consultations), the cost of medication and treatment remains prohibitive for many.
- **Socio-economic challenges.** Smallholder farmers identified several constraints to their livelihoods, including access to land (many farmers do not own land and instead have to exchange their daily labour for access to land or pay to rent plots which undercuts their yields), displacement which can lead to land abandonment, conflict (either from the war or lower level disputes between farmers, or between farmers and breeders, such as when cattle graze on a neighbouring farmer’s land), the lack of fixed prices for agricultural products, and poor roads and limited access to markets which can force farmers to accept lower prices for their products.
- **Gender norms and equity challenges.** Despite the JRP’s promising perceived effects on women’s engagement in community structures and livelihood diversification, the backdrop of pervasive harmful gender norms persists. Myriad activities such as community dialogues, awareness sessions, establishment of Dimitra Clubs, and diagnostic workshops sought to address normative gender restrictions on women’s participation. Even so, respondents in our qualitative sample reported that women often have lower levels of education and literacy, less autonomy and decision-making power within their households, and commonly suffer from gender-based violence. In agricultural work, participants in the study mentioned that most men do not help their wives, especially in mining areas such as Walungu and Kalehe, where they are more focused on mining activities. In some cases, respondents said men do not bring home the proceeds of their mining activities, leaving their families in great poverty.

#### 5.5 Are the effects or changes observed likely to induce other hoped-for changes?

122. Quantitative analyses investigated anticipated theory of change mechanisms around trainings and agricultural output, finding significant relationships between the adoption of post-harvest techniques and crop sales revenue. Previous sections have described the high rate of adoption of farmer trainings and trainings on preservation and marketing techniques. While the household survey data do not show any significant association between receiving farmer trainings and agricultural output, there is a significant correlation between the adoption of preservation and marketing techniques and the monetary value received from the sale of crops. Specifically, farming households who adopted at least two preservation techniques realized, on average, \$60 more in annual crop sales than households who did not adopt at least two techniques ( $p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, farming households who adopted at least two marketing techniques realized \$96 more in annual crop sales, on average ( $p < 0.001$ ). Crop sales are also



significantly and positively correlated with food security and dietary diversity indicators, though the correlation is quite small in magnitude.

## 2.6. Coherence

**EQ 6: To what extent and how do the WFP, FAO, and UNICEF interventions produce results that are mutually reinforcing (cross-fertilizing)—internal coherence—and complementary to those implemented by other partners (NGOs, United Nations agencies) and government structures—external coherence?**

- Despite the complementary nature of JRP interventions, coordination of activities at the community level and with government actors proved challenging and there were some redundancies and missed collaboration opportunities.
- The different approaches and timelines for humanitarian versus development interventions sometimes created problems for JRP implementers in terms of meeting community and individual expectations. While humanitarian assistance modalities such as food or cash focus on immediate gains, development approaches such as the JRP focus on longer-term achievements and were perceived by some beneficiaries to deliver slow results requiring significant effort.
- Respondents identified several key risks to sustainability, including the government's ability to carry project activities forward, a mindset of reliance on external support, and the persistence of conflict and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially North Kivu).

### **6.1 Are programme interventions complementary and coordinated to achieve the objectives of the humanitarian–development–peace nexus approach?**

123. JRP interventions in the areas of food security, livelihoods, access to basic social services, and peacebuilding were designed to be complementary and indeed seem to have successfully complemented one another in their implementation. That said, coordination of the many JRP activities at the community-level—and with government actors—proved more challenging and there were some redundancies and missed collaboration opportunities that are detailed below. Further, the shift from the humanitarian response (which had been prevalent in JRP catchment areas prior to the programme) to a longer-term development approach experienced some growing pains at the community level, as elaborated below.

124. At the regional and country office levels, the implementing agencies reported strong collaboration and clear delineation of responsibilities for different outcomes and activities. As one respondent put it, *“Each agency focused on what it specialized in”* while another referenced a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Agriculture which allowed the ministry to supervise and monitor programme activities and even train beneficiaries. Despite these reported strengths, respondents at the field office and community levels were more likely to report gaps in coordination and redundancies. For example, one key informant referenced confusion amongst beneficiaries whose activities were supervised by both a government agronomist and an agronomist from the NGO partner: *“...the state agronomist is there, and the organization's agronomist is there, and the beneficiary is being supervised by two different structures.”*

125. In addition to redundancies, some NGO partners reported “competition” between partners of the three implementing agencies and scheduling conflicts between activities under the three agencies. As one NGO partner put it, *“Coordination was limited to UNICEF, WFP, FAO. But nothing at the level of local partners on the ground.”* Another NGO partner recalled being unaware of the activities the other agencies were implementing in the same communities:

*“Despite the fact that there is coordination at the provincial level, and we know that WFP, FAO, and UNICEF are active in the area—these three agencies were leading the programme—there were still issues. UNICEF recruited*

implementing NGOs like Caritas, AVUDES, and [the Foundation for Peace and Development] for the three health zones I was talking about. FAO also recruited partners for implementation in the same areas for the components they were handling. Similarly, WFP had implementation structures in the same areas as FAO. When we arrived on the ground, we realized that there were partners who didn't know each other, even though we were all part of the resilience programme. This was a significant weakness. During the last visit, we found that while we were in the same area and programme, we did not know each other."

126. While respondents reported that coordination improved over time, NGO partners pointed to clear limitations in coordination even between NGOs supporting the same implementing agency: *"It has to be said that activities were cross-cutting, and we hardly ever met. It was FAO who coordinated all the activities, with each implementing partner working on its own."* NGO respondents said the few times they did meet with fellow implementing partners, the meetings were valuable and greatly improved coordination.

127. Finally, the different approaches and timelines for humanitarian versus development interventions sometimes created problems for JRP implementers in terms of meeting community and individual expectations. As an NGO partner explained,

*"[Humanitarian projects] would put immediate resources into play and often had a month or two to complete their activities, so they would motivate the community with financial incentives. This created problems. For instance, when we started, there was humanitarian funding being implemented...They would come into the same community and build infrastructure with direct financial support. On the other hand, when we arrived, we didn't provide money directly. Instead, we bought materials like sticks and metal sheets, but we asked the household owners to find some of the resources themselves. This difference in approach caused confusion and issues within the community."*

128. Thus, the difference in humanitarian assistance modalities (often food or cash) which focus on immediate gains versus development approaches—which focus on longer-term achievements—meant that JRP activities were perceived by some beneficiaries to deliver slower results and require greater effort.

## **6.2 How have peace-building activities contributed to strengthening the resilience of the health, nutrition, education, agriculture, and other non-agricultural income-generating sectors?**

129. While there are strong indications that JRP activities contributed to the overall objectives of stabilization and peacebuilding (see EQ 2.2.), the extent to which peacebuilding activities reinforced resilience in other areas (health, nutrition, education, agriculture, and livelihoods) is less clear. JRP participants offered some anecdotal evidence to suggest that peacebuilding activities, if sustained, may reinforce resilience in areas such as health, gender equality, and livelihoods.

130. Male and female farmers reported that conflicts can lead to an array of negative impacts in areas such as health and livelihoods. The research team conducted a participatory problem analysis (problem trees) activity with male and female smallholder farmers by prompting them to identify the signs, causes and broader impacts of conflict (see Figure 18). According to respondents, conflict manifested as land disputes, property theft and destruction, grudges and misunderstanding, and intrahousehold disputes (e.g., between husband and wife). They also reported the primary impacts of conflict as follows: anger and hatred, death, sexual violence, disease, famine, and poverty. These results confirm the statistical findings on types of conflict in EQ 2.2 and highlight how efforts to promote peace and security may indirectly strengthen poverty-, health-, and gender equity-related outcomes.

131. Supporting this, some anecdotal evidence points to the way that JRP's peacebuilding activities may be supporting positive livelihood and gender equality outcomes. For instance, a few respondents reported that peacebuilding skills allow community members to resolve interpersonal and land-related conflicts without requiring the intervention of a local authority, a service which incurs a fine. Peacebuilding skills may thus help some community members keep more money in the household. Further, project documents from 2023 reported that the JRP Dimitra Clubs were becoming a platform to address gender-based violence and promote community-derived solutions to environment and nutrition: *"Dimitra Clubs aim to collectively identify solutions to social and economic challenges at village level and enhance rural women's voice and leadership in decision-making processes. They enhance the self-reliance of communities in conflict management and strengthen the capacities of rural communities to handle gender-based violence while improving nutrition and introducing innovative environmental practices."*



"In Luberezi, there was a workshop that supervised children in welding and adjustment. When we facilitated their integration into these roles, these children expressed gratitude, saying, 'You are like our parents. We used to spend days and nights on the roads, creating barricades, committing crimes, and now we have our own group.' I don't know how to thank UNICEF enough for this. In our community, there will no longer be children engaging in such criminal activities."

**LUVUNGI / UVIRA**

FOCUS GROUP : FAMILIE SMALL HOLDER

- Famille dans la communauté
- Mort d'hommes
- Blessures et coups
- Violençe

**CONFLIT**

Conflit Foncier / limite de champs  
Conflit d'intérêt économique  
Conflit Tribale - ethniques  
Conflit d'héritage et succession  
Conflit Agriculteurs Éleveurs

- Faible organisation des délégués fonciers
- Méfiance et jalouisie
- usurpation du pouvoir
- Manque d'espace suffisant pour le pâturage
- Injustices du terrain

**FOCUS GROUP : KALEHE / KASHA**

PETITS EXPLOITANTS AGRICOLE MASCULIN

**JUSTICE POPULAIRE**  
**COUPLES BLESSURES**  
**MORT**  
**INSÉCURITÉ**  
**CHOMAGE**  
**NOUVEAUX JEWELLS**

**CONFLIT ECONOMIQUE**  
**DIVORCES**

**CONFLIT**

DÉTACHEMENT DES ANIMAUX  
AGRICULTEURS ELEVEURS  
CONFLITS FONCIERS  
CONFLIT D'HÉRITAGE  
SUCCESION DANS LES FAMILLES

**JUSTIFICATION DES TERRES**  
**MÉTAFRASE DES TERRES**  
MANQUE DE CONSCIENCE  
TOUTES LES INTÉRÊTS SONT  
INDIVIDUALISÉS PAR LE  
PAYSAN ET LA COMMUNAUTÉ  
DE LA LOI  
TRIBUTARISATION

### 6.3 Do partners' interventions complement those implemented by other partners and governments to reach the most vulnerable?

135. See the discussion on EQ 7.3 for further information on the equitable inclusion of vulnerable populations within the JRP design and implementation.

## 2.7. Gender, human rights, equity and inclusion

### EQ 7: How and to what extent has the programme contributed to the dimensions of gender, human rights, and equity?

- JRP interventions were based on detailed contextual and gender analyses undertaken by the three implementing agencies.
- Through the gender analysis, women were recognized as the main actors in the agricultural sector in North and South Kivu and disproportionately affected by poverty, food security, and illiteracy. Activities were designed and targeted accordingly.
- While the programme also targeted individuals with disabilities and the elderly, the mechanism for doing so was unclear. Some farmers and other community members shared concerns about equitable access to activities and did not understand the targeting rationale for certain activities.

#### **7.1 Is the targeting of interventions, including beneficiaries, and the choice of modalities and values to be transferred based on relevant analyses? And were there any unintended effects from targeting these beneficiaries?**

136. The implementing agencies undertook an integrated contextual analysis to inform the targeting of interventions under the JRP. Among other criteria, the three agencies looked at the levels of food insecurity, the agricultural potential of different locations, and the prevalence of malnutrition. The project also included a gender analysis, and women were recognized as the main actors in the agricultural sector in North and South Kivu and—along with children—the most affected by poverty and food insecurity. Additionally, female illiteracy was identified as one of the root causes of poverty and increased vulnerability, which was the reason for including functional literacy and numeracy training as part of the JRP.

137. The programme also targeted individuals with disabilities and the elderly. Of the 578 households included in the quantitative sample for this evaluation, 20.2 percent had at least one member with a disability and 16.6 percent had at least one elderly member (aged 65 and older).

138. Despite the detailed analyses that were undertaken to inform JRP activities and targeting, the rationale behind the programme's targeting criteria was not always clear to beneficiaries and stakeholders, which in some cases even created conflicts or led to demotivation among beneficiaries. During focus groups, a variety of beneficiaries reported feeling that JRP inputs were unevenly distributed in the community. For example, a male farmer from Kalehe recalled, *"Sometimes they target [with seeds] ....only 80 people out of a population of 5,000 in Kasheke, which can create conflicts"* while a respondent from Mwenga shared, *"What I didn't like about this project was the fact that they gave breeding to certain members of the community instead of everyone, and this created conflict."* At the school-level, one government informant expressed confusion over why certain schools were targeted over others: *"I don't know why they focused on selecting certain schools and keeping the same beneficiaries over these four years. This approach isn't good and has led to conflicts between zones."* Some teachers, too, complained that some schools benefited from improved latrines and water taps while others did not, without a clear explanation as to why. Based on these accounts, there seems to be a need for increased communication and transparency around the JRP's targeting rationale. The tension around JRP inclusion further highlights the need for development support in these areas and underscores the need for additional development and humanitarian assistance there.

#### **7.2 Has the programme strategically, programmatically, and operationally analysed and managed risks and opportunities, e.g., related to the contextual dynamics of the areas of intervention, protection, and gender?**

#### **7.3 Have gender, human rights, and equity principles been duly integrated into programme design, implementation, equitable participation, and capacity-strengthening?**

Questions 7.2 and 7.3 are answered together below in the interest of succinctness, as both pertain to the consideration of gender and human rights in programme design and implementation.

139. The JRP successfully employed several internal processes to identify and manage risks and opportunities related to equity and inclusion, such as the gender analysis and conflict analysis mentioned in EQ 7.1. Agency staff further relied on monthly and trimestral monitoring to identify risks to equitable participation during implementation. This is evidenced, for instance, by the project's M&E manual which included monitoring indicators related to the participation of women (e.g., women's membership and leadership in targeted farmer's organization).

140. In an effort to manage inclusion risks, staff at implementing NGOs reported making a particular effort to ensure participation from members of vulnerable groups. One NGO shared that they typically visit the village authority to identify people with disabilities and later validate the leader's identification with door-to-door recruitment. Another NGO highlighted that, as a local partner, they felt equipped with the contextual knowledge necessary to recruit vulnerable individuals.

141. As evidence of such procedures, JRP implementing stakeholders unanimously emphasized the specific targeting of women as part of the project design. Partners on the ground echoed that women were prioritized in the households and participant lists provided by UNICEF, FAO, and WFP programme officers. An NGO staff member in Bukavu explained that they were relatively successful in integrating women into programme activities: *"I'd say that the gender aspect was first considered in the selection of households. Given that in the villages, agriculture is practiced more by women, the selection of beneficiaries gave priority to women. There were also some men, but the majority were women."* However, this respondent also highlighted that, for some activities and especially those related to community associations (e.g., farmer's groups), men were more likely to show up. An NGO partner in Bukavu also said that it was more challenging to find women who could help with the awareness raising activities of JRP.

142. On the integration of other vulnerable groups, such as elderly individuals, people with disabilities, and people with albinism, the responses were mixed. According to one NGO staff member, the JRP beneficiary lists provided by the three agencies did not include information on vulnerable groups. Country office staff anecdotally confirmed the lack of structured approaches to integrate these groups within planning. Nevertheless, at the implementation level partners described that people with disabilities were included. For instance, members of COPA expressed that children with disabilities are studying together with children without disabilities and that all children are therefore having equal access to school meals and other aspects of the programme. Similar statements were made about other non-school activities and the inclusion of persons with disabilities, suggesting that persons with disabilities were included as part of the general targeting efforts without special accommodations or structured efforts to facilitate participation. One exception reported were WASH activities whereby accessibility was actively considered within the construction of latrines and showers through the inclusion of ramps in those cases that it was necessary.

143. While the JRP was generally well accepted, smallholder farmers and other community members shared some concerns around equitable access to programme activities. For instance, one farmer from Kalehe explained that access to the agricultural input shop was limited for some of the most vulnerable without means of transportation:

*"We were supposed to benefit from the construction of an input shop. Despite buying [inputs] at a high price locally, it is easier for us than going to buy them in Bukavu or Kabamba. This input shop is more beneficial to those who have the means, so not all beneficiaries have access to it. Additionally, there are some tools that we can't find now, such as watering cans, which are especially needed during this dry period."*

144. Beneficiaries, including smallholder farmers and members of COPA, questioned the selection of beneficiaries in JRP. A female farmer in Walungu expressed that she wished that other women and mothers would have access to the same training and opportunities because some were left behind.

**7.4 To what extent and how has the programme empowered women and young people and reduced inequalities that prevent girls, women, vulnerable people and/or others from various social strata from participating?**

145. Women beneficiary farmers were more likely than men to attribute positive impacts on agricultural production to trainings received under the JRP. When asked which aspect of the programme was the most beneficial in terms of increasing production, women overwhelmingly cited agricultural trainings. In most cases, participants identified PO members as the ones who provided technical assistance that led them to improve their knowledge and practices. Nearly all female beneficiary farmers noted that prior to the trainings they had not been aware of or practiced techniques such as natural fertilizing, plot development, and introduction of novel crops (e.g. eggplant, tomatoes, and beans) which ultimately helped them increase their production.

146. **Women also self-reported greater involvement in community support networks following their participation in the JRP**, namely POs, VSLAs, and Dimitra Clubs. Other respondents confirmed this trend, and some added that women were less sceptical of community groups and more likely to participate wholeheartedly. To this end, one NGO partner reported:

“Regarding men and women... women are more dedicated compared to men. Women wholeheartedly engage in project activities, whereas men tend to show more scepticism. For instance, when asked to visit their fields, women comply readily, whereas men often hesitate or provide reasons for not doing so, possibly due to negligence or other reasons. Women generally exhibit more practical involvement compared to men.”

147. There were several other examples of men demonstrating disinterest and scepticism toward these groups. Nonetheless, when probed about their individual experiences with these community groups, men expressed mostly positive sentiments and noted the improved cultivation techniques and broader seed distribution in their communities.

148. High levels of female participation in community groups are reflected among the 537 women surveyed using the Abbreviated Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (A-WEAI) module with 88 percent of the respondents being part of community groups. Women are most commonly members of religious groups (61 percent), credit/micro-finance groups (44 percent), and agricultural/farming groups (49 percent). On average, women reported being a member of at least 3 groups.

**Table 11: Female membership in community groups, disaggregated by territory and sex of household head**

	Kalehe	Mwenga	Uvira	Walungu	Households headed by men	Households headed by women	All
Average number of memberships	3.33	3.15	2.75	3.91	3.29	3.09	3.28
Proportion of women who hold a leadership role	0.09	0.31	0.18	0.10	0.17	0.16	0.17
Observations	145	123	137	132	362	148	537

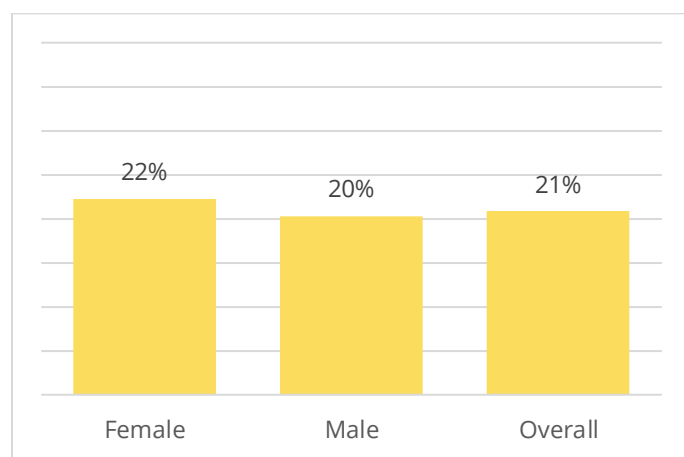
149. Seventeen percent of women shared that they make all or most decisions in at least one of the groups where they hold membership. Mwenga had the largest proportion of women in leadership roles (31 percent) while Kalehe had the lowest proportion (9 percent). Groups that had the highest proportion of decision-making female members were credit/micro-finance groups whereas civic groups had the lowest proportion of primary female decision-makers (7 percent). Annex 11 contains a table of the membership and leadership breakdown by group type.

150. A handful of respondents who self-identified as displaced reported difficulty in accessing key elements that they viewed as critical to improving their socio-economic wellbeing. People who identified as internally displaced reported difficulty accessing capital like land, labour, and farming supplies, attributing this to their relative newcomer status and lack of cash savings. There were no personal accounts of ways in which the intervention specifically worked to address the needs of IDPs, and programme documents indicate that the JRP did not specifically aim to involve or meet the needs (e.g., access to land) of IDPs.

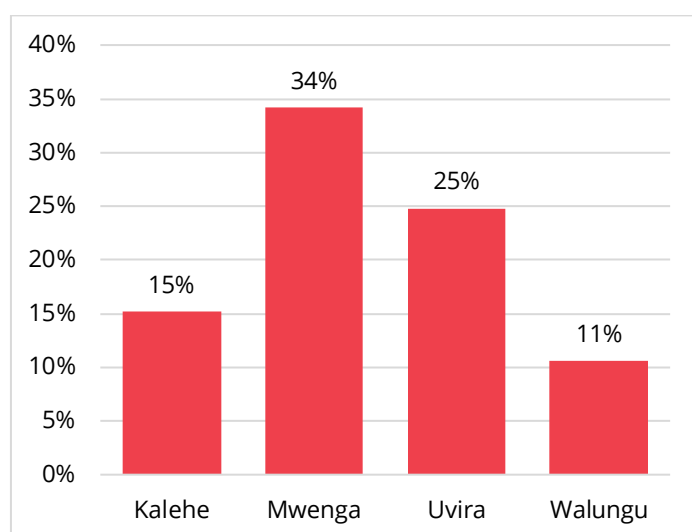
151. Under the A-WEAI framework, overall empowerment of women in recipient households is quite low. Empowerment was captured in five domains- production, resources, income, leadership, and time – and is defined by whether a woman is “adequate” in each domain. Each domain comprised 20 percent of a woman’s final empowerment score, and a woman was empowered if her score was greater than or equal to 0.80. In the production domain, women were adequate if they had some input over the decisions being made in the agricultural activity they participated in on behalf of their household (ex: livestock raising and cash crop farming). The adequacy score for the resources domain is a weighted average of two components: ownership of assets and access to and decisions on credit. A woman was adequate in the asset ownership indicator if she owned an asset, aside from small assets (such as chickens and small consumer goods). This indicator comprised two-thirds of the overall domain. The remaining third is captured by the credit decision-making indicator, in which a woman was found to be adequate if she participated in making any decisions about uses of credit. The income domain is encapsulated by the income control indicator. A woman achieved adequacy in this indicator if she has some or all input in decisions of income generated and feels that she can make decisions regarding wages, employment, and major household expenditures. The leadership domain is made up of the group membership indicator- a woman achieves adequacy by being a member of at least one group in her community. Lastly, the time domain is defined by a workload indicator- women achieve adequacy if they work less than 10.5 hours a day.

152. After analysing the five domains, 20.9 percent of women were found to be empowered. Empowerment was slightly higher among households headed by women (22.3 percent), but the difference is not significant at  $p < 0.05$ . Women living in Mwenga had the highest proportion of empowerment (34.1 percent) while women living in Walungu had the lowest proportion (10.6 percent).

**Figure 19: Proportion of women empowered per A-WEAI framework, disaggregated by sex of household head**



**Figure 20: Proportion of women empowered by A-WEAI framework, disaggregated by territory**



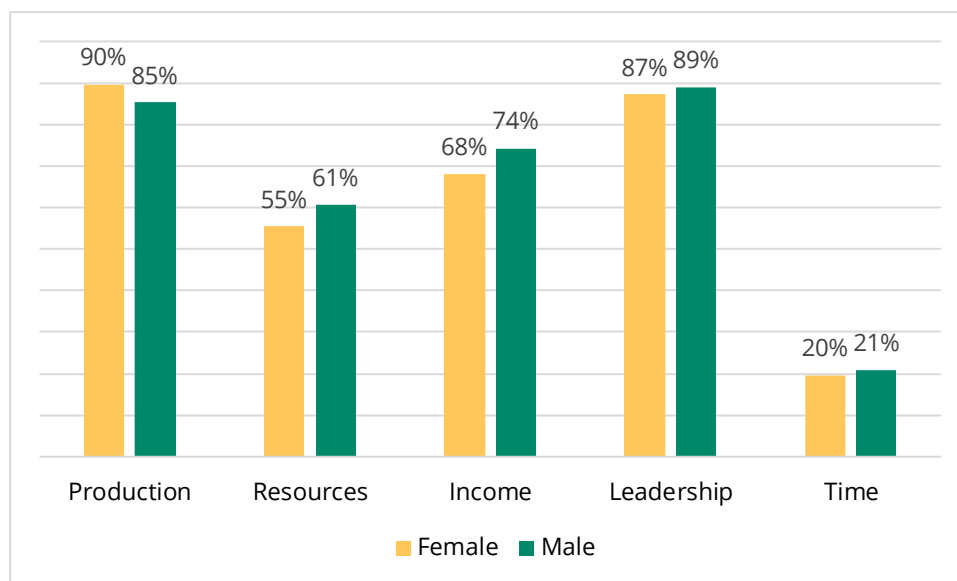
Note: ANOVA F-tests indicate that empowerment differs significantly across territories.

153. The domain with the lowest proportion of women achieving adequacy was the time domain (20 percent), followed by the resources domain (59 percent). The greatest proportion of women who achieved adequacy was found in the leadership domain (88 percent), which is not surprising given the high rate of group membership among the women surveyed. Domain adequacy was similar across territories, with notable levels of disempowerment for the production and income domains in Walungu.

154. Households headed by women tended to realize higher relative empowerment compared to households headed by men in the production domain (90 percent and 85 percent adequacy, respectively). However, households headed women were relatively less empowered in the income and resource domains. Differences in domain scores by sex of household head were not significant for any domain, indicating that intrahousehold power dynamics are not likely to be a primary source of disempowerment for the sample as a whole. Instead, this relative disempowerment could reflect a higher level of general impoverishment among households headed by women; that is, one cannot have decision-making power over credit or large assets if one does not have access to credit or own large assets.

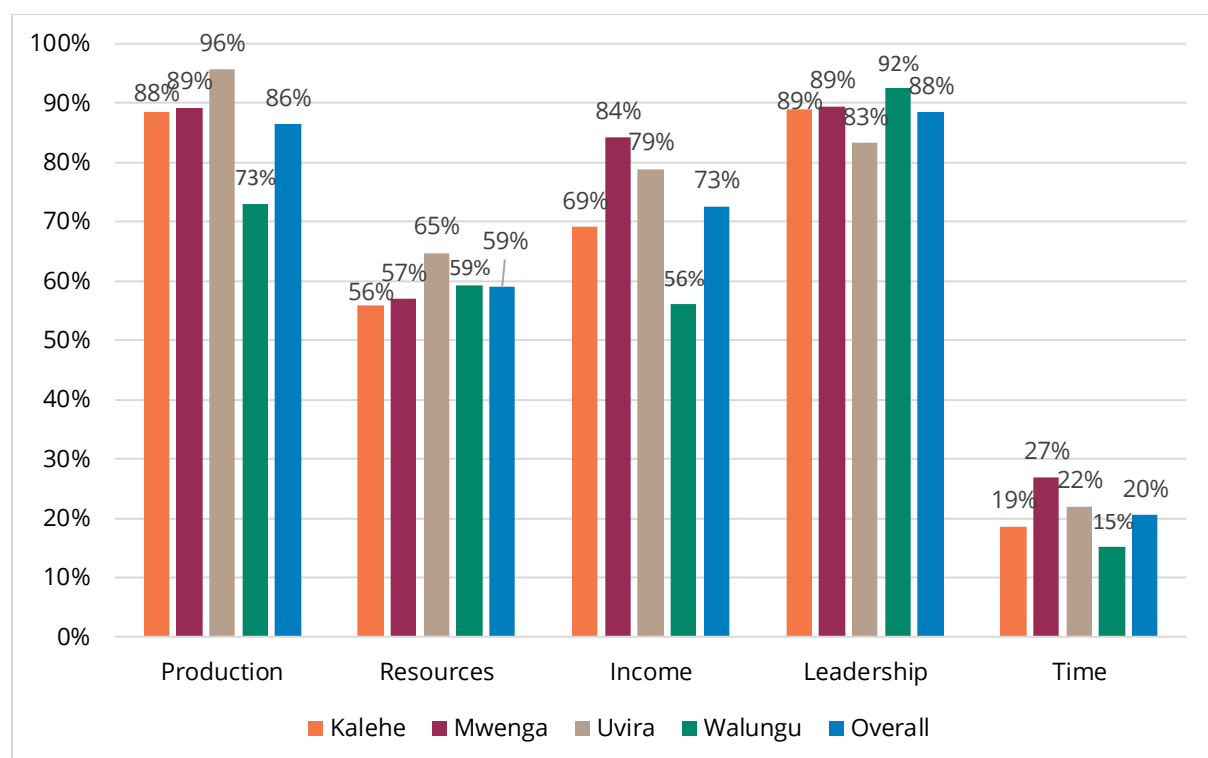
155. More than 70 percent of women across all four territories were empowered in the production and leadership domains, which may signal that programme interventions targeting female smallholder farmers and JRP activities establishing community groups are positively influencing women's empowerment. The resource domain was largely constrained by a lack of decision-making regarding access to and use of credit (only 25 percent were scored as adequate in the credit portion of the resource domain). Continuing efforts to increase women's access to credit may be a way to increase women's financial empowerment. Further, the time component of the empowerment index offers an opportunity for progress, as many women across all four territories have very little time outside of working hours for leisure or to pursue additional education or trainings. Additional programming to support women's livelihoods as well as to reduce the time spent on domestic labour may lower the burden of working hours for women.

**Figure 21: Proportion of women experiencing adequacy in 5 A-WEAI domains, disaggregated by sex of household head**



Note: ANOVA F-tests reveal that there are no significant differences in domains according to sex of household head.

**Figure 22: Proportion of women experiencing adequacy in 5 A-WEAI domains, disaggregated by territory**



Note: ANOVA F-tests indicate that production and income adequacy vary significantly across territories.



## 3. Conclusions and recommendations

156. This section describes the key conclusions which are derived from the evaluation, the lessons learned that have been noted throughout the design and implementation process and the recommendations to further strengthen or inform the JRP in future phases or in similar contexts.

### 3.1. Conclusions

157. The evaluation of the JRP underscores the difficulties of implementing a complex, multi-intervention programme—with many partners—in a protracted crisis setting. Evaluation findings suggest that difficult decisions must be made about how best to serve these vulnerable communities and households, potentially targeting resources more narrowly to accessible areas and limited the number of interventions to ensure that all can be delivered fully to the intended beneficiaries. For example, it proved infeasible for the JRP to be implemented as planned in North Kivu and the three implementing agencies have subsequently discussed whether the next phase of the JRP should focus solely on South Kivu for accessibility and security reasons. Additionally, sheer number of activities (78 were planned) proved impossible to deliver as planned across both North and South Kivu. Regular monitoring and evaluation of all 78 activities proved challenging, and indeed this impacted the evaluation of the JRP in so far as the ET was unable to visit North Kivu for primary data collection which limited the ET's ability to comprehensively assess the programme's impact. Finally, the evaluation revealed how challenging it is to implement a development-focused programme in an area that has primarily received humanitarian assistance. The needs of vulnerable households and communities are many (more than can possibly be met by a single programme), and the mentality is such that longer term development approaches—while needed—can be viewed as slow and cumbersome when compared to the immediate humanitarian assistance (often cash or food) to which these communities are accustomed.

158. This section contains key conclusions based on the main findings of this final evaluation by evaluation criteria.

Relevance:

159. **Conclusion 1:** The JRP fills a gap by providing development-focused activities in a challenging environment where most other programming efforts respond to emergency and humanitarian needs. JRP interventions are aligned with the needs of beneficiary smallholder farmers, in terms of providing enhancements to their agricultural production and income generation. Elements like the provision of seeds, agricultural training, and market access activities helped to build skills and sustain income, two important components of building up resilience against shocks. Other activities of the JRP also have a strong human capital strengthening character through, for instance, the school meals and vocational training for adolescents. Nevertheless, the programme was implemented in an extremely low resource environment where household and community needs continuously exceeded what could be provided by JRP interventions, and further exploration how some of the activities can lead to even more profitable outcomes (e.g. higher incomes, more reliable income).

Effectiveness:

160. **Conclusion 2:** There are continued concerns about resilience, food security and nutrition outcomes in the programme territories, even though outputs related to knowledge and practices indicate some improvements. Households show no improvements in food security and nutrition outcomes between baseline and endline, and at endline both adults and children eat an insufficient number of meals per day. In addition, the results of a comprehensive resilience index were below the target, and its disaggregation showed that it was mainly due to high levels of food insecurity and low assets. However, quantitative and qualitative findings indicate some positive developments in dietary diversity for children aged 6 to 23 months, and beneficiary farmers confirm this in the interviews. These findings suggest that



the pathway between nutrition-related outputs and outcomes may have been disrupted or not yet achieved due to risk factors such as the conflict, instability, low initial resources.

161. **Conclusion 3:** Two of the most salient achievements in the JRP are the increase in improved agricultural practices and perceived increase in outputs which are attributed to the agricultural and livelihood trainings based on the qualitative analysis. Households indicated high rates of adoption of preservation and food marketing techniques when compared to baseline, such as drying, storing, collective selling, etc. These findings were corroborated by many reports in qualitative interviews which reported new agricultural techniques and increased engagement in farming activities. Regarding the trainings, participants reported that the livelihood training activities enabled them to switch from inconsistent income sources (i.e., day labour) to professional trades such as sewing/tailoring, soap-making, automobile working, basket weaving, pastry/bread baking, palm oil collecting, and groundnut butter making. Overall households still lack income diversification, which results in most households still resorting to using coping mechanisms to address crises or emergencies in the household.

162. **Conclusion 4:** The exposure to conflict negatively affected the implementation as well as the effectiveness of the JRP. The experiences with conflict varied strongly by region, but the frequency of conflict was increased according to JRP beneficiaries. Based on the four territories in South Kivu that were included in the evaluation, households in Kalehe experienced the highest exposure to conflict including land disputes, ethnic and armed conflict. JRP beneficiaries—both smallholder farmers and out-of-school adolescents—reported learning and practicing approaches to conflict resolution, including bringing disputes to the chief to be resolved and other methods of community de-escalation. Although the peacebuilding activities were perceived as effective, they would be more helpful if they were targeted at the wider community and not just JRP beneficiaries. In addition, territories in North Kivu were not included in the evaluation due to conflict related concerns suggesting that any results from South Kivu are an underestimation as the expected needs in North Kivu are higher.

Efficiency:

163. **Conclusion 5:** While budgets were not overrun, the JRP has high operating costs which were partially attributed to the challenges operating in a rapidly-changing conflict context and the need for emergency funds to respond to weather-related shocks. Despite the notion of high costs few respondents were able to suggest areas to reduce costs. Efficiency gains were mostly recommended in terms of improving the timeliness of providing funding and/or approving expenditure to implementing agencies.

164. **Conclusion 6:** The three implementing agencies had dedicated M&E teams that led the monitoring of the JRP and conducted regular field missions to observe implementation progress and measure results. Despite their robust systems, there was a perceived lack of coordination in monitoring efforts and opportunities for improvement by aligning M&E plans from the onset of a new programme phase. The results of the monitoring systems led to evidence-based adjustments, which were crucial in a volatile and high-security risk area such as North and South Kivu.

Impact:

165. **Conclusion 7:** Perceived impacts of the activities of the JRP are predominantly positive especially when they are associated with the increase in improved agricultural practices, perceived increase in outputs attributed to the agricultural trainings. Statistical estimations suggested support for the anticipated theory of change pathways between training activities and agricultural income generation outcomes. Qualitative findings corroborated these findings, by showing that the adoption of improved agricultural practices and training were described to contribute to diversification of farming and income sources.

166. The gender-focused analyses indicated that households with women in VSLAs were associated with higher food security and dietary diversity, and they had a higher likelihood of having more diversification in crops. While these results are not causal, the findings are consistent with the existing literature that women's groups can contribute to resilience in volatile situations (Namisango et al., 2021).

167. **Sustainability:**

**Conclusion 8:** The analysis identified three main risks to sustainability, including the Government's ability to carry project activities forward, a mindset of reliance on external support, and the persistence of

conflict and insecurity in North and South Kivu (especially North Kivu). The JRP worked through existing structures in e.g. agriculture, health and education and collaborated closely with government partners to ensure sustainability. However, there was limited evidence of a clear operational plan or budget to sustain JRP activities without external funding. The lack of a clear plan could be due in part to ongoing discussions on the continuation of donor funding as well as the general challenge of operating in a low resource environment.

168. The ongoing conflict and security concerns in North and South Kivu affected the ability to implement programme activities and it risks that the pathways of change from activities, outputs and outcomes are disrupted. In addition, as is shown in this report where the evaluation team was unable to conduct primary data collection in North Kivu, the conflict limits the possibility to assess and monitor any progress or impacts due to the programme.

Coherence:

169. **Conclusion 9:** The JRP interventions are complementary in nature, especially combining food security, livelihoods, access to basic social services, but the coordination of the many JRP activities proved challenging. Some of these challenges derive from issues in coordination and communication between agencies, leading to redundancies or missed collaborations, which in turn may affect the efficiency and effectiveness of the programme.

170. **Conclusion 10:** A coherence concern resulted from the inherent differences between humanitarian and development interventions especially with regards to timelines and approaches, which sometimes created problems for JRP implementers in terms of meeting community and individual expectations. Beneficiaries who are used to humanitarian interventions expected short-term and quick benefits from the programme, even though development programmes are often more focused on the longer-term effect and required sustained commitment from the participants.

Gender, human rights, equity, and inclusion:

171. **Conclusion 11:** The JRP proved successful in prioritizing women, but there is room for improvement on ensuring the integration of other vulnerable groups within targeting and implementation practices. Women were a key focus in targeting of activities and women were integrated in the implementation of the interventions. However, other vulnerable populations such as people with disabilities were mostly included by chance rather than through specific targeting efforts. Moreover, beneficiaries were not always clear why they were targeted and why others were not, leaving potential for better understanding on how the programme targeted beneficiaries. The communication component is especially important given that the programme by design targets different populations for different activities (e.g. outcome 3 activities are focused on children, while outcome 1 and 2 activities are concentrated on smallholder farmers).

172. **Conclusion 12:** Women exhibited high levels of empowerment over agricultural decision-making and participation in community groups, which may attest to the success of the intervention in targeting women smallholder farmers. However, the household survey revealed low levels of women's access to credit, despite nearly half of households participating in VSLAs, which may indicate that the existing VSLAs are not sufficiently capitalized to function as credit mechanisms for members. That is, a VSLA is dependent on the capital contributions of members, and if the members cannot contribute then there is no money available to lend.

## 3.2. Lessons learned

173. The focus of this evaluation is to formulate actionable recommendations which are based on the conclusions and finding that are focused on the implementation of the JRP in DRC (See Annex 6 for the findings, conclusions and recommendations mapping). However, a few lessons learned came forward from the findings which apply to joint programming, especially focused on resilience in a broader context:

174. Lesson 1: Collaboration with government partners is key for sustainability and efficient implementation of the programme elements. Key stakeholders emphasized the importance of early integration to facilitate strong and sustainable partnerships. The involvement of the Government may

contribute to increased ownership and institutionalisation of the programme, especially for multi-sectoral programmes the collaboration across multiple line ministries is important to ensure support.

175. Lesson 2: Convergence of programme interventions is needed in terms of implementation (to maximise effectiveness) as well as in M&E efforts to capture the extent to which individuals benefit from multiple complementary interventions. Integrated, multisectoral programmes such as the JRP have great potential to provide holistic solutions to deprivation. Being able to track beneficiaries across activities would help to ensure that all their needs are fulfilled, and it will enable researchers to identify the added value of receiving multiple interventions at the same time.

176. Lesson 3: Programmes operating in the humanitarian-development nexus should include mitigation mechanisms to manage increased risks associated with the humanitarian context in their sustainability plans. Whether a programme has increased exposure to weather-related shocks, increased security concerns, or any other risks, the sustainability plan should describe mitigation mechanisms to continue or adapt operation in case the situation worsens.

### **3.3. Recommendations**

177. The table below highlights recommendations that are well-aligned with the evaluation questions and findings across the evaluation criteria. For each recommendation the evaluation team has indicated responsibilities, priority levels and an indication of the level of urgency. As the WFP, FAO, and UNICEF are currently finalizing their country strategic plans/ country programme documents for 2025-2029, the evaluation team recognizes that the implementation plan for these recommendations must be adapted to each agency's strategic goals and timelines.

**Table 12: Recommendations**

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping (3 options): By type By theme	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when Short term (0-6 months) medium term (6 months-1 year) Long term (1+ years)
<b>Strategic Recommendations</b>						
1	Consider the level of accessibility and stability needed for full implementation of activities.	Effectiveness, Sustainability, Impact	WFP, FAO and UNICEF: review their own activities	Implementing agencies and NGO partners for confirmation on access	High	Short term: next phase of the programme
2.	<p>Consider focusing on a smaller number of interventions to ensure that all are implemented fully and that beneficiaries receive multiple complementary interventions as opposed to just one.</p> <p>Select activities that are the most promising in terms of building resilience. While the evaluation did not assess all interventions, the ET observed that the following activities showed the most promise: the agricultural and vocational trainings, support for IYCF and maternal nutrition, access to market and storage.</p>	Effectiveness, Sustainability	WFP, FAO and UNICEF: review their own activities. Joint committee to make the final decision	Implicated ministries	High	Short term: next phase of the programme

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping (3 options): By type By theme	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when Short term (0-6 months) medium term (6 months-1 year) Long term (1+ years)
3	Increase coverage of peacebuilding activities (beyond specific individuals or groups) or develop a protocol for wider dissemination across the community.	Effectiveness; Relevance; Efficiency; Sustainability; Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion	UNICEF	Implementing agencies and NGO partners	High	Short/medium term: Next phase of programme
4	Align evaluation strategies across agencies based on shared learning objectives and include elements of convergence to increase learning across organization (EQ 3.3).  Align M&E strategies and adopt unique identifiers across activities so that programme convergence can be tracked at the household level.	Efficiency, Sustainability, Coherence, Impact	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities with one agency identified to take the lead on the combined efforts (for instance by using a centralized reporting structure (as opposed to individual reports from the three agencies) and a centralized mechanism for responding to information requests from the donor or government counterparts)		Medium	Short term: Next phase of programme to time the baseline evaluation of the programme, and as soon as possible for changes in any monitoring system.
5	Ensure sustainability of the JRP and other joint programmes by increasing government ownership and participation within the programme's sustainability strategy. Include further details within the sustainability	Sustainability	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities (with one agency identified to take the lead)		High	Short term: This should be included in the design and proposal of the new phase

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping (3 options): By type By theme	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when Short term (0-6 months) medium term (6 months-1 year) Long term (1+ years)
	strategy on how to mitigate the effects of shocks.					
<b>Operational Recommendations</b>						
6	Select crops based on value chain analysis that identify those that are the most financially beneficial and viable for the region to promote in agricultural training. (EQ 1.4).  Broaden the focus of livelihood and income generating activities by including more non-agricultural opportunities and ensure that vocational trainings align with the sectors/vocations perceived to be most accessible and profitable (EQ 1.4).	Relevance, Effectiveness	FAO (for value chain analysis), WFP and UNICEF (for additional training)	Ministry of Agriculture for inputs on feasibility of selected crop to be cultivated; Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Vocational Training may help identify profitable non-agricultural sectors/vocations.	High	Short term
7	Reinforce farmers' knowledge and practice in natural resource management and climate resilient agricultural production in South Kivu (and North Kivu if feasible).	Relevance, Effectiveness, Sustainability	FAO	WFP	High	Short/medium term: Next phase of programme
8	Adjust procedures to facilitate the timely flow down of funds for implementation and to accelerate the approval process for expenditures to NGO partners to avoid any delays with	Efficiency	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities	Implementation agencies and NGO partners	High	Short term: Adjustments should be made as soon as possible, but could be coincide with the next phase

#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping (3 options): By type By theme	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when Short term (0-6 months) medium term (6 months-1 year) Long term (1+ years)
	financing the implementation of activities. For instance, explore options to allow for pre-financing at the start of implementation; and ensure that the reimbursement process is clear to implementing partners so that they are aware of the timing when claims should be submitted (EQ 3.1)					
9	Establish a coordination mechanism (for example, regular meetings or a WhatsApp group) for NGO partners at the community level to get to know one another, coordinate activities, and reduce duplication of effort.	Coherence	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities	Implementing agencies and NGO partners	High	Short term: As soon as possible, ideally with the launch of the next phase of the JRP
10	Increase communication and transparency around the JRP's targeting rationale at the community level including beneficiaries and other (non-beneficiary) community members (EQ 7.1)	Gender, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion; Effectiveness	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities	Implementing agencies and NGO partners	High	Short/medium term: As soon as possible, but this can be aligned with other community-based efforts
11	Develop a structured approach for including vulnerable populations such as persons with disabilities, elderly, extremely poor within programme targeting (e.g. by adding identifiers in beneficiary targeting lists) and ensure that accommodations are provided if	Gender, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion; Effectiveness	WFP, FAO and UNICEF for their respective activities	Implementing agencies and NGO partners	High	Short term: This should be included in the design and proposal of the new phase



#	Recommendation	Recommendation grouping (3 options): By type By theme	Responsibility (one lead office/entity)	Other contributing entities (if applicable)	Priority: High/medium	By when Short term (0-6 months) medium term (6 months-1 year) Long term (1+ years)
	needed to guarantee equitable access to the activity (EQ 7.3)					
12	Continue efforts to increase women's access to credit through further supporting VSLAs to enhance women's resource empowerment. (EQ 7.4)	Gender, Human Rights, Equity and Inclusion	FAO (for establishment of VSLAs), WFP and UNICEF for additional livelihoods trainings	Microcredit institutions, women's or community groups	Medium	Short/medium term: As soon as possible, but this can be aligned with other community-based efforts

# Acronyms

<b>ADF</b>	Allied Democratic Forces
<b>AFEDEM</b>	Appui aux Femmes Démunies et Enfants Marginalisés en République Démocratique du Congo
<b>AIR</b>	American Institutes for Research
<b>ALNAP</b>	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
<b>ARCC</b>	Alternative Responses to Communities in Crises
<b>A-WEAI</b>	Abbreviated – Women Empowerment in Agriculture Index
<b>BMZ</b>	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany
<b>CAAP TUJENGE</b>	Comite d'Appui a l'Autopromotion
<b>CAC</b>	Community Action Committee
<b>CARI-FS</b>	Consolidated Approach for Reporting Indicators – Food Security
<b>CEDERU</b>	Centre de Developpement Rural de Kibututu
<b>CBOs</b>	Community based organizations
<b>COPA</b>	Parents' committees
<b>COVID-19</b>	Coronavirus disease 2019
<b>CPN</b>	Child Protection Network
<b>CSP</b>	Country Strategic Plan
<b>DAC</b>	Development Assistance Committee
<b>DEQAS</b>	Decentralized Evaluation Quality Assurance System
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>EBF</b>	Exclusive breastfeeding
<b>EM</b>	Evaluation Manager
<b>EQ</b>	Evaluation Question
<b>ERG</b>	Evaluation Reference Group
<b>ET</b>	Evaluation Team
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization
<b>FFS</b>	Farmer Field Schools
<b>FGD</b>	Focus group discussions
<b>FIES</b>	Food Insecurity Experience Scale
<b>FO</b>	Farmers Organizations
<b>HDDS</b>	Household Dietary Diversity Score
<b>HHS</b>	Household Hunger Scale
<b>IDP</b>	Internally displaced person
<b>IGA</b>	Income generating activities
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>JRP</b>	Joint Resilience Programme
<b>JSD</b>	Jeunesse pour la Solidarité et le Développement dans les Grands Lacs
<b>KII</b>	Key informant interviews
<b>LCS-FS</b>	Livelihood Coping Strategies for Food Security
<b>M23</b>	March 23 Movement
<b>MAD-C</b>	Minimum Acceptable Diet for children aged 6 – 23 months
<b>MAM</b>	Moderate Acute Malnutrition

<b>NAP</b>	National Action Plan
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-governmental organizations
<b>OEV</b>	Office of Evaluation
<b>PACIF</b>	Paysans Actifs Contre l'Ignorance et la Faim
<b>PNEVA</b>	National Healthy Villages and Schools Programme
<b>QA</b>	Quality Assurance
<b>QuIP</b>	Quality Impact Assessment Protocol
<b>RIMA</b>	Resilience Index Measurement and Analysis
<b>SAM</b>	Severe Acute Malnutrition
<b>ToC</b>	Theory of Change
<b>UNCDF</b>	United Nations Capital Development Fund
<b>UNEG</b>	United Nations Evaluation Group
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UN-SWAP</b>	United Nations System-wide Action Plan on gender equality and the empowerment of women
<b>UPDDHE</b>	Union pour la Promotion, la Défense des Droits Humains et l'Environnement
<b>VSLA</b>	Village Savings and Loan Association
<b>WASH</b>	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene
<b>WEAI</b>	Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

# Annexes

178. The Annexes are provided in Volume 2 accompanying this report as follows:

Annex 1	Summary Terms of Reference
Annex 2	Timeline
Annex 3	Methodology
Annex 4	Evaluation Matrix
Annex 5	Fieldwork Agenda
Annex 6	Findings, conclusions and recommendations mapping
Annex 7	Key informants' overview
Annex 8	Overview of JRP achievements by year
Annex 9	Programme Activities by Agency
Annex 10	Stakeholder Analysis
Annex 11	Additional Quantitative Results
Annex 12	Data Collection Tools
Annex 13	Bibliography

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