



WFP EVALUATION



**World Food
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Evaluation of Uganda WFP country strategic plan 2018-2025

Centralized evaluation report

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Executive summary

Introduction

Evaluation features

1. The evaluation of WFP's country strategic plan (CSP) for Uganda for the period 2018–2025 was conducted between November 2023 and November 2024. The evaluation covered WFP's operations in Uganda from 2017 to mid-2024, with the main purpose of providing evaluation evidence for institutional accountability for CSP results, and learning that will inform the development of a new CSP. Operations that took place in 2017 were considered in the evaluation in order to facilitate an examination of the development of the CSP, including the drivers of its design, focus and shifts from the previous country programme.
2. The evaluation assessed WFP's strategic positioning, contribution to strategic outcomes and efficiency in implementation, the sustainability of CSP results, and the factors explaining WFP's performance under the CSP, using a mixed-methods and theory-based approach and both primary and secondary, as well as qualitative and quantitative, data. Data collection methods consisted of a document review, 224 key informant interviews, 45 focus group discussions and direct observation.
3. Workshops and discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders to ensure their ownership and understanding of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations.
4. The primary intended users of the evaluation are the Uganda country office and other internal and external stakeholders.

Context

5. Uganda has high rates of poverty, food insecurity, malnutrition and illiteracy. About 42 percent of the population lives below the international poverty line of USD 2.15 a day,¹ and 20.3 percent lives below the national poverty line of USD 1 a day.² The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity is estimated at 71.2 percent, and severe food insecurity is estimated at 23 percent for the 2021–2023 period.³ The highest rates of malnutrition and food insecurity are concentrated in the eastern and northern regions.⁴ Karamoja has the highest rates of child malnutrition in Uganda, with 41.1 percent of children of ages 0–59 months being stunted and 11.9 percent wasted.^{5,6}

¹ World Bank. 2022. [Uganda Poverty Assessment: Strengthening Resilience to Accelerate Poverty Reduction](#).

² Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2023. [The National Standard Indicators \(NSI\) Framework – Level 1 2023](#). Data is from 2020 and 2021.

³ FAO and others. 2024. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024 – Financing to end hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition in all its forms](#).

⁴ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2024. [Uganda: Acute Food Insecurity Situation March - July 2024 and Projection for August 2024 - February 2025 - Partial analysis in Karamoja](#).

⁵ Compared with the national averages of 24.4 for stunting and 3.2 percent for wasting.

⁶ Uganda Bureau of Statistics. 2023. [Demographic and Health Survey 2022](#).

6. The country hosts 1,702,278 refugees and asylum seekers,⁷ of whom 85 percent are from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 79 percent are women and children.⁸
7. Uganda has achieved, or is on track to achieving, 26 percent of its Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets; has made limited progress on 54 percent and backtracked on 19 percent.^{9,10} Major challenges remain with regard to meeting SDG 2 on zero hunger, and SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals, with scores for both either stagnating or increasing at less than half of the required rate.

Overview of the country strategic plan

8. WFP has been present in Uganda since 1964. The first CSP for the country, covering 2018-2025, was preceded by WFP's country programme for 2016–2020, an emergency operation in July 2016, and a protracted relief and recovery operation for 2016–2018.¹¹
9. The CSP for 2018–2025 is focused on Karamoja and the refugee-hosting districts of West Nile and those in southwest Uganda, including Ankole, Bunyoro and Tooro. The country office has implemented the CSP in the context of existing national policy instruments, including Uganda's third national development plan,¹² parish development model, host population empowerment framework, comprehensive refugee response framework, refugee response plan and Uganda Vision 2040.

⁷ UNHCR and Uganda Office of the Prime Minister. 2024. [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#).

⁸ *Ibid.*

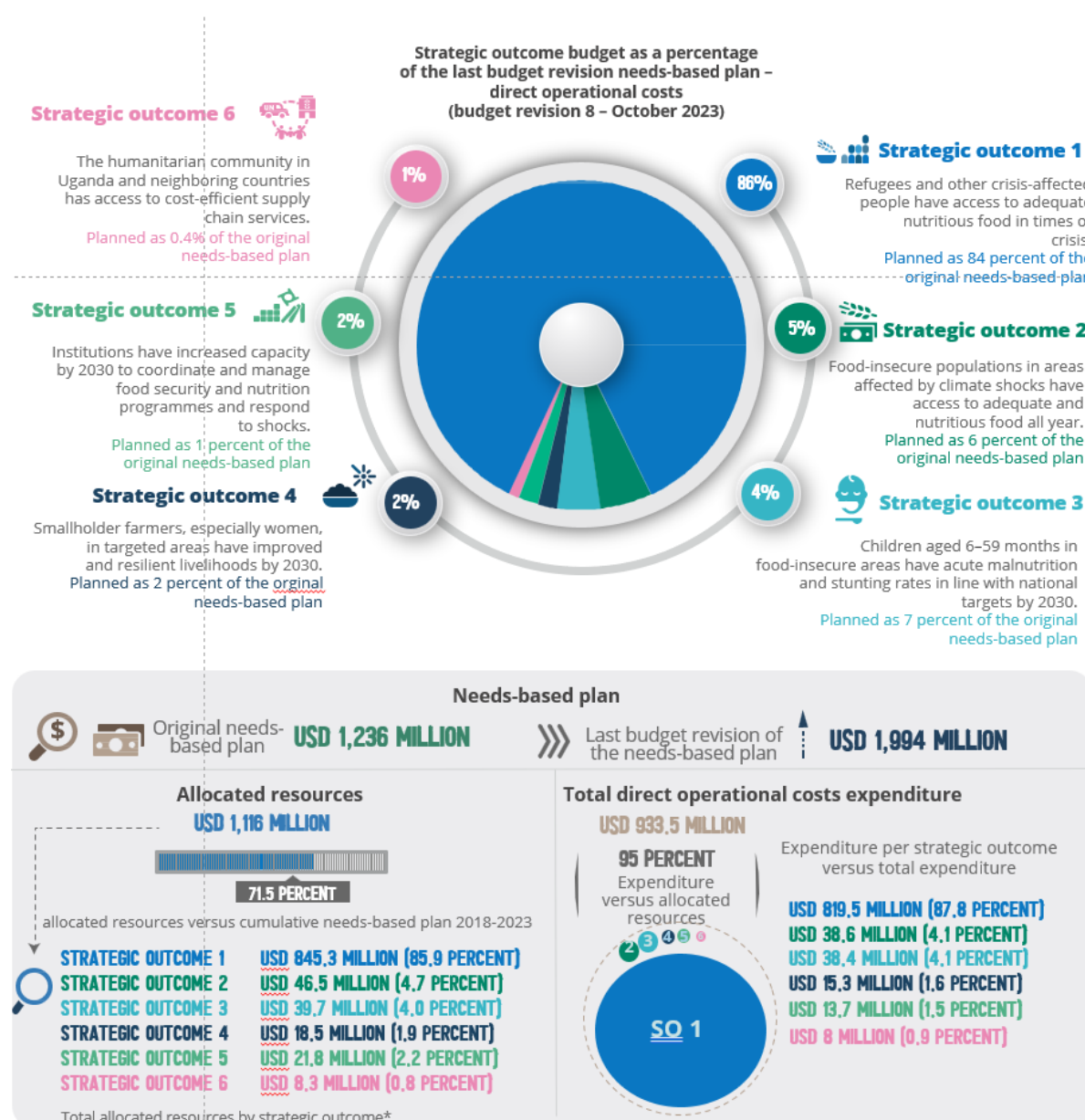
⁹ Sustainable Development Report. 2023. [Sub-Saharan Africa: Uganda](#). Data from Sachs, J.D. and others. 2023. [Sustainable Development Report 2023. Implementing the SDG Stimulus](#).

¹⁰ According to the Uganda voluntary national reviews for 2016, 2020 and 2024.

¹¹ Note that the emergency operations and protracted relief and recovery operation were rolled into this CSP.

¹² For fiscal years 2020/21–2024/25.

Figure 1: Uganda country strategic plan needs-based plan as of October 2023 (excluding direct and indirect support costs)



*All percentages are calculated excluding direct and indirect support costs. The percentages of allocated resources by strategic outcome do not add up to 100 percent because some resources are not allocated to specific strategic outcomes.

10. The original CSP for Uganda, covering 2018–2022, comprised ten activities under six strategic outcomes. The CSP aimed to maintain WFP's emergency response capacity and support the Government in disaster preparedness and in hosting the growing number of refugees, with two strategic outcomes focusing on crisis response. Other strategic outcomes focused on aspects of resilience building and malnutrition, addressing some of the root causes of food insecurity. The CSP and its budget underwent eight CSP revisions between 2018 and 2023. The revisions did not introduce changes in the strategic orientation of the CSP, but rather changes to the duration, scope and focus of activities, as well as the numbers of beneficiaries and the costs of implementation.
11. Key strategic shifts intended under the 2018–2025 CSP include a transition to national ownership of the country's fight against hunger through the sharing of analyses and evidence and the provision of technical assistance; the promotion of a shift from providing food assistance to supporting self-reliance in refugee-hosting areas; the use of cash-based transfers (CBTs) where markets are

functioning; the introduction of nutrition, HIV and gender-responsive or -sensitive programming; and engagement with private sector organizations to address the root causes of malnutrition.

12. The initial expected cost¹³ of the CSP was USD 1.24 billion, and the CSP targeted 3.34 million beneficiaries. Following CSP revisions between 2018 and 2023, the estimated cost increased to USD 1.99 billion and the number of targeted beneficiaries decreased to 2.85 million. Overall, 71 percent of the cumulative needs-based plan for 2018–2023 was resourced, with differences in the level of resourcing between strategic outcomes and activities.
13. The United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland accounted for more than a third of contributions to the needs-based plan, followed by the European Union, Germany, Sweden and the Republic of Korea. Other bilateral and private donors each contributed less than 1 percent.¹⁴ Earmarked contributions fluctuated between 2018 and 2023, increasing from USD 78.9 million in 2017 to a high of USD 194.8 million in 2019, before decreasing to USD 48.7 million in 2023.¹⁵

Key conclusions and evaluation findings

The CSP was evidenced-based, aligned with national priorities and adapted to evolving contexts. However, integration among strategic outcomes and activities was fragmented.

Strategic relevance and coherence

14. The initial design and subsequent revisions of the CSP¹⁶ were informed by available evidence, including a 2017 strategic review of progress towards SDG 2,¹⁷ vulnerability analyses, value chain analyses, market monitoring reports, baseline studies and protection and gender assessments. However, the evidence base for the CSP lacked the necessary analysis to inform a more responsive approach to social inclusion.
15. The CSP is aligned with the United Nations sustainable development cooperation framework for Uganda, under which WFP has engaged in relevant activities, leading pillar 2 on shared prosperity in a healthy environment,^{18,19} participating in United Nations country team working groups, and establishing strategic and technical engagement with United Nations partners. The CSP is also well aligned with national and subnational priorities, as outlined in national development plans and refugee response frameworks, and with district-level development policies, and emergency and humanitarian response plans.
16. Over time, WFP demonstrated a shift towards evidence- and vulnerability-based targeting for the general food assistance for refugees programme, NutriCash,²⁰ lean season responses and school meal activities. However, there was some variance in the consistency and precision of targeting among programmes; for example, the criteria for selecting beneficiaries of asset creation and livelihood, and agriculture and market support activities were less clearly defined than those for other programmes.

¹³ Based on its original needs-based plan.

¹⁴ Country portfolio budget resource situation as at 8 April 2024.

¹⁵ FACTory contribution and forecast statistics as at 8 April 2024.

¹⁶ CSP revisions introduced a shift to CBTs, expansion of a food systems approach and the roll-out of a self-reliance model for the refugee response.

¹⁷ Government of Uganda. 2017. [Towards Zero Hunger: A Strategic Review of Sustainable Development Goal 2 in Uganda](#) (page 16).

¹⁸ On shared prosperity in a healthy environment and contributing to the pillar's results group on natural resources, environment and climate change.

¹⁹ United Nations Uganda. 2024. [United Nations Cooperation Framework 2021-2025: Management Guide](#).

²⁰ NutriCash is a programme through which food and nutrition assistance is provided to refugee and host community beneficiaries through cash transfers.

17. Despite WFP's efforts to increase synergies among workstreams, integration among strategic outcomes and activities was fragmented. For example, there were no intentional links between crisis response (strategic outcome 1), support for the Government on disaster preparedness (strategic outcome 5) and supply chains and logistics (strategic outcome 6). Recently, however, WFP made efforts to enhance coherence, including by developing an approach to crisis response, revising the CSP in 2021 and 2023 to emphasize food systems and nutrition-sensitive interventions, and developing an integrated nutrition strategy in 2024.
18. The CSP design and implementation reflect WFP's traditional comparative advantages in emergency response and logistics and food security and nutrition. Support for national social protection systems constituted a new area of work for WFP as it leveraged its expertise in issues such as beneficiary information systems to position itself as a partner of choice for the Government and other actors in this area.
19. WFP adapted its operations in response to food distribution and safety incidents, such as food poisoning and related deaths in the Karamoja and Palabek refugee settlement due to contamination of the corn soya blend used in WFP-supported nutrition programmes, shocks, the arrival of large numbers of refugees and changes in the resourcing environment. For example, WFP introduced a biometric registration system for general food assistance for refugees; adjusted general food assistance rations and extended the duration of blanket feeding for refugees; and provided additional support to the Government in public health emergencies such as the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and outbreaks of Ebola virus disease. Most of these adaptations did not compromise the original focus of the CSP.

Effectiveness and sustainability

WFP's ability to achieve and sustain improved food security and nutrition outcomes was hampered by the funding modalities used, funding shortfalls, and increases in the needs of refugees and other vulnerable people.

20. WFP provided direct and indirect (via government programmes) food and nutrition assistance to refugees, but food security and nutrition outcomes – such as access to food and the coping strategies adopted – among refugees in the west Nile and southwest regions declined between 2018 and 2023; this is attributable in large part to external factors such as the COVID-19 pandemic, food price volatility and reductions in rations due to funding constraints²¹ (strategic outcome 1).

²¹ Unless otherwise indicated, outcome monitoring data are from WFP's country office tool for managing effectively (COMET). At the time of writing, COMET did not have 2024 data. WFP. 2024. *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of the third round of data collection: April 2024* (internal document).

Figure 2: Food consumption scores among refugees, west Nile

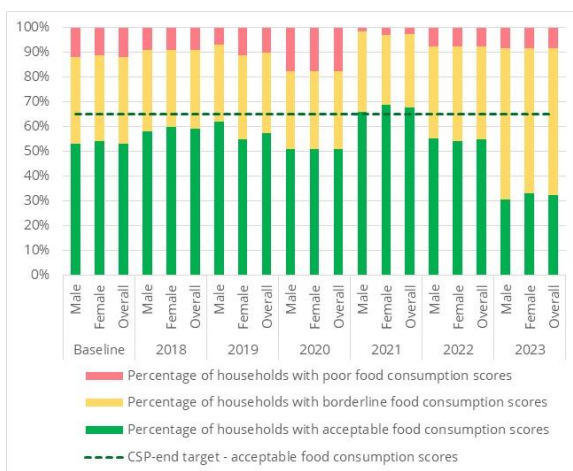
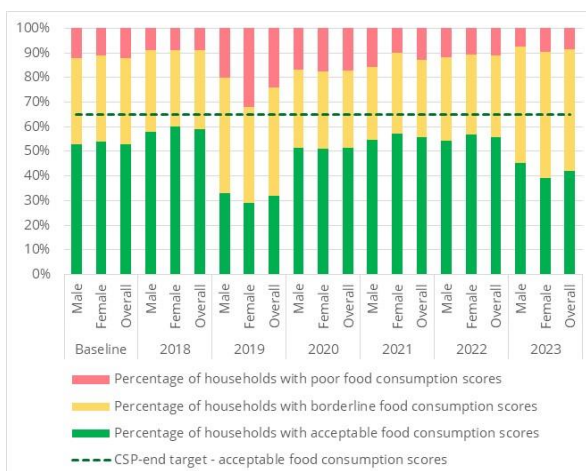


Figure 3: Food consumption scores among refugees, southwest



Source: CM-R010b_Outcome Indicators UG01 2018–2023.

21. WFP's lean season responses in Karamoja contributed to improvements in food security and nutrition outcomes – such as food consumption scores, and consumption-based and livelihood coping strategies²² – among supported vulnerable households. Overall, however, the conditions for food security in Karamoja remain precarious (strategic outcome 1).
22. WFP's shift to CBTs had positive direct and indirect effects for refugees and host communities, including increased incomes, livelihood opportunities and flexibility of spending on food and non-food items, such as for medical and education purposes.^{23,24} In addition, food security outcomes were better for the beneficiaries who received CBTs than for those who received only in-kind food (strategic outcome 1).
23. Vulnerable women and children in Karamoja were provided specialized nutritious foods to treat moderate acute malnutrition. However, the recovery rate after moderate acute malnutrition treatment decreased between 2018 and 2023, and both the non-response and default rates increased owing to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, intensified cattle raids and insecurity from 2021 to 2023, flooding in 2021,²⁵ poor childcare practices, poor ration utilization due to the sale and sharing of rations, and inadequate dietary intake due to the depletion of household food stocks and increased market prices²⁶ (strategic outcome 3).
24. WFP's nutrition-sensitive interventions such as NutriCash and social and behaviour change contributed to improved knowledge and practices in dietary diversity, backyard gardening and financial literacy, especially among refugee women and girls and host communities in west Nile and southwest regions, and affected people in Karamoja. School meals also fostered better nutrition and dietary diversity as parents benefited from the knowledge of gardening and dietary diversity acquired by their children through young farmers' clubs in schools²⁷ (strategic outcomes 1, 2, 3 and 5).

²² Data from internal documents: [WFP annual country reports for 2019 and 2020](#) and WFP Karamoja lean season response reports for 2022 and 2023.

²³ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023* (not published).

²⁴ WFP. 2023. *Direct and indirect benefits of food and cash assistance in Uganda* (not published).

²⁵ [WFP annual country reports for Uganda for 2021, 2022 and 2023](#).

²⁶ Andre Foods International. 2023. *Community-based supplementary feeding programme monthly progress report, June 2023* (not published). The sharing of corn-soya blend ++ was also reported in some focus group discussions.

²⁷ Some of the young farmers' clubs and school gardens were supported by WFP's development partners.

25. WFP's provision of school meals contributed to increased enrolment and attendance rates among school-aged children in WFP-assisted schools. However, retention rates decreased owing to sociocultural factors. In addition, WFP-supported schools and learners faced challenges owing to the reduced size and number of meals and the growing numbers of children eligible for childhood development initiatives attending school to eat (strategic outcome 2).

TABLE 1: EDUCATION OUTCOME INDICATORS IN WFP-ASSISTED SCHOOLS (%)						
Outcome indicators	2018			2023		
	Boys	Girls	Overall	Boys	Girls	Overall
Annual increase in enrolment rate	8	5	7	21	27	24
Annual attendance rate	64	63	63	72	72	72
Annual retention rate	72	87	78	73	71	72

Source: [WFP annual country reports for Uganda for 2018 and 2023](#).

26. Asset creation and livelihood interventions were small-scale and short-term. They had positive effects in filling the consumption gaps of supported beneficiaries but there is less evidence that they contributed to improved or diversified incomes for women and men. In the southwest region, the food consumption scores of targeted beneficiaries improved between 2021 and 2023 (strategic outcome 2).

WFP's Uganda country office began to explore a food systems approach, but there is potential for greater effectiveness through enhanced multisectoral engagement, innovative solutions, and strategic partnerships that support the development of market systems.

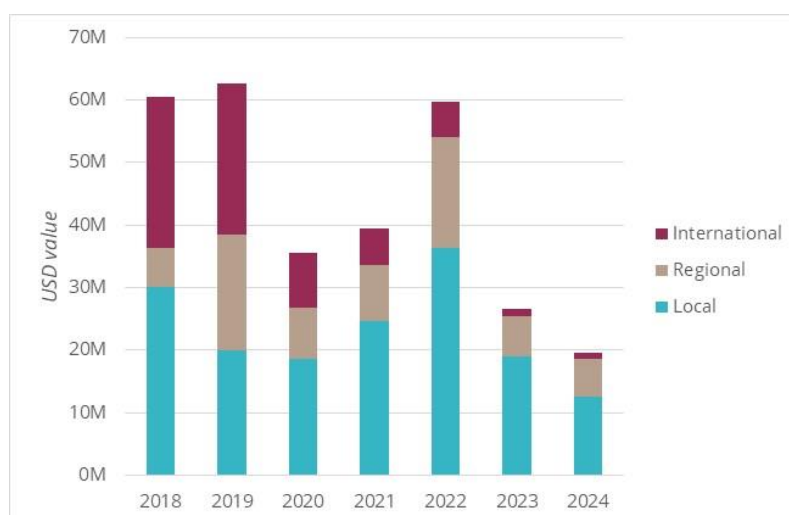
27. Training and onsite technical support provided by WFP contributed to improvements in knowledge and practices in post-harvest management and village saving and loan associations among smallholder farmers. The rate of post-harvest losses decreased from 17.9 percent in 2018 to 12.1 percent in 2023.²⁸ However, smallholders still face challenges in obtaining access to markets (strategic outcome 4).
28. The local procurement of food under the home-grown school feeding programme is beginning to bring economic benefits to smallholder farmers and farmer organizations in Karamoja region. Since 2019, WFP has invested USD 2.5 million in purchasing 3,505 mt of food from smallholder farmers in Karamoja,²⁹ resulting in improved institutional and food supply capacity of farmer organizations³⁰ (strategic outcome 4).
29. WFP procured 621,400 mt of food through its Global Commodity Management Facility, increasingly from local and regional suppliers. WFP's purchases of food for Uganda have made it the largest purchaser of food in East Africa in terms of volume, but challenges in local procurement, such as traceability, remain (strategic outcome 6).

²⁸ CM-R010b_Outcome indicators UG01 2023.

²⁹ WFP. 2024. *June 2024, Local and regional food procurement policy Uganda implementation plan (final)* (not published).

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Figure 3: Country office food procurement by source, 2018–2024*



* Data for 2024 are for the period from January to May.

Source: Data on food procurement by the Government of Uganda and WFP's Regional Bureau for Eastern Africa in 2018–2024.

30. WFP made limited contributions to market linkages for supported smallholder farmers, and its support did not bring about widespread improvements in the capacity of private sector actors to adopt pro-smallholder farmer business models, engage in sustainable agriculture or produce safe and nutritious foods (strategic outcome 4).

WFP demonstrated effectiveness and potential sustainability in strengthening national and local capacity relevant to shock-responsive social protection systems. However, WFP is still learning how to be an enabler as well as an implementer.

31. WFP contributed to strengthened collaboration among national and subnational actors on social protection and the planning of resilience activities. At the national level, WFP helped to strengthen national social protection systems by supporting the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in efforts to enhance the national identification card system and establish a national single registry. At the district level, WFP supported the roll-out of the Ministry of Local Government's digital village directory; the establishment of district social protection coordination committees; the development of district social protection investment plans; and the development of district-level contingency plans for disaster preparedness in nine districts (strategic outcome 5).
32. The positive effects of WFP's capacity strengthening interventions for social protection and shock-response systems are likely to be sustained, as evidenced by increased ownership of those systems by national and subnational social actors; the national social protection strategy for 2023–2028 includes shock-responsive social protection, school meal programmes, and the provision of social protection to refugees, all of which had previously been absent from the government agenda. The exception is the mechanisms for coordinating decentralized social protection, which still rely on external funding (strategic outcome 5).
33. There are, however, gaps in the sustainability of some initiatives, including agricultural market support activities in Karamoja and school meal programmes; WFP supported the Ugandan Government in joining the Global School Meals Coalition in 2022, but WFP and the Government have different visions for school meal programmes, the nature and evolution of the partnership between WFP and the Ministry of Education and Sports, and the extent to which the provision of school meals in Karamoja through the home-grown school feeding model – which is

dependent on external funding and for which WFP is the sole implementer³¹ – is a valid pilot for a country-wide scheme (strategic outcomes 2 and 4).

34. WFP's programming approaches recognized and supported the coexistence of refugee and host communities. In 2023, the country office designed a holistic package of support for self-reliance that enables refugees and the members of host communities to move from dependency on humanitarian assistance towards meeting their own essential needs. The model builds on the government-led expansion of an inclusive social protection system for refugees as they shift to self-reliance, in line with the humanitarian-development nexus approach (strategic outcomes 1, 2, 4 and 5).
35. WFP's inter-agency on-demand services provided valuable operational support to partners. Its transport and storage facilities for emergency response³² were used by partner United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on a cost-recovery basis and by the national Government free of charge. The country office provided crucial services for regional humanitarian corridors such as transport, handling, storage and customs clearance for food and non-food items for the East Africa region, including WFP operations in neighbouring countries (strategic outcome 6).

While WFP made efforts under the CSP to address cross-cutting issues such as those related to gender, environment and accountability to affected people, a more systematic approach is required.

36. Most CSP activities were **gender**-sensitive and promoted equal participation and a role in decision-making for women, but they rarely addressed social relations in ways that addressed the root causes of gender inequality. WFP contributed to a shift in gender dynamics in decision-making, with increasing numbers of refugee households reporting joint decision-making by women and men. Women were empowered through increased agricultural knowledge, financial literacy and enhanced decision-making capacity.
37. WFP maintained a community feedback mechanism, but its coverage across geographic locations and CSP activities was uneven, and the slow resolution of cases undermined beneficiaries' confidence in the mechanism. In 2023, WFP enhanced its strategy for community engagement in order to improve **accountability to affected people** by establishing a helpline and a help desk to create a more holistic community engagement and feedback mechanism.³³
38. Affected people had safe access to assistance and services, without barriers. However, changes in transfer modality, ration cuts and prioritization increased the **protection** risks for affected people. In 2024, as a result of the ration cuts, there were increases in intra-household conflict and division, and in abandonment by household heads. The prioritization exercise reduced the number of people receiving WFP assistance, resulting in increased concern in communities regarding crime, theft, sexual and gender-based violence, child labour, transactional sex and teenage pregnancy.
39. The CSP addressed **environment and climate**-related shocks in some programme activities. For example, a pro-resilience action project strengthened shock-responsive systems and early warning and anticipatory action in Karamoja, and WFP supported beneficiaries in their efforts to adopt environmentally friendly livelihood practices. Other measures taken by WFP included screening for environmental and social risks in field-level agreements, memorandums of understanding and contracts. However, WFP did not systematically track or assess the results of its environmental sustainability efforts.
40. WFP adhered to **humanitarian principles** and employed its operational capacity to meet people's immediate needs and protect the ability of individuals and communities to live in safety and dignity.

³¹ Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports. 2021. *SABER Report on School Feeding, Health and Nutrition in Uganda*, page 22 (not available online).

³² Such as during the COVID-19 pandemic.

³³ In 2023, the community feedback mechanism was integrated with a stronger community engagement role for the country office as part of the research, assessment and monitoring team.

WFP adhered to the principle of impartiality and gave priority to the people with the greatest food security needs through interventions that targeted Ugandan and refugee women. However, WFP's ability to fully adhere to the principle of humanity was limited by circumstances, including a protracted crisis characterized by growing needs and limited resources.³⁴

Efficiency

Most CSP activities were implemented in a timely way, and their expenditures were in line with annual targets. However, there were delays in the implementation of some activities.

41. Most CSP activities were implemented in a timely way, but NutriCash, school meals, and asset creation and livelihood activities experienced some issues with timeliness. NutriCash beneficiaries experienced delays in receiving transfers, often due to operational challenges related to the use of banking agents. Asset creation and livelihood activities were affected by delays in seed deliveries, particularly after the rainy season, and WFP's lengthy procurement processes for purchasing beneficiaries' produce. These delays caused produce spoilage and loss, and poor food quality.
42. Expenditures on most CSP activities were in line with annual targets. By July 2024, at least 89 percent of the resources allocated for 2018–2024 for five of the nine CSP activities had been spent; for the remainder, the delays discussed in the previous paragraph led to reduced expenditure rates. Lower expenditure rates for activities 8 and 9 were attributed to the flexible scheduling of institutional capacity strengthening in child-sensitive social protection and a project for strengthening shock-responsive systems in Karamoja, and to the slow implementation of planned activities by government ministries, departments and agencies.

The shift to CBTs contributed to cost reductions and the optimization of resource use.

43. The shift to CBTs, despite operational challenges related to the use of banking agents and mobile money, enhanced the cost efficiency of the refugee response. The use of CBTs reduced transfer costs per beneficiary compared with in-kind assistance. For example, the average transfer cost per beneficiary for CBTs was lower than for in-kind food assistance in 11 months in 2023. CBTs also enhanced WFP's operational efficiency in providing food assistance and reducing the time that beneficiaries spent at food distribution points, thus limiting their risk of exposure to COVID-19.
44. Retail market engagement initiated in 2023 and 2024 began to provide options for market development and a more cost-efficient means of providing assistance in refugee settlements. Engagement in WFP's activities helped retailers to connect to banks and mobile money services, enhancing digital inclusion and business opportunities, such as with wholesalers, resulting in improved markets in refugee-hosting districts.
45. WFP's post-delivery losses remained well below the 2 percent target from 2020 to July 2024, except in December 2020. However, pipeline breaks, which lasted until 2023, were sometimes aggravated by funding shortfalls. While some breaks were mitigated by cash top-ups, others led to cuts in general food assistance rations, which had negative effects on food and nutrition security outcomes, community social cohesion, household relations and gender-based violence.

Internal and external factors critical to CSP implementation and results

CSP implementation was affected by a sharp decline in donor contributions in 2022 and 2023 and dependence on short-term funding.

³⁴ WFP. 2023. [Impacts of the Cost of Inaction on WFP Food Assistance in Uganda \(2021 & 2022\)](#).

46. All the strategic outcomes of the CSP, except for outcomes 4 and 5, were under-resourced compared with the needs-based plan, receiving less than 60 percent of the planned funds at a time when 82 percent of the CSP had been implemented. Faced with this, WFP opted to reduce rations rather than beneficiary numbers, meaning that beneficiaries received insufficient food assistance and to cut back programmatic activity. Several factors influenced the availability of adequate resources, including uncertainty in the timing of the confirmation of funding for strategic outcome 1 and shifting priorities among traditional donors. Multi-year funding represented only 7.9 percent of contributions from 2018 to 2024, with the majority of these funds being allocated to capacity strengthening and social protection work.
47. The introduction of new non-traditional donors, such as the Mastercard Foundation and Novo Nordisk, fostered innovative approaches, including those resulting in new opportunities for young people's employment and more sustainable food systems to support the home-grown school feeding programme.
48. Most donor contributions – 81.9 percent – were earmarked at the activity level throughout the CSP period. Earmarking posed challenges to the layering of activities among strategic outcomes because the timelines for implementation and the geographic priorities varied among outcomes.

WFP established strategic partnerships with government ministries, departments and agencies and with other United Nations entities, but engagement with the private sector was limited.

49. WFP strategically partnered with key government ministries, departments and agencies, which contributed to improvements in the capacity of national and subnational actors in relation to social protection, shock-responsive systems and community-driven planning of resilience activities. Partnerships with key ministries were characterized by multi-level engagement, clear terms of engagement, alignment with and use of government systems, and the secondment of staff for technical coordination. However, relationships with other relevant ministries were largely activity-based and ad hoc in nature, which impeded the potential for broader results.
50. WFP adopted a new long-term partnership approach to NGO partnerships to facilitate the development of local capacity. This allowed cooperating partners to plan with a longer time horizon and to have more stable staffing over the CSP period; nevertheless, challenges arose in working with WFP's corporate systems and requirements, particularly for local NGOs.
51. WFP did not draw on private sector partners to enhance performance in the early years of the CSP. However, WFP's recent shifts to more strategic engagement with the private sector shows promise for improving support for the development and transformation of food systems, including through collaboration on CBTs, young people's employment³⁵ and local procurement.
52. WFP's relationships with United Nations partners at the strategic and technical levels have been critical to the implementation of the CSP. Most of these partnerships had clear terms of engagement and reflected recognition of each partner's comparative advantage. Some gaps existed, however; for example, WFP has a memorandum of understanding with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), but collaboration remained primarily at the technical level.

The country office's organizational structure and gaps in its human resources capacity impeded programme integration and implementation.

53. Despite organizational realignment, the human resources capacity of the country office was not fully aligned with the strategic demands of the CSP over the period under review. Gaps in capacity and skills that affected CSP implementation included insufficient expertise in gender equality and

³⁵ Funded by the Mastercard Foundation

women's empowerment; a lack of assessment of the staff skills needed for a shift towards capacity strengthening; and limited staffing for home-grown school feeding activities. In addition, an integrated programmatic approach was impeded by the country office's organizational structure, which perpetuated the "silo-ization" of activities.

The use of monitoring information to inform evidence-based management decisions was limited by the lack of validity of some indicators, inadequate staffing and limited knowledge management capacity.

54. Although WFP has strengthened its monitoring and assessment functions, the wealth of data generated is often not analysed or used to support CSP performance owing to limited human resources and knowledge management capacity. Corporate monitoring indicators did not facilitate the tracking of all CSP effects, including those related to strategic shifts towards food systems and institutional capacity strengthening.

Recommendations

55. The evaluation offers four strategic and two operational recommendations.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 1: Enhance programmatic integration and coherence among activities in order to maximize synergies and effectiveness.	Strategic	Country office management		High	December 2025
1.1 Develop an overarching CSP theory of change that is linked to the “nested” theories of change for Karamoja activities and the refugee response and that reflects various contexts and needs; review and update the theory of change during CSP implementation.		Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	Country office programme and supply chain units	High	March 2025
1.2 Adopt a more integrated approach to activity planning and implementation, including through supply chain and programme integration and thematic integration, for example. Other examples include the integration of activities under the concepts of self-reliance and social protection		Country office programme unit	Country office human resources (given that workforce considerations must be factored in) and supply chain units	High	November 2025
1.3 Develop a country office monitoring and evaluation, or a research, assessment and monitoring, plan that integrates monitoring and evaluation into all activities; prioritizes methods, reporting formats, visualizations and timing that facilitate the use of data in decision-making and advocacy; and outlines a knowledge management framework, including procedures for capturing and sharing learning among activities.		Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	Country office management and programme and supply chain units	Medium	January 2026
Recommendation 2: Clearly define and strengthen WFP's role as an enabler of sustainable government capacity and systems, particularly in the areas of self-reliance, social protection – including school meals and shock-responsive systems – nutrition, and food systems transformation.	Strategic	Country office management	Eastern and Southern Africa regional office and headquarters divisions Country office supply chain, nutrition, agriculture market support, social protection and human resources units	High	November 2025 (for definition) and end of CSP (for strengthening)

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.1 Develop comprehensive transition strategies for each key programme area that include clear milestones and timelines for transferring ownership to the Government; the Government's resource commitments, including dedicated budget allocations; capacity strengthening plans at the national and subnational levels; measurable indicators for monitoring progress towards full transition; and explicit exit strategies tied to the achievement of capacity-related benchmarks.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office social protection (includes school feeding) and other units	High	March 2026
2.2 Strengthen government systems and operational capacity by supporting data collection, analysis and utilization capability; building technical capacity for the measurement of self-reliance; and exploring the use of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers for social protection programmes, including school meals, at the district level.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office finance unit Headquarters (requires greater clarity regarding the corporate guidance on the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers)	High	End of CSP
2.3. Establish a clear framework for WFP's role in emergency preparedness and response that clarifies internal roles and responsibilities regarding support for government shock-responsive social protection systems and operational preparedness; includes concrete plans for handover as government capacity increases; specifies triggers for WFP's service provision in emergencies; and outlines WFP's responsibilities as logistics provider of last resort.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office supply chain and programme units	High	November 2025
Recommendation 3: Develop a more strategic and sustainable approach to partnerships, especially with government ministries, private sector entities and local organizations.	Strategic	Country office management		High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.1 The country office should prioritize and establish more formalized, strategic partnerships with key government ministries beyond the office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, including, for example, a revised partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Government, WFP and school-based actors.		Country office programme unit	Country office partnerships unit	High	January 2026
3.2 Develop a clear and resourced action plan for engaging local NGOs and building their capacity as strategic, advocacy and implementation partners.		Country office programme unit	Headquarters Operational Partners Unit	Medium	November 2025
3.3 Develop a clear and resourced action plan for engaging private sector actors and building their capacity in transforming food systems.		Country office partnerships unit	Country office supply chain and programme units	Medium	November 2025
Recommendation 4: Improve the design and sustainability of resilience-building and self-reliance interventions for refugees and vulnerable people.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	High	January 2026
4.1 Refine and scale up, if warranted, the self-reliance model as the main strategy for the “changing lives” agenda, integrating agriculture and market support, asset creation and livelihood, and nutrition-sensitive activities, retail market development, and other activities in refugee and host communities, from the design and proposal stage. Refinements could include harmonizing targeting criteria with government social protection systems; defining specific outcome indicators and related monitoring systems based on the self-reliance index; setting evidence-based criteria for geographical expansion; and revising entry and graduation criteria for participating households.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and supply chain units	High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2 Strengthen the design of asset creation and livelihood interventions through extended timeframes aligned with realistic self-reliance milestones; tailored packages of complementary activities based on household capacity; the continued integration of digital financial services and literacy training; progression pathways from basic to advanced livelihood activities; regular market assessments and linkages with retail market development activities aimed at ensuring the relevance of interventions; and the systematic monitoring of income diversification outcomes.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, partnerships and supply chain units	High	January 2026
4.3 Enhance support for smallholder farmer groups through an emphasis on value addition; access to markets; clear targets for increased market participation and incomes; and enhanced partnerships with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives and private sector actors.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain unit	High	January 2026
Recommendation 5: Strengthen the advancement of cross-cutting priorities by establishing systematic approaches to gender responsiveness, environmental sustainability and accountability to affected people across all CSP activities.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	High	January 2026
5.1 Implement a gender-responsive approach by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for gender-specific interventions; establishing clear gender-responsive indicators for each programme area; creating activity-specific gender action plans with milestones and targets, required technical expertise, including for partners, and advocacy strategies to influence the enabling environment; and developing a gender knowledge management system that captures and shares good practices, documents evidence of gender-responsive changes, and informs programmatic adjustments.		Country office programme unit	Country office gender and protection, research, assessment and monitoring, and knowledge management units	High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2 Strengthen the environmental sustainability of WFP's programming by conducting systematic environmental impact assessments for all activities; developing activity-specific environmental mitigation plans; and integrating nature-based solutions into programming and mapping opportunities across activities.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and supply chain units	High	January 2026
5.3 Continue to enhance accountability through a robust community feedback mechanism and meaningful participation under all activities and in all locations, especially activities not related to general food assistance.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and gender and protection units	High	January 2026
Recommendation 6. Enhance WFP's thought leadership and catalytic role in food systems transformation through multisectoral engagement and innovative solutions.	Strategic	Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units Regional office	Medium	June 2028
6.1 Scale up innovative private sector partnerships and market-based solutions to address food security and nutrition challenges. This could include establishing a structured private sector engagement strategy; creating innovative financing mechanisms that leverage private sector investments and support scalable market solutions; and developing specific value chain interventions to address key market inefficiencies.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units Regional office	Medium	June 2027
6.2 Strengthen and expand strategic engagement with relevant ministries, United Nations partners, especially FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), academia, local organizations and others to promote an integrated approach to food systems transformation. This could include continuing to strengthen formal coordination mechanisms and thematic working groups; continuing and expanding joint initiatives with other United Nations entities, especially FAO and IFAD, academia, and local organizations; and tracking collective progress and gaps in coordination.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units	Medium	June 2027

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6.3 Build the evidence base for food systems transformation, including by strengthening government capacity in data collection and analysis and evidence-based policy-making, and adopting a stronger knowledge management and knowledge sharing function.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and communications units	Medium	November 2026

1. Introduction

1. The evaluation of the World Food Programme (WFP)³⁶ Uganda Country Strategic Plan (CSP) 2018-2025 was commissioned by the WFP Office of Evaluation (OEV) as per the Summary Terms of Reference (ToR) in Annex I and was conducted by The Universal Management Group from February to November 2024.

1.1. Evaluation features

Evaluation rationale and objectives

2. CSP evaluations (CSPEs) are mandatory for all WFP CSPs and encompass the strategy and activities during a specific period. In this case, the period under review is 2017 to mid-2024. While implementation of the CSP began in 2018, the year 2017 is also considered in order to examine the development of the CSP and what informed its design, focus and shifts from the previous country programme.

3. This CSPE serves the dual objectives of accountability for results to WFP stakeholders and learning on the performance of WFP for its country-level strategic decisions. The CSPE also examined the extent to which WFP uses resources efficiently, the factors that affect WFP performance and the extent to which WFP has made the strategic shift envisaged by the CSP. The evaluation provides the country office (CO) with an independent assessment of its programme of work, to inform the design of a new CSP for Uganda, scheduled for approval by the Executive Board (EB) in November 2025.

4. In accordance with the WFP Policy on Country Strategic Plans, the WFP Evaluation Policy, and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations (UN) system, the evaluation's design incorporated gender and human rights dimensions that ensured the inclusion and visibility of both men and women, as well as vulnerable or socially excluded groups, and utilized methodologies that integrated the voices of the most vulnerable and marginalized populations.

Intended users and uses of the CSPE

5. The primary intended internal users of the evaluation are the staff and management of the WFP country office in Uganda and its area offices (AOs), sub-offices and field offices (FOs), the regional bureau in Nairobi (RBN), headquarters (HQ) divisions, including the Office of Evaluation, and the WFP Executive Board. External users include target groups of affected populations of the CSP (including refugees and other crisis-affected and vulnerable people), the ministries, departments and agencies of the Government of Uganda, academic and research institutions, cooperating partners (CPs) of WFP (local and international non-government organizations (NGOs), private sector partners), and international development actors, including other United Nations agencies, international financial institutions (IFIs) and WFP donors. The views of these users were sought throughout the evaluation, and evaluation results were discussed with them and will be communicated through the dissemination of the report.

6. Intended uses of the evaluation include: (i) providing accountability for results to WFP stakeholders; (ii) informing the development of the new CSP; (iii) enhancing understanding of WFP contributions to strategic outcomes (SOs) and how WFP can strengthen its enabling environment for these; (iv) providing input that the regional bureau in Nairobi and WFP headquarters can draw from to strengthen strategic guidance and technical support to the Uganda country office; and (v) providing cross-cutting lessons for WFP that are more broadly applicable across the region and globally.

³⁶ Note that all acronyms used in this report are listed in Annex XVII.

1.2. Context

General overview

7. Located in East Africa, Uganda has a population of 45.9 million (51 percent female, 49 percent male),³⁷ and hosts 1,702, 278 refugees and asylum seekers.³⁸ More than 85 percent of refugees and asylum seekers come from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and 79 percent are women and children.³⁹ The total Ugandan population is relatively young; 54 percent are 18 years old or younger.⁴⁰ While Uganda is one of the most rapidly urbanizing countries in the world, 73 percent of the population lives in rural areas.⁴¹

8. For the 2022/2023 fiscal year, Uganda's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was USD 1,088.⁴² Uganda's economic growth rate dropped from 6.3 percent in 2018 to 4.7 percent in 2022⁴³ due to disruptions in the global economy, compounded by climate-related disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Ebola outbreak of 2022, and increased to 5.3 percent in 2024.⁴⁴

9. Uganda's agricultural productivity is low, despite its strong potential; while over 80 percent of Uganda's land is arable, only 35 percent is being cultivated. Contributing factors include lack of irrigation infrastructure, limited use of quality farming inputs, inadequate post-harvest handling practices and infrastructure, shortage of agricultural credit and an overall weakening over time of public institutions and policies to promote agricultural productivity among smallholder farmers.⁴⁵ Of Uganda's workforce, 72 percent is engaged in the agriculture sector, while rural women constitute 76 percent of the agricultural labour force.⁴⁶

10. Uganda is at risk of natural disasters and extreme weather events. Severe flooding in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 resulted in loss of life, infrastructure damage and displacement. According to the Notre Dame-Global Adaptation Index (ND-GAIN), Uganda is ranked 173 out of 185 countries, indicating a high level of vulnerability to the effects of climate change, which is exacerbated by low readiness levels.⁴⁷

11. Poverty is high, with about 42 percent of the population living below the international poverty line of USD 2.15 a day⁴⁸ and 20.3 percent living below the national poverty line of USD 1 a day.⁴⁹ Rural poverty is more than two times higher than urban poverty.⁵⁰ Infant mortality and the mortality rates for children under-5 are also high, at 36 and 52 deaths per 1,000 live births, respectively.⁵¹ Fertility rates in Uganda have dropped substantially in the last decade – with an average of 4.5 children per woman as of 2024.⁵² Literacy rates in Uganda are higher than many neighbouring countries – with 76.6 percent of men and 71.6 percent of women considered literate.⁵³

12. Uganda is made up of 13 official subregions.⁵⁴ The CSP focused on Karamoja and the refugee-hosting districts of West Nile and those in Southwest Uganda (Ankole, Bunyoro, and Tooro).

³⁷ Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). 2024. *National Population and Housing Census 2024*.

³⁸ UNHCR and Uganda Office of the Prime Minister. 2024. [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#).

³⁹ UNHCR and Uganda Office of the Prime Minister. 2024. [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#).

⁴⁰ UBOS. 2021. [The Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020](#).

⁴¹ UBOS. 2021. [The Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020](#).

⁴² UBOS. 2023. [2023 Statistical Abstract](#). Per capita calculation is at current prices.

⁴³ World Bank. 2023. [GDP growth \(annual percent\) – Uganda](#).

⁴⁴ WFP. 2023. *Evaluation of Uganda WFP Country Strategic Plan 2018-2025 Terms of Reference*.

⁴⁵ International Trade Administration (U.S. Department of Commerce). 2023. [Uganda - Country Commercial Guide \(Agricultural Sector\)](#).

⁴⁶ FAO. 2022. [National Gender Profile of Agriculture and Rural Livelihoods – Country Gender Assessment Series](#).

⁴⁷ ND-GAIN. 2021. [ND-GAIN Country Index](#).

⁴⁸ World Bank. 2022. *Uganda Poverty Assessment: Strengthening Resilience to Accelerate Poverty Reduction, June 2022*.

⁴⁹ UBOS. 2023. [The National Standard Indicators Framework – Level 1 2023](#). Data is from 2021/2021.

⁵⁰ UBOS. 2021. [The Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020](#).

⁵¹ UBOS. 2023. [Demographic and Health Survey Report 2022](#).

⁵² UBOS. 2024. *National Population and Housing Census 2024*.

⁵³ UBOS. 2024. *National Population and Housing Census 2024*.

⁵⁴ UBOS. 2024. *National Population and Housing Census 2024*.

Food and nutrition security

13. In 2023, Uganda had a score of 25.2 on the Global Hunger Index and is classified as facing “serious” levels of hunger.⁵⁵ The prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity in the population is estimated at 71.2 percent and severe food insecurity is estimated at 23 percent for the 2021-2023 period.⁵⁶

14. The highest prevalence of malnutrition and food insecurity is concentrated in the eastern and northern regions. Food security in Karamoja has deteriorated, with currently 45 percent of the population facing high levels of acute food insecurity (Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 3 or above).⁵⁷ Karamoja also has the highest rates of child malnutrition in Uganda; 41.1 percent of children aged 0-59 months are stunted and 11.9 percent are wasted (compared to the national averages of 24.4 and 3.2 percent respectively).⁵⁸ Karamoja has a single rainy season (typically between April and November), while most of Uganda has two distinct rainy seasons.⁵⁹ Conflict, climate change and mobility have contributed to increased food insecurity in Karamoja in recent years. Mining, green energy development, oil exploration, commercial agriculture and other factors limit access to water sources, space for livestock mobility and pastures where crop production is possible. Climate change-induced desertification, land degradation and natural disasters further undermine livelihoods and food security.⁶⁰

National policies, strategies, plans and priorities

15. Government national policy instruments aimed at addressing some of the country's development challenges include the third National Development Plan (NDPIII) for FY2020/21-2024/25, Uganda Vision 2040, the Parish Development Model, the Host Population Empowerment Framework, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and the Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP) for the period 2022-2025.

16. Uganda completed three voluntary national reviews in 2016, 2020, and in 2024 to report on progress made in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda). It has achieved, or is on track to meet, 26 percent of its SDG targets; has made limited progress on 54 percent and backtracked on 19 percent.⁶¹ Major challenges remain with regard to meeting SDG 2 (zero hunger) and SDG 17 (partnerships), with scores for both goals either stagnating or increasing at less than half of the required rate.

Humanitarian situation and funding landscape

17. Uganda hosts the largest refugee population in Africa. As of June 2024, Uganda hosted 1,656,423 refugees and 45,855 asylum seekers. Refugees are spread out across 13 districts in north and southwestern subregions and in the capital Kampala, with 94 percent of them living in settlements alongside host communities in areas that are among the poorest and most underdeveloped in the country. The most densely populated refugee-hosting districts are in the West Nile districts bordering South Sudan, the western region bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the southern region bordering Rwanda and Tanzania. Refugees and asylum seekers from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo account for 56.3 percent and 31 percent respectively of the total refugee population. Other origin countries include Somalia, Burundi, Eritrea and Rwanda.⁶² Approximately 20 percent of the population living in Uganda's refugee settlements and host districts were estimated to face high levels of acute food insecurity (that is, IPC Phase 3 or above) for the period August 2023– January

⁵⁵ Global Hunger Index. 2023. [Uganda](#).

⁵⁶ FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO. 2024. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024](#).

⁵⁷ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification. 2024. [Uganda: Acute Food Insecurity Situation March-July 2024 and Projection for August 2024-February 2025 - Partial analysis in Karamoja](#).

⁵⁸ UBOS. 2023. [Demographic and Health Survey Report 2022](#).

⁵⁹ USAID. 2017. [Climate Risk Profile – Climate Risks in Food for Peace Geographies: Karamoja region, Uganda](#).

⁶⁰ FAO, IGAD, Interpeace. 2023. [Conflict, climate change, food security and mobility and the Karamoja cluster](#).

⁶¹ Sustainable Development Report. 2023. [Sub-Saharan Africa: Uganda](#). Data from Sachs, J.D., Lafortune, G., Fuller, G., Drumm, E. 2023. [Implementing the SDG Stimulus. Sustainable Development Report 2023](#).

⁶² UNHCR and Uganda Office of the Prime Minister. 2024. [Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal](#).

2024.⁶³ These concern 6 out of Uganda's 12 main refugee host districts. Relationships between host and refugee communities are critical due to sharing of resources and impact on social fabrics.

18. Given the growing refugee presence, the Ugandan government has incurred significant costs, spending an estimated USD 277 per refugee per year.⁶⁴ Refugee hosting districts have received significant support from donors including the European Union (EU), the United States of America (US), and Germany, but the need for international assistance remains high to meet persistent complex humanitarian challenges.

19. The United States⁶⁵ and the European Union remain the largest contributors to the refugee response in Uganda, working principally through the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and WFP. The EU Commission reports, however, that diminishing international funding is likely to aggravate food insecurity, especially for refugee populations.⁶⁶ Since 2020, decreases in funding for food assistance resulted in food rations being progressively reduced for all refugees.⁶⁷ As of the first quarter of 2024, UNHCR reported a funding gap of 82 percent of its overall financial requirements, having received only 18 percent of earmarked funding from donors.⁶⁸

Gender, equity and wider inclusion considerations

20. In 2021, Uganda ranked 138 out of 166 countries and scored 0.527 on the Gender Inequality Index,⁶⁹ reflecting high levels of gender inequality in reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. Uganda has achieved gender parity in primary and lower secondary enrolment, but upper secondary education enrolment remains disparate in favour of boys.⁷⁰ Between 2007 and 2022, only 58 percent of women and girls had decision making authority on sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights; 34 percent of girls experienced child marriage by age 18; and, in 2023, the adolescent birth rate was 128 for every 1,000 girls aged 15-19 years.⁷¹ Though gravely underreported, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) has been on the rise since 2018. In line with global increases in SGBV during the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, there was a 29 percent increase in domestic violence cases reported in Uganda compared to the year prior.⁷²

21. Almost 9 percent of Ugandans live with a disability, and women with disabilities experience greater risk of poverty, stigma, discrimination and SGBV than those without disabilities.⁷³ Various government plans include priorities for protecting the rights of persons with disabilities, including Uganda Vision 2040 and the NDPIII.

Exogenous shocks – COVID-19 and Ebola

22. The COVID-19 pandemic had important repercussions on development outcomes. The World Bank estimates that the pandemic "wiped out" reductions in rural poverty rates and deepened urban poverty across Uganda.⁷⁴ In 2020, the poverty rate increased by 7.2 percent in rural areas and 3.1 percent in cities. Unemployment rates and work stoppages were more pronounced among refugee populations (the proportion of refugees reporting being employed dropped to 32 percent in 2021). Relative to Ugandans,

⁶³ IPC. 2024. *Uganda: Partial IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis in Refugee Settlements and Host Districts, November 2022*.

⁶⁴ Government of Uganda and UNHCR. 2022. *Inter-Agency Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2022-2025*, p. 8.

⁶⁵ United States Department of State. 2024. [United States Provides More Than \\$25 Million for Refugee Assistance in Uganda](#).

⁶⁶ EU Commission. 2024. *European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations: Uganda*. See also: EU Commission. 2024. [A Welcoming Haven for Those Fleeing Strife and Insecurity: Uganda's Unique Refugee Policy](#).

⁶⁷ WFP and UNHCR. 2023. *Support To UNHCR and WFP country operations in Uganda. Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub*.

⁶⁸ UNHCR. 2024. [Uganda Funding update, as of 31 March 2024](#).

⁶⁹ United Nations. 2022. [Gender Inequality Index \(Human Development Index Data\)](#).

⁷⁰ UNFPA. 2023. [World Population: Uganda](#).

⁷¹ UNFPA. 2023. [World Population: Uganda](#).

⁷² UNFPA. 2020. [Uganda: GBV Factsheet](#).

⁷³ Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). 2020. *Situational Analysis of Persons with Disabilities in Uganda*.

⁷⁴ World Bank. 2022. *Uganda Poverty Assessment: Strengthening Resilience to Accelerate Poverty Reduction*.

lower shares of refugee households reported being able to return to full employment compared to pre-pandemic levels.

23. Between 2020 and 2021, WFP was compelled to reduce food assistance rations to refugees as a result of funding shortfalls owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, compounded by the continued influx of refugees.⁷⁵

24. Uganda suffered from an Ebola outbreak during the CSP period, in 2022.⁷⁶ Ebola outbreaks in Uganda and elsewhere have often had serious impacts on agricultural production in epidemic-affected areas, with long-term consequences for food insecurity, especially for rural households.⁷⁷

1.3. Subject being evaluated

CSP design and evolution

25. WFP has been present in Uganda since 1964. Prior to the Executive Board's approval of the Uganda CSP in November 2017, the WFP portfolio of interventions consisted of: i) the country programme (2016-2020), which focused on the prevention of malnutrition and stunting among children, treatment for moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and school meals; ii) emergency operations (July 2016) in response to rapid refugee influx from the South Sudan conflict in the West Nile region of Uganda; and iii) the protracted relief and rehabilitation operation (2016-2018), responding to food security and malnutrition among refugees and food-insecure populations through strengthening government emergency preparedness and capacity.⁷⁸

26. The original 2018-2022 CSP document articulated the strategy in ten contributing activities under six strategic outcomes (SOs). The CSP aimed to maintain an emergency response capacity and support the Government in hosting the growing number of refugees, with two strategic outcomes focused on crisis response. Other strategic outcomes addressed aspects of resilience building and malnutrition, addressing some of the root causes of food insecurity. The CSP strategic outcomes, focus areas, activities, modalities and current resourcing levels are presented in [Table 2](#). See Annex II for the CSP's line of sight and results framework.

27. The CSP for Uganda originally covered the 2018-2022 period and was extended to cover the 2018-2025 period in June 2021 through budget revision (BR) 6, to align with the timeline of NDPIII and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) for Uganda 2021-2025.

28. The WFP Uganda country office conducts analytical work such as market, food security and nutrition, needs and protection assessments, and beneficiary analyses related to gender, age, vulnerability, nutrition status and other variables. The WFP country office has monitoring systems and undergoes regular evaluations. This is discussed in [Finding 1](#). Over the CSP period and across the eight budget revisions, the budget and number of beneficiaries varied. Overall, 71 percent of the cumulative needs-based plan (NBP) for 2018-2023 was resourced, with differences in the level of resourcing between different strategic outcomes and activities (see [Table 2](#)).

⁷⁵ Government of Uganda and UNHCR. (2022). *Inter-Agency Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan 2022-2025*, p. 18.

⁷⁶ European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. 2023. [Ebola Outbreak in Uganda, as of 11 January 2023](#). See also World Health Organization. 2022. *Disease Outbreak News; Ebola Disease caused by Sudan virus – Uganda*.

⁷⁷ See, for example, Djomaleu ML, Rogers AB, Barrie MB, Rutherford GW, Weiser SD, Kelly JD. 2022. *Long-term consequences of food insecurity among Ebola virus disease-affected households after the 2013-2016 epidemic in rural communities of Kono District, Sierra Leone: A qualitative study*. See also Africa Renewal. 2014. [Ebola Disruption Could Spark New Food Crisis](#).

⁷⁸ Note that the emergency operations and protracted relief and rehabilitation operation were rolled into the new CSP.

Table 2: Strategic outcomes of WFP Uganda CSP 2018-2025

Focus area	SO	Activity	Resourcing level (%)
Crisis response	SO1: Refugees and other crisis-affected people have access to adequate nutritious food in times of crisis	Act. 01	70%
		Act. 02	70%
	Sub-total SO1		70%
Resilience building	SO2: Food-insecure populations in areas affected by climate shocks have access to adequate and nutritious food all year.	Act. 03	43%
		Act. 04	88%
		Non-Activity Specific	N/A
	Sub-total SO2		62%
Root causes	SO3: Children aged 6–59 months in food-insecure areas have acute malnutrition and stunting rates in line with national targets by 2030.	Act. 05	61%
	Sub-total SO3		61%
	SO4: Smallholder farmers, especially women, in targeted areas have improved and resilient livelihoods by 2030.	Act. 06	72%
		Act. 07	42%
	Sub-total SO4		70%
	SO5: National and local institutions, agencies and enterprises in Malawi have increased capacity and improved supply chain systems to achieve SDG 2 by 2030 (resilience building)	Act. 08	124%
		Act. 09	133%
	Sub-total SO5		126%
Crisis response	SO6: The humanitarian community in Uganda and neighbouring countries has access to cost-efficient supply chain services.	Act. 10	97%
	Sub-total SO6		97%

Source: ACR1-A_a_Standard_Country_Report (CRF_2022-2025)_v34 "Uganda Country Portfolio Budget (2018-2025), Cumulative Financial Overview as at 21 December 2025 (Amount in USD)

30. The initial cost of the CSP, based on its original needs-based plan, was USD 1,236,043,557 and it targeted 3,342,663 beneficiaries. Following the budget revisions in 2018-2023, the estimated cost increased to USD 1,994,338,581 and the number of targeted beneficiaries decreased to 2,852,482. The reasons for the increased cost of the needs-based plan and simultaneous decrease in beneficiaries are: (i) increases in the needs-based plan cost across all budget revisions, 1, 5, 6, 7 and 8, especially through the extension of the CSP through BR06 by three years;⁷⁹ (ii) a significant reduction in numbers of beneficiaries (by 654,972) under Activity 1 through BR05, resulting from the refugee reverification exercise in 2018;⁸⁰ and (iii) another significant reduction of numbers of total beneficiaries (by 368,740) through BR08, brought about by reductions in Activity 1 beneficiaries (net reduction by 190,178),⁸¹ and Activity 3 cash

⁷⁹ WFP. 2021. BR06.

⁸⁰ WFP. 2019. BR05.

⁸¹ Net reduction brought about by reduction in food beneficiaries (205,828) and slight increase in cash beneficiaries (15,650) as part of overall shift towards cash. WFP. 2023. BR08.

beneficiaries (by 324,527).⁸² Overall, 71 percent of the cumulative needs-based plan for 2018-2023 was resourced, with differences in the level of resourcing between different strategic outcomes and activities (see **Table 2**).

31. The US and United Kingdom (UK) accounted for more than a third of contributions to the needs-based plan, followed by the European Union, Germany, Sweden, and South Korea. Other bilateral and private donors each contributed less than 1.0 percent of the needs-based plan.⁸³ While earmarking of donor contributions fluctuated during the 2018-2023 period, it has declined over time. Donor contributions earmarked at the strategic outcome and activity levels increased from USD 78.9 million in 2017 to a high of USD 194.8 million in 2019, before decreasing to USD 48.7 million in 2023.⁸⁴

32. The CSP underwent eight budget revisions between 2018 and 2023. The budget revisions did not introduce changes in the strategic orientation of the CSP, but changes to the duration, scope and focus of activities, as well as the number of beneficiaries and costs of delivery. Key strategic shifts intended under the 2018-2025 CSP included: (i) transition to national ownership of the country's fight against hunger through sharing of analyses and evidence, and provision of technical assistance; (ii) promotion of transition from provision of food assistance to supporting self-reliance in refugee-hosting areas; (iii) use of cash transfers where markets are functional; (iv) introduction of nutrition, HIV and gender transformation-sensitive programming; and (v) engagement with private sector organizations to address root causes of malnutrition.

33. The WFP country office went through an efficiency and restructuring exercise in 2020,⁸⁵ which was implemented in 2021 and reduced the number of positions from 693 to 475. As of May 2024, the country office had 473 staff (57 percent men, 43 percent women) and was implementing another realignment.

34. Between 2018 and 2023, CSP beneficiaries, both planned and actual, included more women and girls than men and boys (ranging between 51 percent to 58 percent women and girls).⁸⁶ The percentage of actual versus planned beneficiaries was close to 100 percent for most years between 2018 and 2022, with slight dips in 2019 (93 percent)⁸⁷ and 2020 (86 percent).⁸⁸ In 2023, the percentage of actual versus planned beneficiaries was 96 percent.⁸⁹

35. To provide context for the CSP, a ten-year (2013-2023) timeline of events in Uganda leading up to and including the CSP period is provided in [Figure](#) below. Key events highlighted include: shocks; national strategies; UN frameworks; WFP programmes, plans and operations; and audits and mid-term reviews.

⁸² BR08 shifted the provision of NutriCash from Activity 3 to Activity 8. However, neither the BR08 document nor other documents reviewed provide an explanation for the significant reduction in Activity 3 cash beneficiaries through the BR. BR08 added 13,633 beneficiaries to Activity 8, which is in line with the target number of beneficiaries to be reached by NutriCash (13,500). Source: WFP. 2023. BR08.

⁸³ Country Portfolio Budget Resource Situation as of 08-04-2024.

⁸⁴ FACTory Contribution and Forecast Statistics as of 08-04-2024.

⁸⁵ The term "efficiency and restructuring exercise" was used by country office staff consulted during the inception phase to describe this exercise; they did not use the term "organizational realignment".

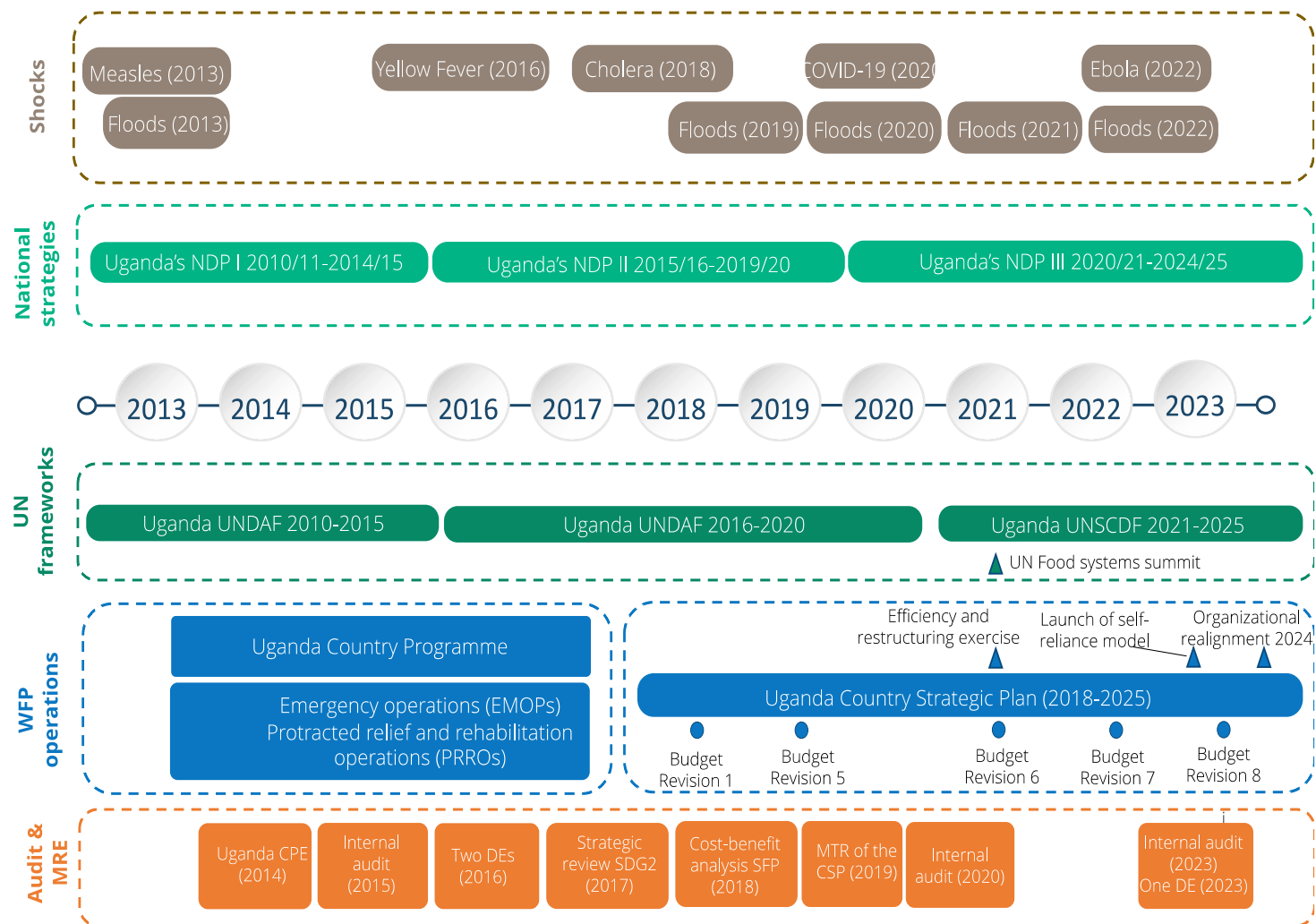
⁸⁶ ACRs for 2018 to 2023.

⁸⁷ WFP. 2020. 2019 ACR.

⁸⁸ WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR.

⁸⁹ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

Figure 1: Timeline of events in Uganda



1.4. Evaluation scope, methodology, limitations and ethical considerations

36. The unit of analysis for the evaluation was the 2018-2025 CSP. The evaluation aimed to provide a holistic assessment of the CSP and was guided by an evaluation matrix, which builds on the evaluation questions (EQs) and sub-questions identified in the terms of reference.

37. The core questions that the evaluation sought to answer are common to all CSPEs and broadly cover the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence (EQ1), effectiveness and sustainability (EQ2), and efficiency (EQ3). EQ4 addresses factors that explain WFP performance.

38. The evaluation team kept the main evaluation questions outlined in the terms of reference but adjusted selected sub-questions to further strengthen their precision and relevance to the country office's learning needs and interests (or "learning themes"). (See [Table 2](#)). Findings are presented according to evaluation question. [Figure](#) maps the six country office learning themes to their corresponding evaluation question. The full evaluation matrix, which maps all evaluation questions to related indicators, sources, and data collection and analysis techniques, is presented in Annex III.

39. The evaluation covers the period from 2017 (during the design and transition to the CSP) to mid-2024. The geographic scope of the evaluation is national, with a focus on the subregions prioritized by the CSP, including the West Nile, Southwest and Karamoja. Thematically, the evaluation analyses the various thematic areas covered by the CSP, including nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive programming, school feeding, support to livelihoods and agricultural markets, social protection and emergency preparedness and response. Cross-cutting areas of the CSP, such as gender, protection, environment and accountability to affected populations, are also addressed. Strategic shifts in the CSP over time and consequences of those shifts are also analysed.

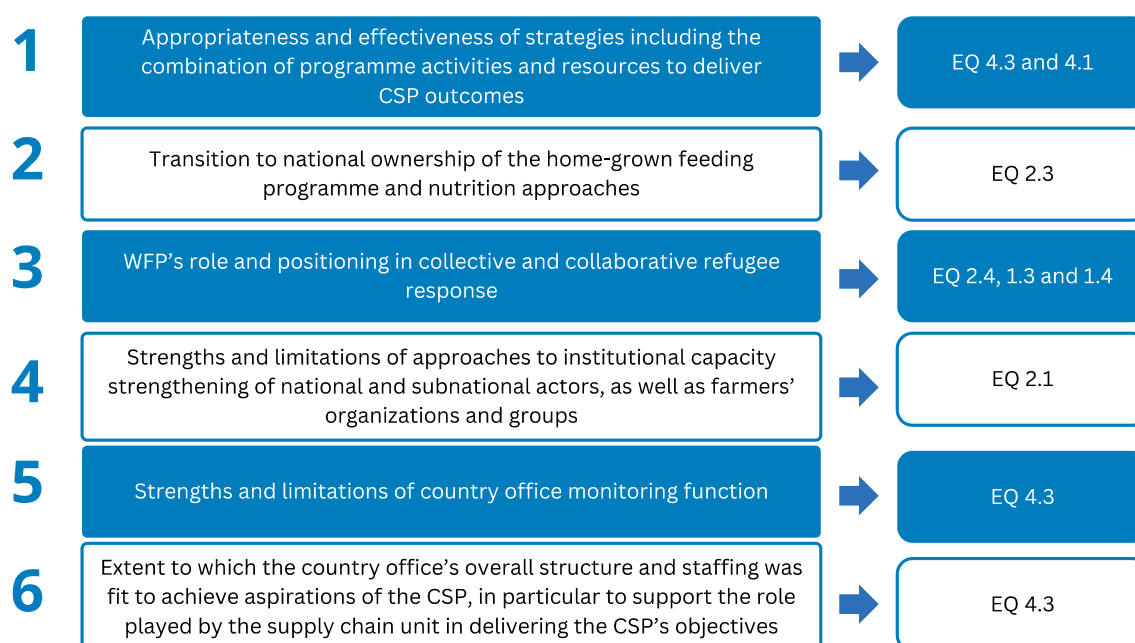
Table 3: Main evaluation questions and sub-questions

EQ	Evaluation questions and sub-questions
1	To what extent is the CSP evidence-based and strategically focused to address the needs of the most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity?
1.1	To what extent was the CSP informed by credible evidence on the hunger challenges, the food security and nutrition issues prevailing in Uganda to ensure its relevance at design?
1.2	To what extent and how was the CSP designed and implemented to 'enable' the Government of Uganda to achieve national priorities, as well as to support the UN cooperation framework and the SDGs?
1.3	To what extent and how is the CSP design internally coherent and based on a clear theory of change with realistic assumptions?
1.4	To what extent and how did the CSP adapt and respond to evolving needs and priorities in Uganda to ensure continued relevance - for example through budget revisions - without compromising the original focus of the CSP?
2	What difference did the CSP make to food security and nutrition in the country?
2.1	To what extent did WFP activities and outputs contribute to the expected outcomes of the CSP and the UNSDCF? What, if any, were unintended, positive or negative, results?
2.2	To what extent and how did WFP's strategies contribute to achievement of cross-cutting aims (protection, accountability to affected populations, gender, equity and inclusion, environment, climate change) and adhere to humanitarian principles?
2.3	To what extent and how are achievements under the CSP likely to be sustainable beyond WFP's support or facilitation?
2.4	To what extent and how did WFP use the nexus approach to programming to address food insecurity and malnutrition in Uganda?
2.5	To what extent and how did WFP contribute to thought leadership in food security and nutrition in Uganda?
3	To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently?
3.1	To what extent and how were the CSP outputs and related budget delivered within the intended timeframe?
3.2	To what extent and how did WFP reprioritize its interventions and use vulnerability-based targeting in operational planning and implementation to optimize limited resources?
3.3	To what extent and how were WFP's activities delivered in a cost-efficient manner?
4	What are the critical factors, internal and external to WFP, explaining performance and results?
4.1	To what extent and how has WFP been able to mobilize adequate, timely, predictable, and flexible resources to finance the CSP?
4.2	How well did WFP establish and leverage strategic and operational partnerships with government actors,

EQ	Evaluation questions and sub-questions
	other UN agencies, NGOs, and the private sector to maximize efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of interventions to address root causes of malnutrition and food insecurity in Uganda?
4.3	<p>What role, if any, have the following factors played in the implementation of the CSP?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Programme integration at design stage and during implementation. - Adequacy of human resources. - Innovation in the CSP design and implementation leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness. - Adequate availability and use of monitoring data and stakeholder feedback to track progress and inform decision making. - Other internal or external factors

40. In accordance with UNEG Guidance on Integrating Gender Equality and Human Rights in Evaluation,⁹⁰ gender equality and human rights considerations have been integrated throughout the evaluation process. The UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, and the UNEG Ethical Guidelines and Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System were also followed.

Figure 2: Mapping country office learning themes with evaluation questions⁹¹



41. The evaluation used a mixed-methods and theory-based approach. As the CSP did not have a theory of change (ToC), the evaluation team, in consultation with the country office, reconstructed a theory of change during the inception phase to illustrate the anticipated change mechanisms (drivers of change), change pathways and underlying assumptions of the CSP. The reconstructed theory of change is presented in Annex IV.

42. Quantitative data analysed included performance data, expenditures and fund allocations. Qualitative information was collected through document review, key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and direct observation. See Annex V for the evaluation's full methodology, including its sampling strategy and limitations, Annex VI for data collection tools, Annex VII for the list of stakeholders consulted, and Annex XIV for the bibliography.

⁹⁰ UNEG. 2014. *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*.

⁹¹ See also Annex XVII for a mapping of learning themes to evaluation findings.

43. Workshops and discussions were held with internal and external stakeholders at country and regional levels to validate key findings, conclusions and recommendations before completing the final evaluation products.
44. See Annex VIII for the field mission calendar and Annex IX for the timeline of the evaluation.

2. Evaluation findings

EQ1: To what extent is the CSP evidence-based and strategically focused to address the needs of the most vulnerable to food and nutrition insecurity?

Finding 1: The initial design and subsequent evolution of the CSP through budget revisions were informed by available evidence. However, the evidence base for the CSP lacked the analysis necessary to inform a more gender-responsive approach. (EQ 1.1)

45. The CSP design was informed by the 2017 Strategic Review of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, a country-level self-assessment of food and nutrition security conducted by the Government of Uganda.⁹² It identified issues such as inadequate diets, child malnutrition with insufficient public funding to address the problem, low agricultural productivity, hunger in schools and increasing weather-related shocks aggravating food insecurity. The review recognized gender inequality as a driver of food and nutrition insecurity. Initially, the CSP was not based on a separate gender analysis, scoring a 1 on the WFP gender and age marker tool.⁹³ In 2018, the Uganda country office launched a Gender Action Plan to guide gender integration and mitigate for the low gender and age markers at the design phase. Following the 2019 CSP mid-term review, WFP continued to fill gaps in this area by conducting a comprehensive gender context analysis assessing the impact of gender dynamics on WFP interventions, especially in the Karamoja region.⁹⁴

46. CSP interventions drew upon existing vulnerability analyses, value chain analyses, market monitoring reports, baseline studies and protection and gender assessments to inform the scale-up of cash-based transfers (CBTs) and barrier analyses. WFP contributed to the annual government-led food security and nutrition assessment (FSNA) in Karamoja and refugee-hosting areas of Uganda, informing WFP intervention design and monitoring.⁹⁵ While these analyses were mostly gender-sensitive, they did not collect and analyse the data needed to understand gender and social relations in order to inform a gender-responsive approach (this is further elaborated in Finding 18).

47. Budget revisions (BR) supported changes to the CSP. Recommendations from the 2019 mid-term review of the CSP informed elements introduced by BR1 and BR5. Other notable shifts included:

- **Cash transfers:** The shift to cash-based transfers was based on research from WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), which examined the benefits of cash-based transfers combined with nutrition education for children living in Karamoja.⁹⁶ Other research in refugee settlements found that economic multipliers increased when food assistance was delivered through cash-based transfer as opposed to in-kind delivery.⁹⁷ WFP cash interventions were informed by market price monitoring, feasibility and market functionality index assessments.⁹⁸ Cash transfers evolved over the course of the CSP from "cash on wheels" to agency banking and most recently, to mobile money (piloted in 2024), drawing upon capacity assessments of traders to inform roll-out.
- **Food systems:** A food systems approach was expanded following the 2020 "Fill the Nutrient Gap" analysis, emphasizing strengthening value chains and supporting local, national and regional food

⁹² Government of Uganda. 2017. *Towards Zero Hunger: A Strategic Review of Sustainable Development Goal 2 in Uganda*, p. 16.

⁹³ WFP. February 2019. *WFP Uganda Country Office CSP 2018–2022 Mid-Term Review*.

⁹⁴ WFP. October 2021. *Gender Context Analysis - Uganda: Karamoja*.

⁹⁵ FSNA complements post-distribution monitoring (PDM) for SO1, activities 1 and 2.

⁹⁶ WFP, UNICEF, and IFPRI. 2013. *Impact Evaluation of Cash and Food Transfers at Early Childhood Development Centres in Karamoja, Uganda*

⁹⁷ WFP. 2017. *Uganda Country Strategic Plan 2018-2025* p. 6.

⁹⁸ WFP. 2023. *2022 Annual Country Report*. See also WFP. 2017. *CSP 2018-2025* p. 6.

systems through an integrated, holistic approach.⁹⁹ Local procurement from smallholder farmers organizations within the agriculture and market support (AMS) programme evolved based on value chain analyses and data on food safety and quality, as well as retail market development.¹⁰⁰

- **Self-reliance model:** In 2024, WFP Uganda rolled out a programmatic framework that strategically integrates, layers and sequences activities to provide a holistic package of support enabling refugees to move from dependency on humanitarian assistance towards an ability to meet their own essential needs. This was developed in line with the Government's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and informed by the decentralized evaluation of promoting self-reliance¹⁰¹ and a baseline evaluation in the Southwest,¹⁰² among other analyses.

Finding 2: The country office demonstrated a strategic shift towards vulnerability-based targeting across its activities, reflecting an adaptive approach to resource allocation. However, the implementation of targeting strategies varied in consistency and precision across different programmes. (EQ1.1)

48. The country office's targeting strategies shifted toward vulnerability-based approaches, using evidence from FSNA, IPC and household surveys. (See Annex XI). This was especially evident in general food assistance (GFA) for refugees, which transitioned from status-based to vulnerability-based targeting. The NutriCash pilot programme demonstrated this approach, combining geographic, categorical and community-based targeting approaches developed by the Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP) and the Labour Intensive Public Works (LIPW) programme to identify the most vulnerable households.

49. Lean season responses (LSRs) focused on pregnant or breastfeeding women and girls (PBWG) and children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), demonstrating a targeted approach to address acute needs within resource constraints. Similarly, school feeding programmes in Karamoja selected schools based on poverty levels, malnutrition rates and low enrolment or retention rates, aiming to address systemic vulnerabilities at the community level.

50. The consistency of targeting approaches varied across activities, however. The criteria for selecting beneficiaries in asset creation and livelihood (ACL) and agriculture and market support activities were less clearly defined compared to other programmes. Targeting approaches were documented in various country office documents and evolved over time, making it challenging for the evaluation team to gain a precise picture of how all programmes selected beneficiaries.

51. The general food assistance programme for refugees underwent multiple iterations in defining vulnerability criteria, highlighting the complexities of operationalizing vulnerability-based targeting. The latest prioritization phase combined index-based vulnerability assessments with categorical criteria, emphasizing protection status. The Phase 3 model rolled out in 2023¹⁰³ used statistics and community input to define vulnerability, optimizing effectiveness and satisfaction based on feedback from partners and affected populations. This evolving approach, while aiming to optimize effectiveness, also introduced variability in targeting methods over time.

Finding 3: The CSP was well aligned with national and subnational priorities, as outlined in national development plans and refugee response frameworks, with district-level development policies and with emergency and humanitarian response plans. (EQ 1.2)

⁹⁹ WFP. 2020. *Food Systems in Fragile Settings: Identifying Gaps and Opportunities to Support Access to Improved Diets. Fill the Nutrient Gap Report.*

¹⁰⁰ See, for example, WFP. April 2021. *First Follow-Up Survey Report: Agriculture and Market Support Programme and WFP.* See also WFP. 2024. *Evaluation of Local and Regional Food Procurement Pilot Programmes in Eastern Africa (2021-2023).*

¹⁰¹ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of Promoting Self-Reliance with Livelihood, Asset Creation and Resilience Interventions in Uganda 2020-2023.*

¹⁰² WFP. 2023. *Transition Model for Self-Reliance Baseline Evaluation Report: Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements and Hosting Areas.*

¹⁰³ WFP and UNHCR. 2023. *Support To UNHCR and WFP Country Operations in Uganda. Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub.*

52. The CSP's strategic outcomes were aligned with several national development frameworks aimed at improving food security outcomes by stimulating agricultural productivity and reinforcing the agro-industrial value chain (see Annex X).

53. The CSP was aligned with Uganda's National Development Plan II (NDPII) and extended in 2021 to align with the period covered by NDPIII (2022-2025). The agriculture and market support and asset creation and livelihood interventions aimed to improve agricultural productivity, establish market linkages for smallholder farmers and strengthen national institutions for pro-smallholder policies and programmes. This systems approach to combating nutrition and food insecurity was explicitly aligned with NDPIII.¹⁰⁴

54. The CSP supported refugee self-reliance through food assistance and livelihood opportunities, in line with Uganda's CRRF, and in support of the Government's pledge to the Global Refugee Forum (see Finding 25). Targeting strategies for asset creation and livelihood interventions (Activity 3), the agriculture and market support programme (Activity 6) and NutriCash (Activity 8) aligned with the Government's settlement transformation agenda that envisioned a 70 percent host community and 30 percent refugee split in developing livelihood programmes that benefit both.¹⁰⁵ This reflects the Ugandan Government's approach to providing services to both refugee populations and host communities, aimed at maintaining social cohesion in refugee-hosting areas.

55. Throughout 2018-2024, WFP worked closely with the Government at national and district levels. Interventions aligned with and supported the implementation of national guidelines and used government systems and structures for delivery to varying degrees. Moderate acute malnutrition treatment interventions were informed by service statistics provided through the District Health Information System (DHIS2). Several aspects of WFP support to refugees and host communities complemented and drew on the approaches and structures in place for the Government's DRDIP.¹⁰⁶ The asset creation and livelihood project in Isingiro in the Southwest region involved DRDIP implementation support teams. The NutriCash pilot utilized DRDIP beneficiary lists in the West Nile region to target beneficiaries and applied the harmonized approach to cash transfers (HACT) to the Government, a first for the Uganda country office.

Finding 4: The CSP aligned with the UNSDCF from the outset. As a member of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT), WFP supported coherence through contributions in the cash working group, the humanitarian inter-agency coordination group, and strategic and technical engagements with United Nations partners. (EQ1.2)

56. The CSP was designed and extended to align with the UNSDCF timeframe. CSP strategic objectives contribute to various UNSDCF outcomes. WFP led on Pillar 2 on "shared prosperity in a healthy environment" and contributed to the pillar's results group on "natural resources, environment and climate change".¹⁰⁷ In line with the UNSDCF emphasis on leaving no one behind (LNOB), WFP prioritized the most vulnerable groups and was one of the few agencies supporting the remote community of the Ik people in Kamion, Kaabong district.

57. In a fragmented coordination context (due to regional differences, coordination gaps in government, lingering COVID-19 effects and inconsistent coordination mechanisms),¹⁰⁸ WFP played coordinating or supporting roles to improve coherence among national-level development partners. In mechanisms such as the cash working group, where WFP expertise, knowledge and market monitoring data helped drive cash expansion in humanitarian activities and update the minimum expenditure basket for refugees. UNCT members acknowledged WFP field presence and logistics capacity as crucial for timely United Nations humanitarian support. WFP participates in the humanitarian inter-agency coordination group.

58. According to key informant interviews, collaborations at area and field office levels varied and were sometimes limited by inconsistent directives emanating from each agency's Kampala office. WFP was

¹⁰⁴ WFP. April 2021. *First Follow-Up Survey Report: Agriculture and Market Support Programme*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁵ WFP. 2021. *Endline Impact Evaluation: Asset Creation and Livelihood Project in Isingiro District, December 2021*, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ DRDIP is led by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and was launched in 2017 targeting households among the national population and in refugee settlements. It addresses social, economic and environmental needs of host and refugee communities in the 15 Ugandan refugee-hosting districts.

¹⁰⁷ UN Uganda. ND. *United Nations Cooperation Framework 2021-2025, Management Guide*.

¹⁰⁸ KII and UN Uganda. 2023. *Uganda: 2023 UN Country Results Report*, p.57.

involved in a few joint programmes, such as Child Sensitive Social Protection, which includes NutriCash, and is jointly implemented by WFP, UNICEF and DRDIP; and PRO-ACT, which was jointly implemented by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Coordination primarily focused on operational implementation rather than strategic planning.

59. The CSP anticipated different levels of strategic and technical engagement between WFP and other UN agencies, particularly UNHCR, UNICEF, and FAO. With UNHCR, there was a clear division of labour in the context of the refugee response. The CSP envisioned deeper collaboration with FAO in the development of national early warning systems. With UNICEF, the CSP extended the partnership and division of labour to prevent malnutrition (with a WFP focus on moderate acute malnutrition and a UNICEF focus on severe acute malnutrition (SAM)) and both played complementary roles in child-sensitive social protection. These relationships evolved over the course of the CSP. The WFP partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) grew in prominence to seek greater synergies in social protection. (See evolution of partnerships in EQ 4.2).

Finding 5: The original design of the CSP lacked a clear theory of change, resulting in limited internal coherence. Despite country office efforts to increase synergies between workstreams, integration across strategic objectives and activities remained fragmented. (EQ 1.3)

60. At the time of CSP design in 2017, there was no formal requirement for the country office to develop a theory of change. The lack of a theory of change resulted in the absence of explicit assumptions about interactions between strategic outcomes and activities at the operational level. For example, while the CSP envisaged layering nutrition-specific activities with direct assistance to refugees, it offered no comprehensive integration strategy. It remained implicit whether and how the CSP would contribute to addressing the root causes of the targeted issues. Despite a 2019 mid-term review recommendation, a theory of change for the CSP was not developed until 2023. The country office now has separate theories of change for Karamoja and refugee response to guide programming from 2024 onward.

61. Additional steps towards improved internal coherence included a crisis response approach paper, CSP budget revisions (needs-based plans) in 2021 and 2023 that emphasized a food systems lens and nutrition-sensitive interventions, and an integrated nutrition strategy in 2024. These steps improved internal coherence in the following ways:

- The Crisis Response Approach Paper (2020) promoted integrated programming (using SO1 as an access platform for other strategic outcomes) to create synergies between CSP workstreams and with existing government and partner programmes.¹⁰⁹
- Budget revisions introduced nutrition-sensitive interventions across activities, such as social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) messaging on nutrition and dietary practices, support for backyard gardens and financial literacy training; these were included across CSP activities, ranging from the refugee general food assistance, a community-based supplementary feeding programme (CBSFP) and maternal child health and nutrition (MCHN) programmes, NutriCash, and the home-grown school feeding (HGSF) programme.¹¹⁰ Indicators for nutrition integration as a cross-cutting aim were introduced to the CSP logframe in 2023.
- BR06 (2021) emphasized a food systems lens, envisioning links across WFP interventions related to addressing malnutrition, asset creation and livelihoods (Activity 3), school feeding (Activity 4) and agriculture and market support (Activity 6).

62. In practice, layering of activities varied and synergies across targeted regions and beneficiary groups were limited. Additionally, there were no intentional links between crisis response (SO1), support to the Government on disaster preparedness (SO5) and supply chain and logistics (SO6). Annex XIII shows the disparate coverage of activities by region.

¹⁰⁹ WFP. 2020. *Crisis Response Approach Paper*.

¹¹⁰ BR06 entailed the re-wording of Activity 5 to reflect an enhanced focus on taking a nutrition-sensitive approach. Inclusion of nutrition-sensitive interventions in Activity 1 introduced through BR06 (2021); introduction of NutriCash, first to Activity 3 through BR06 (2021), and then subsequent placement under Activity 8 through BR08 (2023).

Finding 6: CSP design and implementation reflected traditional WFP comparative advantages in emergency response and logistics and food and nutrition security. Building on its data management expertise, WFP also provided relevant support to national social protection systems. This constituted a new area of work for the country office and there is not yet evidence to suggest that WFP has a comparative advantage in this field. (EQ1.3)

63. Stakeholder feedback suggests that CSP activities reflect two areas where WFP already had solid experience, technical capabilities, established partnerships and, hence, a strong reputation:

- **Crisis response:** The Government, United Nations partners and donors cite the quick response of WFP to the surge in the influx of refugees (requiring hot meals upon arrival) and support to Government in the context of the Ebola and COVID-19 public health crises. Compared to other United Nations agencies, WFP has a much broader operational footprint to support the United Nations and its partners in the delivery of assistance to affected populations.
- **Nutrition and its link to food systems:** By virtue of its long-standing support and experience in providing nutrition interventions in Karamoja and refugee-hosting districts in West Nile and the Southwest, consulted government and key non-government partners see WFP as having comparative advantage in nutrition that has been enhanced by a food systems perspective.

64. According to key informant interviews and reviewed documents, WFP is less well known for its support for livelihoods and agricultural markets linked to resilience building. This may be due to more limited coverage, less evidence of experience and impact and the number of other actors in this space.

65. In response to government requests and contextual needs, WFP increased its engagement in the social protection space where the country office had not previously played a major role. Here, the country office leveraged WFP expertise on issues such as beneficiary information systems to position itself as a partner of choice for government and other actors. There was no evidence to suggest, to date, that WFP has cultivated a comparative advantage in social protection.

Finding 7: WFP adapted its operations in response to food distribution and safety incidents, shocks, refugee influxes and changes in the resourcing landscape. Most adaptations maintained or enhanced the relevance of the CSP to the context and did not compromise the original focus of the CSP. (EQ 1.4)

66. During the first two years of the CSP, the country office confronted several shocks requiring rapid changes in approaches. In 2018, a biometric registration system for general food assistance for refugees was introduced due to unrest emerging from large-scale errors in refugee registration and targeting and changes in locations of food distribution points as part of food collection procedures. According to the mid-term review, WFP rolled out the biometric system in partnership with UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) in record time, turning the crisis condition into an opportunity.¹¹¹ That system facilitated the shift to cash-based transfers, a modality that grew in strategic and operational importance. In 2019, food poisoning and related deaths in the Karamoja and Palabek refugee settlement related to contamination of the Corn Soya Blend+ (CSB+) used in WFP-supported nutrition programmes led to the suspension of the use of CSB+ and negatively affected the reputation of WFP.¹¹²

67. WFP also adapted its programming and resourcing strategy in the following ways:

- responding to the refugee influx of 2022 by adjusting general food assistance rations and extending the duration of blanket feeding, which meant revising planning figures to accommodate 146,000 beneficiaries,¹¹³ and by supporting a donor conference to raise funding for the response;
- providing additional support to the Government in public health emergencies (COVID-19 and Ebola outbreaks);

¹¹¹ WFP. 2019. *WFP Uganda CSP 2018-2022 Mid Term Review*, p. 6.

¹¹² KIIs, internal audit reports, and ACR suggest that WFP Uganda was able to overcome this challenge by enhancing CO and supplier capacity to assess food safety and quality, working closely with Ministry of Health and other relevant actors, and using alternative products in the nutrition programme.

¹¹³ WFP. 2022. *WFP ACR*, p. 17.

- adapting to COVID-19 by introducing take-home rations for school feeding and scaling up digital, contactless cash assistance. Other adjustments included the pre-packaging of rations, staggering of distributions, remote monitoring systems and enhanced hygiene measures at distribution sites;¹¹⁴
- introducing an approach to anticipatory action in Karamoja (through PRO-ACT) that began to provide an alternative to crisis response for a development context;
- developing an integrated nutrition strategy, with emphasis on community-based management of acute malnutrition, to align with World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines (2023) and respond to a reduction in funding for nutrition-specific programmes; and
- introducing market facilitation and expanding cash-based transfers in the refugee context.¹¹⁵

68. As noted in Finding 2, WFP introduced general food assistance prioritization in 2021 due to funding cuts. This unforeseen shift required significant investment of country office time and resources. While this helped align with the new resourcing landscape, focus limited resources on vulnerable populations and address some donors' requests for a shift from blanket assistance, it also affected the ability of WFP to meet the minimum food intake requirements and CSP targets, particularly as it coincided with ration cuts since 2020 (see EQ2).

EQ2: What difference did the CSP make to food security and nutrition in the country?

EQ2.1 – WFP activities and output contributions to expected outcomes

69. This section of the report is organized by the “actions to drive change” from the reconstructed theory of change, as shown in Figure 3, to group analyses of the different types of interventions, which encompass various CSP activities and outputs. The second and third action to drive change have been merged under the heading “Nutrition-sensitive interventions and food systems – support and technical assistance”.

¹¹⁴ WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR.

¹¹⁵ WFP. 2020. *Linking Humanitarian and Development Assistance in Refugee Hosting Districts*.

Figure 3: Approach to organization of EQ2.1

Actions to drive change (from reconstructed ToC)	Corresponding activities and strategic outcomes
Direct food and nutrition assistance to refugees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activity 1 (SO1) and Activity 5 (SO3)
Direct food and nutrition assistance to crisis-affected and food-insecure populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSR provided through Activity 2 (SO1) • Nutrition support provided through Activity 2 (SO1), and the community-based supplementary feeding programme (CBSFP) in Activity 5 (SO3).
Food systems-focused technical assistance to smallholder farmers micro and small enterprises, retailer groups and private sector actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrition-sensitive interventions through Activity 1 and, 2 (SO1), 3 (SO2) and 5 (SO3) • ACL interventions in Activity 3 (SO2) • School feeding through Activity 4 (SO2) • AMS support through Activity 6 (SO4)
Institutional capacity strengthening interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACL capacity strengthening in Activity 3 (SO2) • School feeding capacity strengthening in Activity 4 (SO2) • Health systems strengthening interventions in Activity 5 (SO3) • AMS capacity strengthening in Activity 6 (SO4) • NutriCash in Activity 8 and PRO-ACT in Activity 9 (SO5)
Provision of supply chain services and expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply chain services in Activity 10 (SO 6)

Direct food and nutrition assistance to refugees

Finding 8: Despite WFP direct food and nutrition assistance, food security and nutrition outcomes among refugees declined between 2018 and 2023 due to COVID-19, food price volatility and reduced rations. (EQ 2.1)

70. WFP provided direct assistance to refugee populations in Uganda through in-kind food distributions, cash-based transfers and specialized nutritious foods, and through general food assistance and nutrition-specific interventions to treat moderate acute malnutrition. Annex XII outlines the types of direct assistance provided. WFP also supported the Government in providing direct cash transfers and nutrition-sensitive interventions to refugees and host communities through NutriCash. Finding 10 addresses the nutrition-sensitive interventions.

71. From 2018 to 2023, WFP provided food assistance to growing numbers of refugees, but with lower levels of assistance to beneficiary households. As shown in Figure and Figure below, WFP often met or even exceeded annual targets of beneficiaries through food and cash transfers but fell short of annual targets for the amounts of food and cash transferred.

Figure 4: Annual target achievement comparison beneficiaries and food for SO1, Activity 1

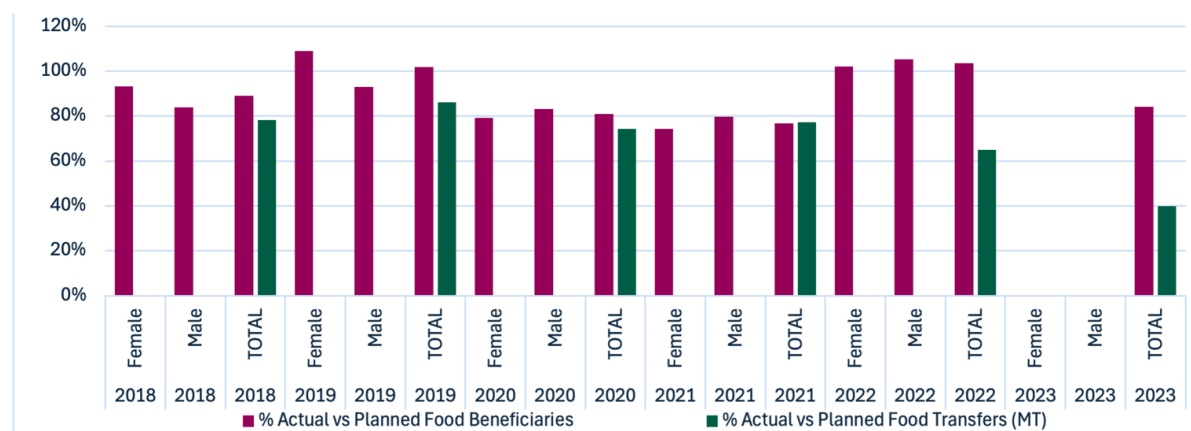
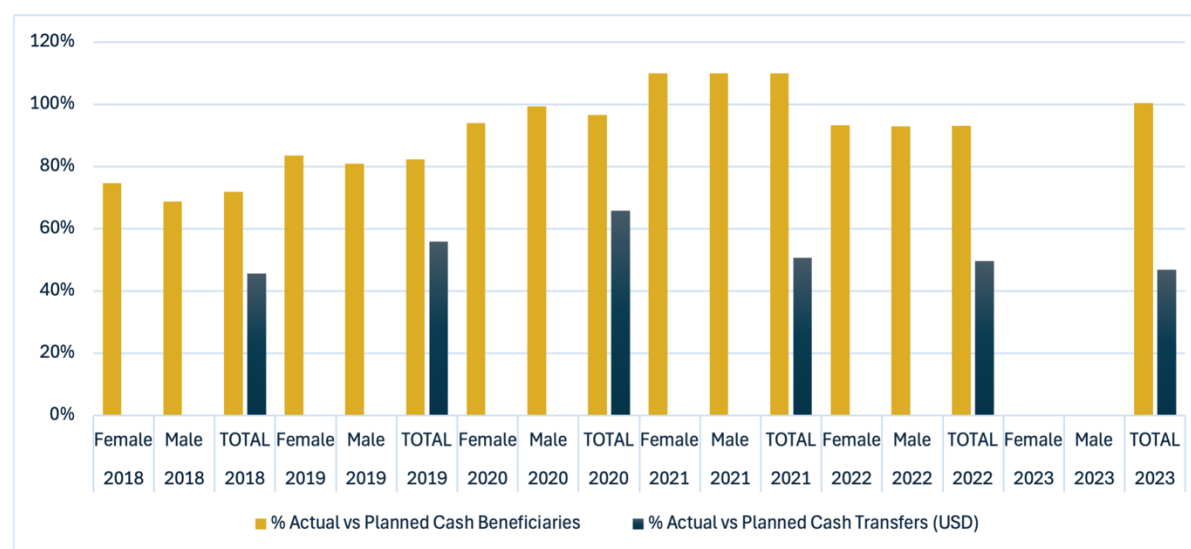


Figure 5: Annual target achievement comparison beneficiaries and cash for SO1, Activity 1



Sources for Figures 4 and 5: CM-R-007 Annual Distribution (CSP) Uganda 2018-2023; CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries; CM-R030_Actual ben. Adjustment_OUTPUT_UG01 2023.

72. Reasons for this trend include the following:

- Shift to cash:** In line with the intent of the CSP, the number of beneficiaries that received cash transfers increased significantly from 265,095 in 2018¹¹⁶ to 846,878 in 2023.¹¹⁷ The outbreak of COVID-19 and resulting operational challenges for in-kind distribution accelerated this shift.¹¹⁸ This explains the high annual target achievement rates for cash beneficiaries between 2021 and 2023, as well as steady increases in absolute numbers of beneficiaries reached over time, from 715,557 in 2021,¹¹⁹ to 846,878 in 2023.¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ CM-R002b_Annual beneficiaries by SO.

¹¹⁷ CM-R030_Actual ben. Adjustment_OUTPUT_UG01 2023.

¹¹⁸ WFP. 2020. *Crisis Response Approach Paper*.

¹¹⁹ CM-R002b_Annual beneficiaries by SO.

¹²⁰ CM-R020_Adjusted participants and beneficiaries UG01 2018-2023 and CM-R030_Actual ben. Adjustment_OUTPUT_UG01 2023.

- **Fluctuations in food transfers:** The number of beneficiaries receiving food assistance through Activity 1 decreased from 1.2 million in 2018 to 556,663 in 2021.¹²¹ This is explained by: (i) the shift from food to cash transfers, as noted above; and (ii) refugee reverification exercises during the 2018-2020 period, which saw a decrease in the number of planned and actual beneficiaries.¹²² The number of beneficiaries of Activity 1 food transfers increased from 556,663 in 2021 to 729,948 in 2022¹²³ due to an influx of refugees in 2022 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, the new arrivals who required additional hot meals and high energy biscuits.¹²⁴
- **Changes in ration sizes during the 2020-2023 period:** This explains the decreases in annual target achievement rates of food and cash transferred, and why these remained lower than annual target achievement rates of beneficiaries. As shown in Annex XII, general food assistance rations were cut over time, beginning in April 2020.

73. During the CSP period, food and nutrition security outcomes among refugees in the West Nile and Southwest regions declined, as observed in post-distribution monitoring (PDM) and FSNA. Refugees' access to food decreased, and their economic vulnerability and reliance on coping strategies increased.¹²⁵

- **Food consumption:** Overall, between 2018 and 2023, the proportion of households with acceptable food consumption scores (FCS)¹²⁶ decreased, accompanied by an increase in the proportion of households with borderline food consumption scores. See Figure and Figure for slight differences between the Southwest and West Nile. Acceptable food consumption scores for refugee settlements overall declined from 55.3 percent in 2022 to 47.8 percent in 2023, while poor food consumption scores increased from 8.9 percent to 11.2 percent.¹²⁷ However, recent data from April 2024 show that poor food consumption scores have gone down to 4 percent; this improvement may potentially be attributed to a decline in food prices.¹²⁸ Households receiving cash are also presenting better overall recent trends than those receiving food; between April 2023 and April 2024, poor food consumption scores among those receiving cash reduced by 13 percent while it reduced by 7 percent for those receiving food.¹²⁹
- **Coping strategies:** Food shortages among refugees led to greater use of short-term consumption-based coping strategies such as reducing meal frequency or relying on less preferred foods. The reduced Consumption-Based Strategy Index (rCSI)¹³⁰ rose between 2018 and 2023 for both regions, then slightly decreased from 2023 to 2024 (West Nile: 16 to 8.9; Southwest: 18 to 10), but remains higher than 2018 levels (in 2024: 6.9 in both regions). In West Nile, while consumption-based coping strategies were more prevalent among women and girls than men and boys between 2018 and 2020; that trend reversed from 2021 onwards. In Southwest, consumption-based coping strategies were more prevalent among women and girls than men and boys from 2018 to 2023, with a temporary reversal in 2022. Women who participated in focus group discussions were more likely than men to describe relying on coping mechanisms, such as sharing food with friends and relatives in other households, and reducing the number of meals eaten in a day. FSNA reports from 2020 to 2023 also point to an increase in severity of stress over time, with more households selling off productive assets and relying on emergency coping mechanisms.¹³¹

¹²¹ CM-R002b_Annual beneficiaries by SO.

¹²² Following the reverification exercise, the total number of refugees who were planned to be assisted by WFP decreased from 1.44 million to 1.13 million, which represented a 24 percent reduction. WFP. 2019. *CSP revision 5*.

¹²³ CM-R002b_Annual beneficiaries by SO.

¹²⁴ WFP. 2023. 2022 ACR. In 2022, there was an influx of more than 146,000 refugees and asylum seekers to Uganda.

¹²⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, the outcome monitoring data is from COMET. As of writing, COMET did not have 2024 data. Outcome monitoring from 2024 in the narrative of the bullet points draws from a draft version of the 2024 PDM for the refugee GFA, provided by the CO: WFP (2024). *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of the third round of data collection: April 2024*.

¹²⁶ Definition provided in Annex XV.

¹²⁷ The Republic of Uganda, *Food Security and Nutrition Assessments, 2020, 2022, and 2023*.

¹²⁸ WFP. 2024. *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of third wave of data collection in April 2024*.

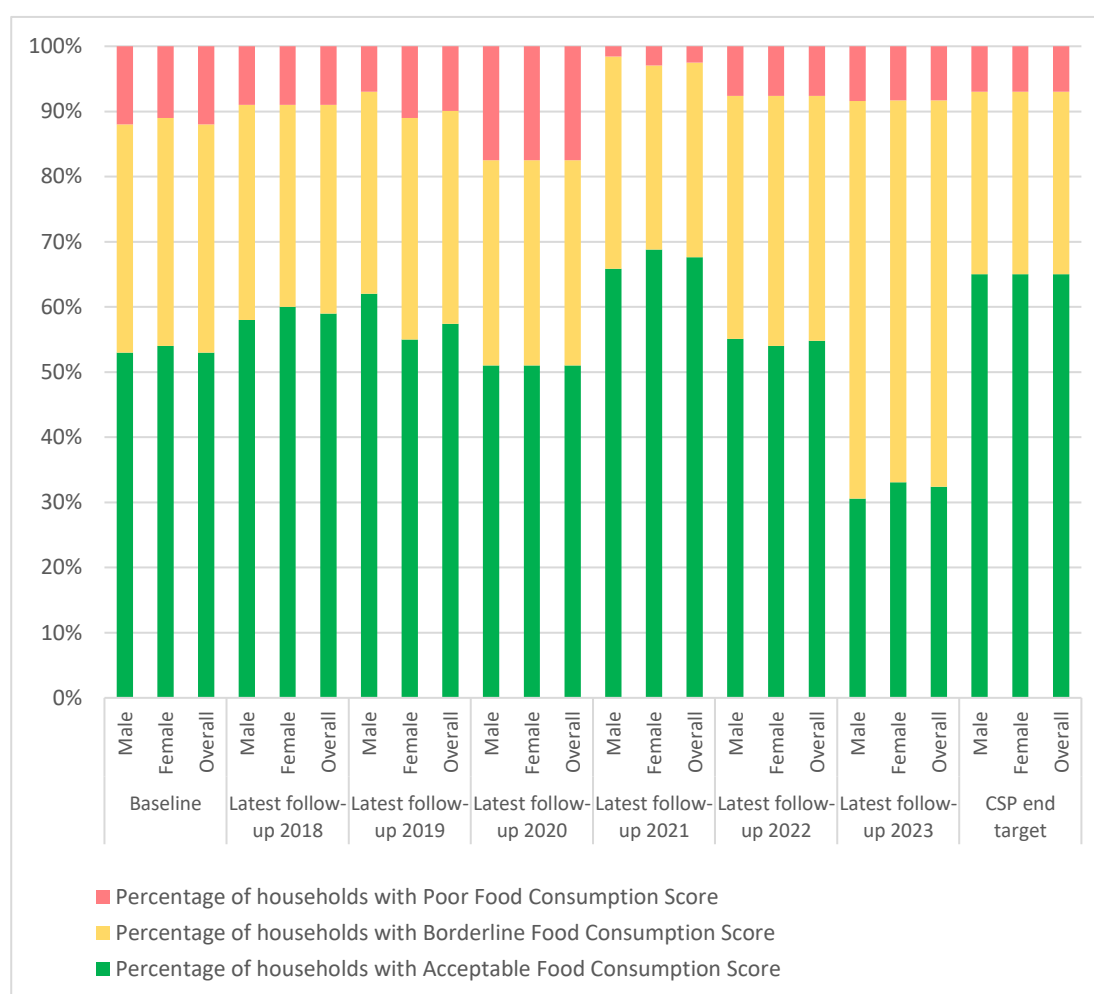
¹²⁹ WFP. 2024. *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of third wave of data collection in April 2024*.

¹³⁰ Definition provided in Annex XV.

¹³¹ The Republic of Uganda. 2023. *Situation of Food Security and Nutrition in Refugee Settlements, Refugee Host Districts, and Kampala 2023*.

- Economic vulnerability:** Refugee households' economic vulnerability remained high and increased over time. The Food Expenditure Share (FES) indicator rose from 48 percent (57 percent men and boys; 48 percent women and girls) to 64 percent in West Nile, and from 57 percent (56 percent men and boys; 58 percent women and girls) to 65 percent (70 percent women and girls; 61 percent men and boys) in Southwest between 2019 and 2022. This indicates that refugee households were becoming increasingly resource-constrained and more vulnerable to future shocks. By 2023, according to WFP post-distribution monitoring, 92 percent of refugee households (96 percent of those headed by women and girls; 91 percent of those headed by men and boys) in both regions lacked the economic capacity to meet their essential needs.¹³² The use of stress coping strategies increased, indicating a reduced ability to handle future shocks due to higher indebtedness and fewer resources.¹³³

Figure 6: Food consumption scores for refugee population, West Nile



¹³² CSP monitoring data only included data for food expenditure shares for the 2019-2022 period. PDM reporting on the Economic Capacity to Meet Essential Needs (ECMEN) indicator for SO1 Activity 1 was only done for 2023, and there were no data on this during 2018-2022. ECMEN definition provided in Annex XV.

Figure 7: Food consumption scores for refugee population, Southwest



Source: CM-R010b_Outcome Indicators UG01 2018–20

74. The declines in food and nutrition security outcomes among refugees were attributed to:
- COVID-19:** The pandemic increased economic vulnerability by limiting economic activities in refugee settlements due to government-mandated movement restrictions and loss of casual employment opportunities in 2020-2021.¹³⁴ Some WFP staff interviewed suggested that refugees resorted to emergency or stressed livelihoods coping strategies, such as selling assets to meet food consumption needs, although this was not confirmed by review of post-distribution monitoring data. Many stakeholders also saw the subsequent Ukraine conflict as having contributed to rising food prices (see below).
 - Food price volatility:** The cost of the food minimum expenditure basket¹³⁵ remained stable between 2020 and 2021 but increased substantially in October 2022.¹³⁶ UNHCR adjusted the minimum expenditure basket value from 276,904¹³⁷ Ugandan shillings (UGX) in 2021 to 396,860¹³⁸

¹³⁴ WFP. 2020. *East Africa MVAM Bulletin, September 2020*; World Bank. 2021. [Covid-19 socio-economic impact worsens for refugees in Uganda](#).

¹³⁵ Definition provided in Annex XV.

¹³⁶ WFP. 2020. *Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas, Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-31 December 2020*; WFP. 2021. *Market Monitor – Refugee Hosting Areas, Refugee Settlement Price and Market Functionality Snapshot, 1-31 September 2021*; WFP. 2022. *Uganda Cash Working Group Refugee Market Monitor*.

¹³⁷ USD 75 (<https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=USD&to=USD&amount=1>)

¹³⁸ USD 104 (<https://www.oanda.com/currency-converter/en/?from=USD&to=USD&amount=1>)

UGX in 2023, to reflect inflation in the 2021-2023 period.¹³⁹ Consulted refugee beneficiaries and WFP staff noted that higher food prices decreased the adequacy of general food assistance cash transfers. The 2023 post-distribution monitoring report recognized that deterioration in food consumption levels and consumption-based coping strategies were likely influenced by significant increases in food prices between 2022 and 2023.¹⁴⁰

- **Decreased ration size of general food assistance over time:** As noted above, WFP reduced ration sizes in response to funding shortfalls. The 2023 post-distribution monitoring report noted that refugees receiving higher levels of assistance (Category 1), had better access to food and were less likely to engage in extreme livelihood coping strategies. In contrast, refugees in categories 2 and 3 experienced lower food consumption scores, higher engagement in extreme coping strategies and reduced dietary diversity.¹⁴¹

75. The WFP shift to cash had positive, direct and indirect, effects for refugees and host communities, including increased incomes, livelihood opportunities and spending flexibility for both food and non-food items such as medication and education.^{142, 143} The reduction in transfer size due to ration cuts between 2020 and 2023 remained challenging, however. Focus group discussion participants expressed preference for cash over in-kind assistance, but noted difficulties purchasing sufficient food with the reduced transfer.

76. Through the maternal child health and nutrition (MCHN) programme and targeted supplementary feeding programme (TSFP) in the West Nile and Southwest regions, WFP detected early onset of acute malnutrition in refugee populations and provided timely treatment, preventing more severe cases. In both the West Nile and Southwest, WFP moderate acute malnutrition treatment achieved consistently high rates of recovery among targeted beneficiaries, increasing between 2018 and 2023, and the mortality remained within the “Sphere” standards¹⁴⁴ (see Annex XII). High rates of recovery were achieved despite health workers’ reports of the inconsistent availability of ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF).¹⁴⁵ Delivering moderate acute malnutrition treatment through government health facilities and outposts, with village health teams actively referring and identifying moderate acute malnutrition cases, has been a critical success factor. These outposts brought moderate acute malnutrition treatment and other health services closer to beneficiaries.

Finding 9: WFP lean season responses (LSRs) in Karamoja contributed to improvements in food security and nutrition outcomes among vulnerable women, girls and boys who were at greatest risk of malnutrition. However, the overall context for food insecurity remains precarious. (EQ 2.1)

77. WFP implemented lean season responses in Karamoja in 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023. In 2024, WFP began implementing early action cash-transfers to support vulnerable households in purchasing seed and food commodities prior to the lean season.¹⁴⁶ Cash-based transfers were provided to households to meet their food consumption needs, including the purchase of seeds. Annex XII provides a description of each lean season.

78. From 2018 to 2023, WFP reached greater numbers of male and female beneficiaries than planned, by transferring smaller amounts of food and cash. Figure and Figure show that WFP performance against annual targets for numbers of beneficiaries reached through food and cash transfers exceeded the rates at which it met annual targets for amounts of food and cash transferred. These trends are explained by:

- **No lean season responses in 2018 and 2020:** In 2020, however, specialized nutritious foods were distributed to pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, and children aged 6-59 months, to prevent increases in acute malnutrition.

¹³⁹ WFP and UNHCR (2023). *Uganda Cash Working Group: Updated 2023 Minimum Expenditure Basket*.

¹⁴⁰ WFP. 2023. *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of the second round of data collection*.

¹⁴¹ WFP. 2023. *Post-Distribution Monitoring of General Food Assistance – Results of the second round of data collection*.

¹⁴² WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

¹⁴³ WFP. 2023. *Direct and indirect benefits of food and cash assistance in Uganda*.

¹⁴⁴ The Sphere Standard mortality rate threshold for MAM is 3 percent.

¹⁴⁵ In these cases, reported in Isingiro, health workers used CSB++ to treat MAM.

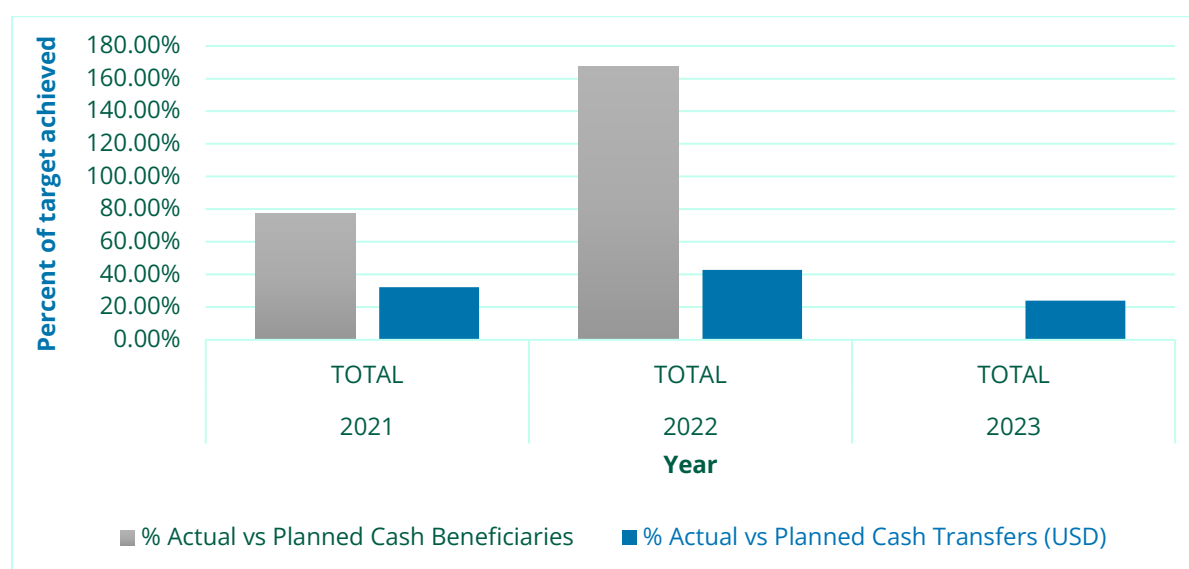
¹⁴⁶ Data on the results of this effort were not available at the time of the evaluation.

- **Introduction of cash transfers in lean season responses in 2021:** Cash was added as a modality in the lean season response, complementing specialized nutritious foods and in-kind food commodities. WFP staff interviewed noted that while the 2023 lean season response included some in-kind food commodities, the amounts were significantly less than in previous years.
- **Shocks that increased demands in 2022:** Amounts of food and cash transferred, and numbers of beneficiaries who received food transfers, exceeded their annual targets for 2022 as WFP responded to an especially severe hunger crisis in Karamoja in 2022,¹⁴⁷ in which the lean season response covered all districts in the region. Figure data for that year also reflect direct transfers in response to the Ebola outbreak (see textbox).¹⁴⁸

Support for the Ebola outbreak in 2022

Under Activity 2, WFP supported the government's response to the outbreak of the Ebola virus. WFP distributed 47,946 hot meals to patients and healthcare staff and food assistance to 407 households. WFP also provided logistics support and procurement of supplies such as personal protective equipment and food storage tents to the Ministry of Health.

Figure 8: Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and cash for SO1, Activity 2

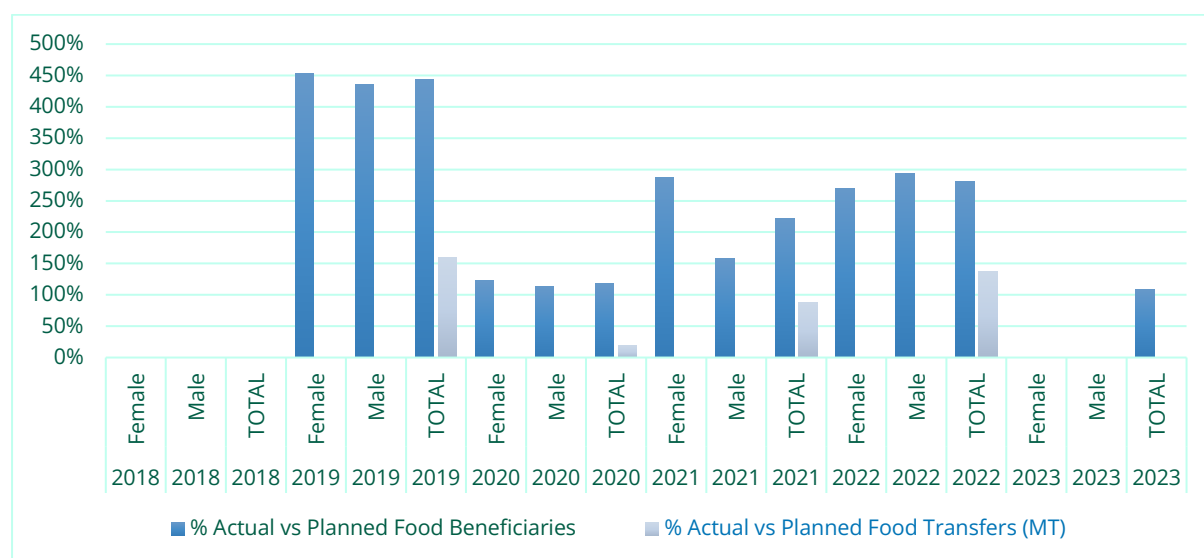


Source: CM-R014_Food and CBT UG01 2018-2024; and CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries

¹⁴⁷ Neither LSR reports, concepts of operations, nor WFP ACRs mention this crisis in Karamoja in 2022. Available research highlights a hunger crisis in 2022, in which 518,000 persons faced critical food insecurity (IPC phases 3 and 4), and in which all nine districts were classified as IPC Phase 3 or worse. Source: Cullis, A., and R. L. Arasio. 2022. *The 2022 Humanitarian Crisis in Karamoja, Uganda: A real-time review*.

¹⁴⁸ WFP. 2023. 2022 ACR. This was also corroborated by KIIs.

Figure 9: Annual target achievement comparisons beneficiaries and food for SO1, Activity 2



Source: CM-R014_Food and CBT UG01 2018-2024; and CM-R020 Adjusted Participants and Beneficiaries

79. WFP lean season responses provided crucial support during lean seasons in Karamoja, improving food consumption and reducing coping strategies among beneficiaries. For example:

- **Food consumption:** All lean season responses conducted during 2018-2023 period improved food consumption among beneficiaries, with fewer households reporting poor food consumption scores and more achieving acceptable food consumption scores.¹⁴⁹
- **Coping strategies:** Lean season responses in 2022 and 2023 led to fewer households using consumption-based and severe livelihood coping strategies, reducing overall stress from food shortages.¹⁵⁰

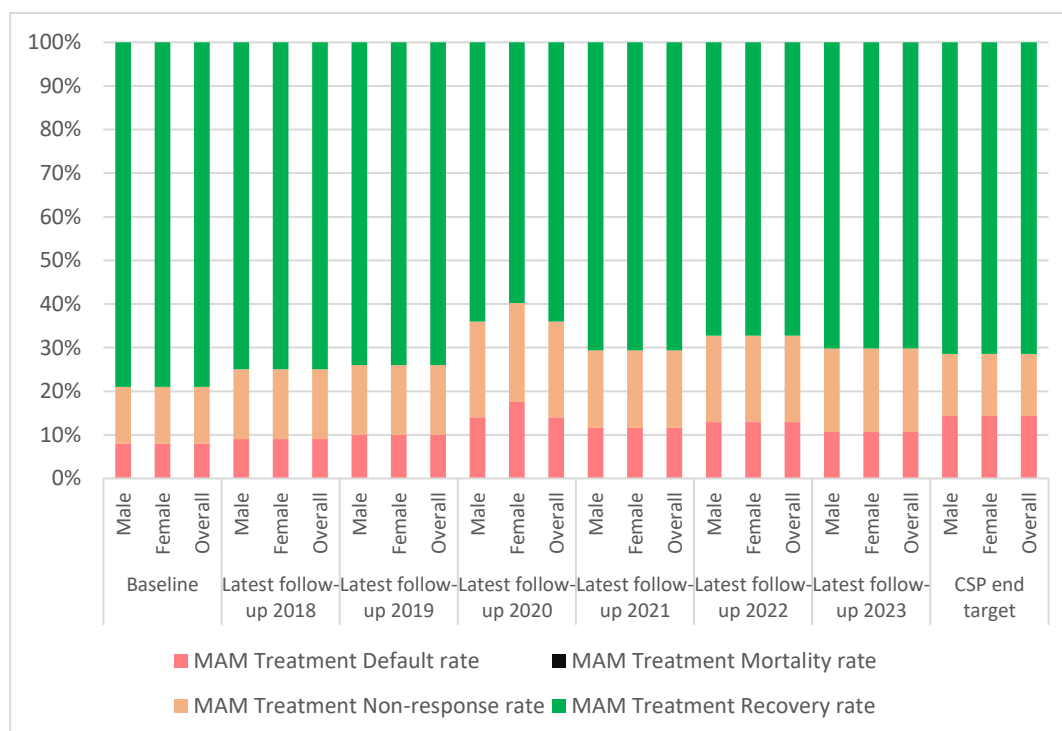
80. The shift to cash had positive effects. Post-distribution monitoring reports for lean season responses in 2022 and 2023 showed higher food security outcomes among cash recipients than among those who received food only, with better food consumption scores, lower rCSI scores, and improved dietary diversity. Cash recipients were less at risk of nutrition deficiencies and used cash for both food (for example, beans, silverfish, green vegetables) and non-food items (for example, soap, medical fees).

¹⁴⁹ WFP. 2020. 2019 ACR; WFP. 2022. *Karamoja Lean Season Response 2022 Report*; WFP. 2023. *Karamoja Lean Season Response 2023 Report*.

¹⁵⁰ WFP. 2022. *Karamoja Lean Season Response 2022 Report*; and WFP. 2023. *Karamoja Lean Season Response 2023 Report*.

81. Moderate acute malnutrition treatment in Karamoja provided vulnerable women and children with specialized nutritious foods through the community-based supplementary feeding programme (CBSFP), lean season responses and blanket supplementary feeding during food insecurity. Focus group discussion participants noted that these interventions helped children recover from moderate acute malnutrition, despite declining trends in moderate acute malnutrition treatment recovery rates evidenced in Figure .

Figure 10: Moderate acute malnutrition treatment (default, mortality, non-response and recovery rate), Karamoja



Source: CM-R010b_Outcome Indicators UG01 2018-2023.

82. The WFP moderate acute malnutrition treatment programme in Karamoja also faced challenges. As shown in Figure above, the moderate acute malnutrition treatment recovery rate decreased from 2018 to 2023, while both the non-response and default rates increased. Several reasons for the decline in performance were noted in documents and interviews: COVID-19 restrictions in movement that affected health service delivery and disrupted the supply of specialized nutritious foods to the region; intensified cattle raids and insecurity in 2021-2023; flooding in 2021; and particularly high food insecurity in 2022 and 2023.¹⁵¹ Additional challenges were due to poor childcare practices, poor ration utilization (selling and sharing), high burden of disease especially malaria, and inadequate dietary intake due to depletion of household food stocks and increased market prices.¹⁵²

83. FSNA data (2024) from Karamoja show an overall decline in acceptable food consumption scores since 2020, with a slight improvement in 2024.¹⁵³ The 2024 data also show an improvement in the proportion of households with no or little hunger (up to 51 percent from 33 percent of households in 2023). Since 2020 there has been a progressive increase in the proportion of economic severely insecure households, from 19 percent in 2020 to 63 percent in 2024.

Nutrition-sensitive interventions and food systems – support and technical assistance

84. WFP nutrition-sensitive interventions promoted good nutrition practices through SBCC, including communications and training on healthy diets using local foods. WFP encouraged local food production through backyard gardens and small animal husbandry to enhance dietary diversity and income, especially

¹⁵¹ Sources: WFP ACRs for 2021, 2022, and 2023.

¹⁵² AFI. 2023. *CBSFP monthly progress report*, June 2023. Sharing of CSB++ was also reported in some FGDs.

¹⁵³ Government of Uganda. 2024. *Situation of food security and nutrition in Karamoja*, Figure 17, Figure 21.

for children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Working with agricultural extension workers, WFP supported skill building in modern agricultural practices and provided improved seeds and farm inputs for better production. Additional food systems initiatives included support for school meals, asset creation and livelihood and agriculture and market support. (See Annex XII)

Finding 10: WFP nutrition-sensitive interventions contributed to improved knowledge and practices in dietary diversity, backyard gardening and financial literacy, especially among women refugees and host communities in West Nile and Southwest and affected populations in Karamoja. (EQ 2.1)

85. These interventions likely contributed to the following improvements among beneficiaries:

- **Increased knowledge and awareness of nutrition practices:** Women focus group discussion participants across SBCC interventions noted increased knowledge in nutrition and health, ranging from breastfeeding and child feeding to dietary diversity and food preparation practices. NutriCash monitoring reports noted significant improvements in beneficiaries' knowledge of the length of time a child should be breastfed and fed on iron-rich foods.¹⁵⁴ WFP relied on existing community health structures such as village health teams and care groups to cascade SBCC messages and information to beneficiaries, and on-site health and nutrition education during the distribution of direct assistance, of both specialized nutritious foods to treat moderate acute malnutrition and NutriCash.
- **Enhanced awareness of practices in dietary diversity through kitchen and backyard gardens:** WFP support to women beneficiaries to create and maintain kitchen and backyard gardens contributed to improved practices for dietary diversity. Through NutriCash, 13,882 beneficiaries (12,216 mothers and 1,666 spouses) received training on backyard gardening practices. Similar trainings were provided through other activities.¹⁵⁵ Focus group discussion participants noted that care group volunteers provided onsite training and technical support, helping beneficiaries grow vegetables for both household consumption and occasional market sales. The number of households enrolled in NutriCash that use backyard gardens for both consumption and sales increased by over 10 percent since the beginning of the programme (from 28.7 percent at baseline to 39.1 percent at endline), although the use of gardens for sales only is still limited.¹⁵⁶ Kitchen gardens are more prominent in refugee settlement areas (over 50 percent of host and refugee communities)¹⁵⁷ than in Karamoja, where about one-third of households report having them.¹⁵⁸ Several WFP and cooperating partner staff interviewed, and focus group discussion participants, reported that prolonged dry spells and lack of irrigation often limited garden sustainability.
- **Improved knowledge and practices in financial literacy:** WFP support to men, women and youth on financial literacy improved their knowledge and practices on a variety of topics related to financial management. In 2023, 86,000 beneficiaries were trained in financial literacy (57 percent women and 43 percent men).¹⁵⁹ Since the start of the youth financial literacy programme in November 2022 until the completion of its second cohort in February 2023, 61,662 youth (49 percent girls; 51 percent boys) were trained.¹⁶⁰ An assessment found that refugees significantly improved their knowledge of financial products and services, including digital services, of household budgeting, financial goal-setting, and record-keeping, leading to improved use of services and products such as mobile money and village savings and loans associations (VSLAs).¹⁶¹ Focus group discussion participants confirmed these benefits, with NutriCash beneficiaries noting how the training complemented the support they received to start income-generating enterprises,

¹⁵⁴ WFP/OPM-DRDIP M&E team. 2023. *NutriCash Routine Monitoring Survey Draft Report*.

¹⁵⁵ WFP and UNICEF. 2023. *Child-Sensitive Social Protection in Refugee Hosting Districts of West Nile, Uganda*.

¹⁵⁶ WFP/OPM-DRDIP M&E team. 2023. *NutriCash Routine Monitoring Survey Draft Report*.

¹⁵⁷ UNICEF, Ministry of Health, UBOS, OPM, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF), UNHCR, and WFP. 2023. *Food Security and Nutrition Assessment in Refugee Settlements, Hosting districts, and Kampala, 2023*.

¹⁵⁸ WFP and UBOS. 2023. *Situation of Food Security and Nutrition in Karamoja 2023*.

¹⁵⁹ WFP. 2024. *Cash Transfers Brief*.

¹⁶⁰ WFP. 2023. Youth dataset Y1&2 22 02 2023.

¹⁶¹ WFP. *Endline Impact Assessment – Financial Literacy Training, Southwest and West Nile Refugee Settlements in Uganda*.

such as chicken-rearing.¹⁶² Early in CSP implementation, training roll-out was not in sync with the pace of cash distribution scale-up.¹⁶³

86. The NutriCash pilot introduced a holistic approach to providing food and nutrition assistance to refugee and host community beneficiaries through the cash transfers, a savings component and elements of nutrition-sensitive programming mentioned above. The cash transfer allowed beneficiaries to buy nutritious food for their household and pay for education or healthcare-related expenditures.¹⁶⁴ Focus group discussion participants noted that this cash transfer was significant, especially for refugees who were categories 2 or 3, for whom direct WFP assistance through the general food assistance was either reduced or removed.

87. In Karamoja, WFP worked with Andre Foods International (AFI) to promote local food-based approaches. Most focus group discussion women participants in Karamoja knew the benefits of the Malnutrition Eradication Therapy in Uganda's (METU) "special" porridge for malnourished children, and understood its preparation and use. Despite ongoing roll-out efforts in Karamoja, METU has not yet been widely adopted by moderate acute malnutrition treatment beneficiaries or the broader population. Government interviews noted that this limited uptake stemmed from METU lacking official approval as a moderate acute malnutrition treatment commodity.¹⁶⁵

88. Nutrition-sensitive approaches in school feeding also supported better nutrition and dietary diversity. Focus group discussion participants reported that parents had benefited from their children's knowledge of gardening and dietary diversity acquired through young farmers clubs in schools.¹⁶⁶

Finding 11: The provision by WFP of school meals contributed to increases in enrolment and attendance rates among school-aged children in WFP-assisted schools. Local procurement of food through the HGSP programme is beginning to bring benefits to the region. WFP-supported schools and learners, however, faced challenges due to the reduced size and number of meals and growing numbers of early childhood development (ECD)-aged children attending school to eat. (EQ 2.1)

89. The WFP HGSP programme in Karamoja supported 315 schools with food commodities for the preparation of school meals, nutrition-sensitive interventions and other forms of support.¹⁶⁷

90. School meals contributed to increased enrolment and attendance in WFP-supported primary, secondary and tertiary schools. Between 2018 and 2023, the annual change in enrolment went from a 7 percent increase (8 percent boys; 5 percent girls) in 2018 to a 24 percent increase (21 percent boys; 27 percent girls) in 2023.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, attendance rates in WFP-supported schools increased from 63 percent (64 percent boys; 63 percent girls) in 2018 to 72 percent (72 percent boys; 72 percent girls) in 2023, with a dip to 57 percent (58 percent boys; 57 percent girls) in 2020 due to COVID-19.¹⁶⁹ Key informant interview and focus group discussion participants corroborated that school meals motivated children's enrolment and attendance at school. School officials noted that, at the beginning of the term, the arrival of trucks delivering WFP food commodities prompted an increase in the number of children reporting to school.

91. During the same period, retention rates of school-aged children decreased from 78 percent (72 percent boys; 87 percent girls) in 2018 to 72 percent (73 percent boys; 71 percent girls) in 2023. According to interviews, low retention rates are still a challenge in Karamoja, reflecting cultural and social norms that

¹⁶² WFP and OPM-DRDIP 2023. *CSSP – NutriCash Routine Monitoring Survey*, November 2023. This was corroborated by NutriCash monitoring (2023), which found a statistically significant increase in the level of knowledge in financial literacy and business skills among beneficiaries, with positive knowledge gains in topics related to budgeting, saving, personal financial management and record-keeping, and loans management.

¹⁶³ WFP. 2020. *Internal Audit of WFP Operations in Uganda*, AR/20/06.

¹⁶⁴ NutriCash monitoring (2023) also found that the cash transfer was used to procure livestock and agricultural inputs, buy food prepared outside the household, meet health care costs, and increase amount that is saved. WFP and OPM-DRDIP. 2023. *CSSP – NutriCash Routine Monitoring Survey*, November 2023.

¹⁶⁵ Although supporting research on METU trials exists, it has not been presented to the MoH leadership for approval.

¹⁶⁶ Some of the young farmer clubs and school gardens were supported by other development partners.

¹⁶⁷ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR.

¹⁶⁸ CM-R01b Outcome Indicators UG01 2018-2023.

¹⁶⁹ CM-R01b Outcome Indicators UG01 2018-2023.

give high value to household and livestock chores and less value to formal education, especially for girls. As a result, there are gender differences in education retention rates; while Uganda has achieved gender parity in primary and lower secondary enrolment, upper secondary education enrolment remains disparate in favour of boys.¹⁷⁰

92. At the schools visited for this evaluation, food commodities from WFP were primarily sourced from farmers' organizations in Karamoja. WFP-supported school meals have become a key market for farmers organizations supported by WFP agriculture and market support. Through the HGSF programme, WFP significantly increased the amount of food it procured from smallholder farmers, from 414 metric tons in 2022 to 2,345 metric tons in 2023.¹⁷¹ While food procured by WFP is from Karamoja, it is not necessarily from the same district or same catchment area as a given school. Thus, the HGSF programme is beneficial in a macro sense for the regional economy,¹⁷² but its positive effects were not localized.

93. According to district-level focus group discussions and key informant interviews, training on management of school meals and provision of tracking equipment to school management committees enhanced the capacity of the committees to effectively monitor levels of food available in storage and better account and plan for school meals based on monthly numbers of school attendees. WFP process monitoring indicates that most of the schools had up-to-date records on food utilization, with less accuracy on attendance records.¹⁷³

94. Schools visited by the evaluation team benefited from WFP hermetic storage bags and siloes to store food. Focus group discussion participants reported that these prevent pests from entering the food and ensure that the food does not rot or have toxins. However, some schools have insufficient space for storage and used classrooms to store food, which meant poor storage conditions and fewer rooms for learners.

95. In 2020 and 2021, take-home rations in response to school closures due to COVID-19 provided relief to households and a source of food for school-aged girls. Focus group discussion participants highlighted the importance of the take-home rations in ensuring that girls would continue to have access to nutritious meals and attend school during the pandemic. However, interviews suggest that this also reinforced traditional social norms in which the girl child is the one responsible for gathering food for the family.

96. WFP provided schools with orange-fleshed sweet potato (OFSP) vines with the intent that schools would grow OFSP for school meals.¹⁷⁴ In 2022, 80 schools established OFSP gardens,¹⁷⁵ with most of them reporting that the OFSP contributed significantly to improved diets of the schoolchildren during the key informant interviews. In some focus group discussions, parents also reported incorporating OFSP in their home garden. However, many schools visited noted that OFSP production was affected by late delivery of the vines in the previous growing season leading to its exclusion from the menus in some of the schools.

Partnership with the International Potato Centre (CIP)

WFP worked closely with Government of Uganda and other actors in the context of bridging the gap in food security in the most vulnerable populations. WFP leveraged its global partnership with the CIP to support research on the biofortified orange-fleshed sweet potato and facilitate its introduction among the most vulnerable populations of Karamoja and refugee communities across the country leading to improved diets especially in the schools in Karamoja region as noted from feedback provided during this evaluation.

¹⁷⁰ UNFPA. 2023. [World Population: Uganda](#)

¹⁷¹ WFP. 2023. 2022 ACR.

¹⁷² For example, WFP ACR notes that the increase in food procurement from farmers organizations in Karamoja translate into "USD 1.9 million injected into the local economy". WFP, 2023. 2022 ACR.

¹⁷³ WFP. 2023. *Process Monitoring Biannual Report, WFP Uganda CO, July–December 2023*.

¹⁷⁴ <https://cipotato.org/annualreport2022/inclusive-food-systems-for-health/orange-fleshed-sweetpotato-uganda/>.

¹⁷⁵ WFP. 2023. 2022 ACR.

97. When WFP reduced rations in 2023 due to funding cuts, schools reduced the size and number of meals for students from three meals to two meals a day. This was especially consequential for learners in boarding schools, where the school meal is often their only source of daily food.¹⁷⁶

98. School feeding also had unintended effects as reported in the CSP mid-term review in 2019.¹⁷⁷ Some early childhood development learners attend school with their brothers or sisters to access a meal even though there is no early childhood development capacity at the school. According to focus group discussions, schools do not want to turn these children away, despite having insufficient food for all students and being unable to tailor the curriculum for early childhood development.

Finding 12: The CSP supported asset creation and livelihoods primarily through small-scale and short-term projects. There is no evidence to suggest that these interventions contributed to improved and diversified incomes for women and men. (EQ 2.1)

99. Overall, asset creation and livelihood interventions were small scale and short term.¹⁷⁸ While there is some evidence that they brought positive effects in filling consumption gaps of targeted beneficiaries, there is less evidence they contributed to improved and diversified incomes for women and men. A 2024 evaluation on resilience programming noted the lack of documentation on any contributions of asset creation and livelihood interventions to diversification of household incomes in Karamoja and the Southwest.¹⁷⁹

100. In the Southwest region, food consumption scores of targeted beneficiaries of asset creation and livelihood interventions improved between 2021 and 2023 (see Figure 11). An endline assessment of the 2020-2021 Isingiro asset creation and livelihood project found statistically significant improvements in acceptable food consumption scores among participating households compared to non-participants.¹⁸⁰ This improvement likely resulted from the combination of created assets and food assistance for assets (FFA) cash transfers. Households headed by men showed higher food consumption scores than households headed by women though, indicating a need for further gender analysis to inform the design of equitable livelihood interventions.

101. It is not clear whether asset creation and livelihood interventions in Isingiro contributed to improved livelihoods or diversified income-generation activities. While the endline assessment briefly noted enhanced group incomes from increased activities,¹⁸¹ it provided no supporting details. WFP staff interviewed indicated that beneficiaries continue to maintain the created assets, but the evaluation team could not verify this during field work.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁶ Among the 315 WFP-supported schools, 165 offer boarding. FGD participants noted that WFP school meals are not provided to boarding school students on weekends and public holidays. This is a challenge for children whose parents are not able to provide additional food to supplement their diet.

¹⁷⁷ WFP. 2019. *WFP Uganda Country Office CSP 2018-2022 Mid-Term Review*.

¹⁷⁸ ACL interventions delivered under the CSP are described in Annex XII.

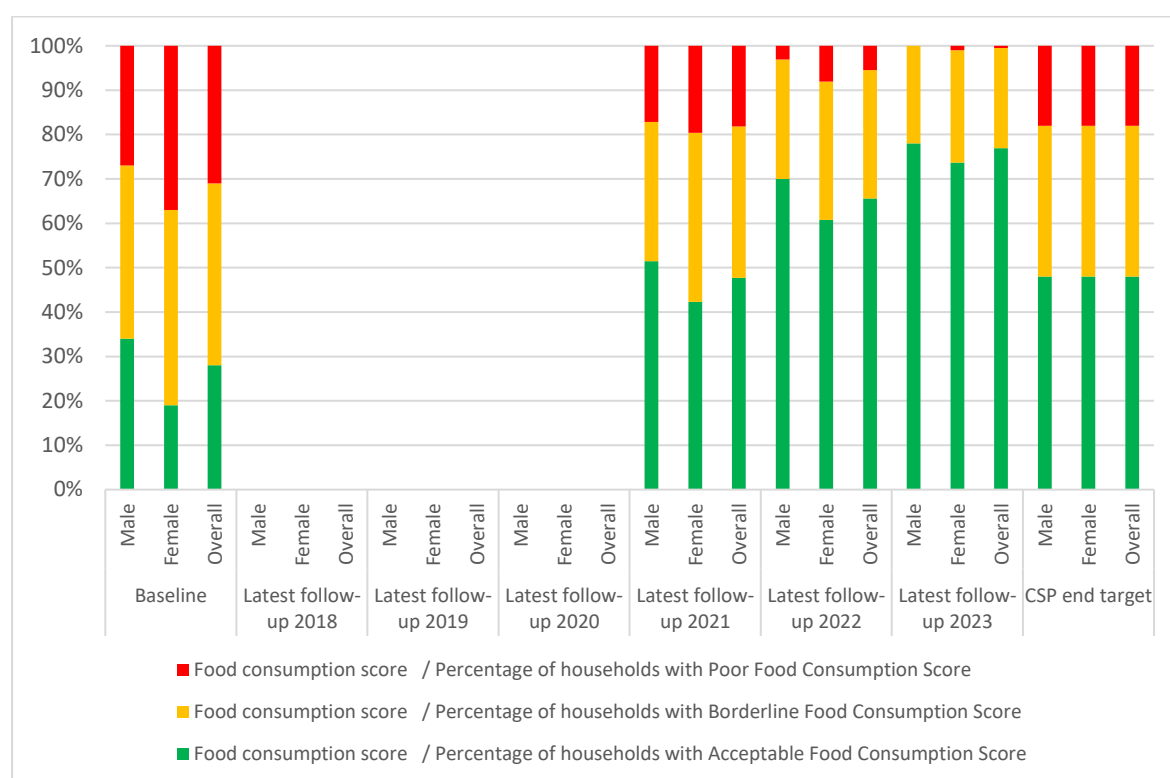
¹⁷⁹ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

¹⁸⁰ WFP. 2021. *Endline Impact Evaluation: Asset Creation and Livelihood Project in Isingiro*.

¹⁸¹ WFP. 2021. *Endline Impact Evaluation: Asset Creation and Livelihood Project in Isingiro*, p. 15.

¹⁸² FGD participants in the clustered food systems groups in Southwest did not recall ACL support from WFP. They commented on AMS activities, such as in post-harvest management and bulking.

Figure 11: Food consumption scores, SO2 Activity 3, Southwest¹⁸³



Source: CM-R010b_Outcome Indicators UG01 2018-2023

102. The Excel Hort Agribusiness Incubator (ECHA) project provides another example of an asset creation and livelihood intervention during the CSP period. While two incubation hubs were established in Kyangwali and Kyaka settlements,¹⁸⁴ WFP staff interviewed noted that the Kyangwali hub has not been maintained, primarily because it was located too far away from the refugee settlement and lacked a nearby water source, which was consequential for one of its main assets, a fishpond. There is no evidence that the project contributed to improved food consumption or livelihoods, to date.

103. In Karamoja, community assets created through the Turkana-Karamoja cross-border project were implemented during a condensed time frame in 2023. In Kamion sub-county, Kaabong, focus group discussion participants reported problems with beehives, including a 50 percent colonization rate, and no market to sell the honey. OFSP vines had been harvested (one growing season only) and sold to buyers identified by the cooperating partner and WFP. While the cross-border project completed outputs, there were challenges to sustaining improvements in food and nutrition security outcomes among targeted beneficiaries.

Finding 13: WFP contributed to improvements in knowledge and practices in post-harvest management and village saving and loans among smallholder farmers. There are still challenges among smallholders in accessing markets. Local procurement and private sector engagement have not yet been fully integrated to support a food systems approach. (EQ 2.1)

104. Smallholder farmers improved knowledge and practices in post-harvest management. In focus group discussions with farmers' organizations supported by the agriculture and market support intervention, participants cited the contributions of WFP in training and onsite technical support on good practices in storage of produce, and in providing equipment such as tarpaulins, hermetic bags and siloes. Within the agriculture and market support intervention, all the supported farmers' organizations consulted

¹⁸³ Data for SO2 Activity 3 from 2018 to 2020 were not available on COMET. Data were only available for the Southwest.

¹⁸⁴ WFP and Excel Hort Consult. 2022. *The F3A Model Business Incubation End of Pilot Project Completion Report*.

began bulking their produce collectively after receiving training from WFP on good practices and securing storage space, which sets a foundation for selling produce at a larger scale. The agriculture and market support intervention has also set guidelines to streamline its interventions, which has strengthened support in the areas of processing and has added value.

105. CSP monitoring data for Activity 6 indicate an overall decrease in the rate of post-harvest losses from 17.9 percent at the baseline in 2018 to 12.1 percent at the follow-up in 2023.¹⁸⁵ Despite positive progress overall, there have been some fluctuations and challenges over this period. For example, a 2024 evaluation found that enhanced capacity for storage of grains reduced post-harvest losses among beneficiaries consulted but the effects were limited by insufficient space.¹⁸⁶

106. WFP support to VSLAs improved smallholder farmers' knowledge on savings and loans but did not increase loan access or investment spending. Members of farmers' cooperatives consulted through focus group discussions noted benefits stemming from WFP training, such as increased knowledge on governance of savings groups, financial management and good practices in lending. Farmers who are members of savings groups reported a greater ability to buy agricultural inputs for the next planting season and to pay for school fees and supplies for their homes. The agriculture and market support endline survey confirmed that a high proportion of agriculture and market support-assisted smallholder farmers use their group savings on consumption spending (that is, on food or medical expenses), rather than investment spending (for example, agriculture investments).¹⁸⁷ However, farmer organizations consulted are still unable to access loans either from their VSLAs or through banks, which is a challenge for expanding their agricultural production. The agriculture and market support survey confirmed that the proportion of households that accessed loans through their farmers' groups was low overall and decreased from 10.9 percent in 2020 to 8.6 percent in 2022.¹⁸⁸

107. According to focus group discussions and a WFP report (2024), most farmers' organizations supported by WFP agriculture and market support did not have access to value-addition technology for agroprocessing. At a programme level, only 28 percent of the smallholder farmers received such support due to WFP financial constraints.¹⁸⁹ Farmers were still doing value addition on a small scale, limiting their growth potential. Those who did not have access to value-addition equipment cited this as a missed opportunity to diversify products and increase revenue from higher-value items like maize and cassava flour.

108. WFP has made limited contributions to market linkages for the smallholder farmers it supports through the agriculture and the market support intervention. On the one hand, WFP provided technical support for production of agricultural produce for smallholder farmers, purchased produce from smallholders and supported processing and value addition by setting guidelines to streamline interventions. Smallholder farmers also reported increased access to market information.¹⁹⁰ However, focus group discussions with farmers' organizations identified ongoing challenges: in accessing markets, in finding new buyers or a wide range of buyers of produce (retailers or aggregators) and low market prices.

109. The WFP agriculture and market support did not bring about widespread improvements in the capacity of private sector actors (such as retailers, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and aggregators) to adopt pro-smallholder farmer business models, sustainable agriculture, or the provision of safe and nutritious foods. Omia Agribusiness Group is a positive example of how an MSME's capacity was strengthened to the point where it partnered with WFP to support smallholder farmers' organizations through the provision of extension services, but this approach has not yet been pursued on a large scale by WFP. A regional evaluation of the Local and Regional Food Procurement Policy (LRFPP)¹⁹¹ noted that

¹⁸⁵ CM-R010b_Outcome indicators UG01 2023.

¹⁸⁶ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

¹⁸⁷ WFP. 2023. *Endline Survey Report: Agriculture and Market Support Programme*.

¹⁸⁸ WFP. 2023. *Endline Survey Report: Agriculture and Market Support Programme*.

¹⁸⁹ WFP. 2024. *AMS Baseline Survey Report*, p. 44. A greater proportion of participating smallholder farmers (40 percent) received such support in Karamoja.

¹⁹⁰ The AMS endline survey (2023) reported an increase in proportion of farmers accessing market information among beneficiaries of AMS support, from 14.8 percent in 2020 to 64.4 percent in 2022.

¹⁹¹ [WFP/EB.2/2019/4-C](#).

investing in smallholder farmers by traders resulted in better business for them, with all maize sourced by WFP since the end of 2022 procured under conditional contracts with grain traders.

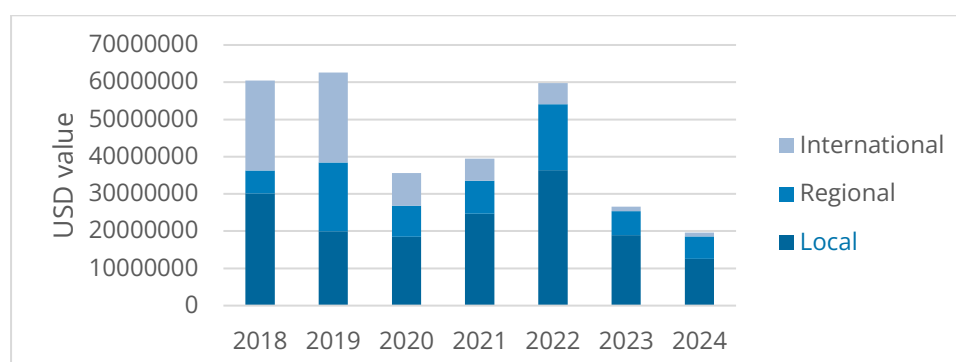
110. Since 2019, WFP has invested USD 2.5 million in purchasing 3,505 metric tons of food from smallholder farmers in Karamoja.¹⁹² The funds invested helped improve the capacity of farmers' organizations in terms of their institutional development and food supply capacity (that is, governance, volumes of food commodities bulked and sold). Additionally, the number of farmers' organizations institutionally qualified and registered as WFP vendors increased from two in 2017 to ten by the end of 2023, three of which registered as cooperatives, becoming advanced agribusiness entities.¹⁹³

111. The country office noted that the farmers' organizations it supported have diversified their business portfolios, with some, such as Namalu Farmers Association,¹⁹⁴ investing in value addition and primary processing (milling flour, vegetable oil, etc.). The country office collected evidence of clear understanding and ability to aggregate and supply food commodities required,¹⁹⁵ with volumes increasing from 98 metric tons in 2018 from two farmers' organizations to 2,345 metric tons of food commodities from nine farmers' organizations during the 2023 purchasing period.¹⁹⁶

112. Not all traders are at the same level and, because of the WFP approach to local procurement, more now want to engage. However, there have been concerns raised by key informant interviews that although WFP does not tell traders or smallholder farmers when to buy and when to harvest, there are risks that WFP has created expectations that they will continue to purchase large food tonnages.

113. In 2023, about 75,000 metric tons of food were purchased locally for the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) but there was a significant procurement decline in 2024 due to the continued shift to cash and funding limitations. See Figure 12 below on WFP food procurement by source. According to the annual performance plan review (2022) for procurement, USD 61.5 million was injected into the local economy through food, goods and services procured. Approximately 10,620 metric tons of food was purchased from smallholder farmers under the LRFPP versus a target of 10,000 metric tons. However, the country office recognized that there has been an inadequate capacity to verify or trace the fact that at least 20 percent of food has been purchased directly from smallholder farmers by traders; there have also been broader challenges in measuring the impact of the LRFPP.¹⁹⁷

Figure 12: WFP Uganda food procurement by source, 2018-2024¹⁹⁸



Source: Food Procurement UG and RBN Data 2018-2024

¹⁹² WFP. 2024. *June 2024, LRFPP Uganda Implementation Plan (Final)*.

¹⁹³ WFP. 2024. *June 2024, LRFPP Uganda Implementation Plan (Final)*.

¹⁹⁴ One of the first to be enlisted as a smallholder farmer vendor.

¹⁹⁵ WFP. 2024. *June 2024, LRFPP Uganda Implementation Plan (Final)*.

¹⁹⁶ WFP. 2024. *June 2024, LRFPP Uganda Implementation Plan (Final)*.

¹⁹⁷ WFP. 2024. *Evaluation of LRF pilot programme in Eastern Africa*.

¹⁹⁸ Data for 2024 is for January to May.

Institutional capacity strengthening interventions

114. WFP included institutional capacity strengthening in a range of CSP areas, including asset creation and livelihood, school feeding, health systems strengthening, social protection and shock-responsive systems strengthening.

Finding 14: WFP contributed to improving the capacity of national and subnational actors in relation to social protection and shock-responsive systems, and for community-driven resilience planning. (EQ 2.1)

115. WFP contributed to enhanced capacity in the areas of collaboration among national actors, strengthened architecture for social protection, improved technical capability of national actors to obtain analysis and evidence on social protection issues and in preparation for climatic shocks. These represent steps towards a strengthened adaptive social protection system in Uganda, the intermediate change intended by the CSP.

More effective and efficient collaboration among national actors on social protection¹⁹⁹ and resilience planning

116. In the West Nile, WFP contributed to strengthening the collaboration of relevant social protection actors by supporting the establishment of district social protection coordination committees in all districts in May 2022. Specifically, WFP provided technical support to a technical working group led by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) that sought to strengthen district-level coordination of social protection.²⁰⁰ The committees convene local government representatives from district offices. Their establishment addresses long-term challenges in relation to information exchange on social protection interventions, grievance management and the overlap or isolation of roles and responsibilities of relevant government and community-level actors. Government staff interviewed confirmed that the committees met regularly but did not know how often.

117. WFP also contributed to more robust, evidence-based and coordinated strategic planning by assisting with the development of district social protection investment plans in three districts of the West Nile (Koboko, Yumbe, and Adjumani) in August 2023. WFP provided financial support through the Child Sensitive Social Protection (CSSP) programme to the MGLSD to conduct Economic Policy Research Institute (EPRI) training²⁰¹ for district local government representatives and facilitated technical support through the Ugandan universities, Muni and Gulu, for developing the plans.²⁰² According to key informant interviews, the investment plans demonstrated increased district government understanding of the local gaps and needs in social protection and facilitated making more informed requests for future support from development partners.

118. Through PRO-ACT, WFP contributed to district disaster management committees (DDMCs) enhancing their strategic planning for emergency response and disaster preparedness at the district level in Karamoja. In 2021, workshops convened by WFP, the Department of Disaster Preparedness and Management (DRDPM) of the Office of the Prime Minister and FAO led to district-level contingency plans for disaster preparedness in nine districts in Karamoja.²⁰³ The contingency plans were subsequently integrated with their respective district development plans.²⁰⁴ In 2023, district local governments and other development actors drafted a regional drought anticipatory action plan, which is the first guiding framework in the country to initiate actions in the event that forecast-based triggers have been reached.

¹⁹⁹ The subsections under this finding correspond to short-term outcomes as described in the 'pathways to social protection impact for WFP', in: WFP. 2021. WFP Strategy for Support to Social Protection, p. 70.

²⁰⁰ WFP developed the ToR for the committees and disseminated it through workshops attended by MGLSD and DLG staff. WFP funded the design of a training curriculum for the coordination committees.

²⁰¹ EPRI delivers training courses on social protection.

²⁰² UNICEF, Sweden, WFP. 2023. *Child-Sensitive Social Protection in Refugee Hosting districts of West Nile, Uganda, UN Joint Programme Progress report to SIDA, 1 January to December 2022*.

²⁰³ District-level contingency plans provide a snapshot of district characteristics, management and coordination arrangements in the event of disasters. Sources: Moroto District Local Government – Multi-Hazard Contingency Plan, 2021-2023; Report for Review of the District Contingency Plans for the 9 Districts of Karamoja Region, February 2021.

²⁰⁴ FAO, Government of Uganda, EU, and WFP. Integration of District Contingency plans in the District Development Plans and Budgets with Linkage to the NDPIII 2020/21- 2024/25, 2021.

WFP provided technical input to anticipatory action plan development (including validation and simulation) and monitoring and evaluation arrangements.²⁰⁵ Government staff highlighted the significance of these plans in providing specific guidelines for actions to be undertaken in the event of a disaster, and in providing a common understanding of the needs for disaster risk preparation in the region and a basis for dialogue among district local governments, national government and international actors. The challenge is to secure future funding for implementing specific anticipatory actions.

119. WFP also contributed to enhanced community-driven resilience planning by helping district local governments in Karamoja and the Southwest region to strengthen their technical understanding of the three-pronged approach (3PA), and facilitating the development of community action plans and their integration into district development plans. The community action plans outline the key actions towards community-driven resilience. Interviewed district local government officials from the Southwest noted that community action plans have been a guiding document for government resilience and livelihoods interventions and cited their increased understanding of the 3PA and its value in helping the Government design quality public work initiatives informed by communities' needs. The plans will allow governments to better mobilize domestic and international resources. Interviewed district local government representatives in the Southwest noted, however, that securing resources to fund public work initiatives in community action plans is the next challenge.

Strengthened national social protection architecture

120. CSP implementation helped strengthen foundational elements of national social protection system architecture in Uganda.

121. In 2022-2023, WFP contributed to national efforts to address inadequate coverage and widespread errors in national identification (NID) cards. Supported by WFP, the Ugandan Parliamentary Forum for Social Protection (UPFSP) advocated for corrections to NIDs, including an advocacy campaign in June 2022 with the National Identification Registration Authority, the Parliament of Uganda and the Ministry of Health.²⁰⁶ WFP also provided financial support to the UPFSP to organize visits for parliamentarians to the National Identification Registration Authority offices to analyse status of NID access in Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE), DRDIP and NutriCash, and to organize peer learning sessions and media coverage of the issue of NIDs and access to social protection.²⁰⁷ In November 2023, the MGLSD drafted national guidelines to correct errors in NIDs that reflected inputs from WFP and from MPs and other government officials, convened by UPFSP.²⁰⁸

122. WFP contributed to improved beneficiary management information

Uganda's National Single Registry

The launch of the National Single Registry (NSR) was led by the Directorate of Social Protection in the MoGLSD. The establishment of the registry addresses problems of having separate lists of beneficiaries across different government-led social protection programmes, by connecting beneficiary lists across programmes such as DRDIP, SAGE, NUSAF, and the Orphans and Vulnerable Children programme. The NSR provides the MoGLSD a more complete picture of the beneficiaries, bringing together information on a range of national social protection systems. The NSR is also planned to integrate information from WFP's Karamoja Social Registry in the near future, enabling sector-wide verification of applicants and beneficiaries for social protection interventions.

However, the NSR still only includes existing beneficiaries of social protection programmes, and as such does not serve as a comprehensive repository of information on all potential beneficiaries in the country. This function would instead be served by the National Social Registry, whose establishment is still ongoing.

²⁰⁵ District contingency plans are integrated into the regional drought anticipatory action plan.

²⁰⁶ Interviewed stakeholders noted that WFP provided financial support and technical inputs on advocacy approaches, to the UPFSP. However, documents reviewed did not provide details on timeline and funding.

²⁰⁷ ILO, EU/ILO/UNICEF/GCSPF. 2023. *Programme on Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management – Final Report; CSSP Interventions to Expand Access to National Identification and Civil Registration*.

²⁰⁸ Government of Uganda, Sweden, WFP, UNICEF. 2023. *CSSP Interventions to Expand Access to National Identification (NID) and Civil Registration – Progress Brief, May 2023*.

systems through its support for the National Single Registry (see text box). WFP: contracted consultants to upgrade and conduct periodic maintenance of the registry and prepare a feasibility study for developing the social registry module; provided financial support for technical working group meetings; and financed training on the administration and management of national social protection systems.²⁰⁹ A National Social Registry, which is now in a feasibility phase, would centralize data on vulnerability indicators to inform the design and targeting of future government-led social protection programmes.²¹⁰

123. Through PRO-ACT, WFP also collaborated with ILO to support the 2024 roll-out of the Ministry of Local Government's Digital Village Directory in Karamoja. Compared to current paper-based village registers, the Digital Village Directory will provide digital, up-to-date information on citizen data at the village, parish and subcounty levels that can be used for beneficiary targeting for anticipatory actions and other programmes in Karamoja.²¹¹

Improved technical capability of national actors to obtain robust analysis and evidence on social protection issues and in preparation for climatic shocks

124. In the West Nile, WFP contributed to enhanced technical capability of three district local governments in social protection programming by providing technical assistance for the design of micro-projects that responded to the district social investment plans.²¹² These projects, which focused on preventing teen pregnancy, are indicative of district local governments' increased awareness of technical concepts within social protection, and their enhanced ability to assess needs and formulate programmes. Project implementation began in May 2024.

125. WFP contributed to enhanced technical capability among government actors in preparing for climatic shocks. At the national level, WFP support is linked to improved technical knowledge on disaster risk financing at the Office of the Prime Minister, leading to the revival of a technical working group comprised of the Office of the Prime Minister, MGLSD and other ministries, departments and agencies. The group is responsible for approving indicators related to technical oversight and the coordination of anticipatory actions. WFP co-financed a methodology to define region-specific thresholds and triggers for drought in Karamoja developed by the Intergovernmental Authority on Development Climate Prediction and Applications Centre (ICPAC), Uganda National Meteorological Authority (UNMA) and Karamoja district local governments. The region-specific triggers and thresholds for drought are essential to decision making on anticipatory actions.²¹³

126. Through PRO-ACT, and in collaboration with FAO, WFP contributed to the enhancement of climate forecasting and early warning information in Karamoja. WFP contracted ICPAC to provide on-the-job technical support to UNMA in downscaling climate forecasts from the East African regional level to national and subnational levels. Since 2021, this has resulted in early warning advisories, which had previously not been systematically produced.²¹⁴ With technical leadership from FAO and WFP funding for equipment, the National Emergency Coordination and Operations Centre (NECOC) and district disaster management committees in Karamoja resumed the publication of monthly multi-hazard early warning bulletins, district-specific monthly early warning bulletins and a quarterly regional drought early warning bulletin.²¹⁵ Since 2022, community-level actors, including DDMCs and town agents, engaged to disseminate early warning information through megaphones and community radios. WFP supported radio spots, drama troupes,

²⁰⁹ See [TRANSFORM](#).

²¹⁰ MGLSD. 2023. *Terms of Reference for a Technical Feasibility Study to Develop a Social Registry in Uganda*.

²¹¹ WFP, FAO, EU - PRO-ACT. 2023. *Half Year Technical Report, July 2023*; ILO, EU/ILO/UNICEF/GCSPF. 2023. *Programme on Improving Synergies between Social Protection and Public Finance Management – Final Report*.

²¹² Examples include Koboko DLG Project Title: Prevention and mitigation of the impact of child marriage and teenage pregnancy in Koboko, June 2023; Adjumani District Local Government, Micro Project Concept Note, Combating Teenage Pregnancy and Sexual Gender-Based Violence, September 2023.

²¹³ ICPAC, WFP, UNMA. 2023. *Defining Flood Thresholds/ Triggers & Endorsement of Drought Trigger for Karamoja: Co-Development Approach*.

²¹⁴ Oliver V. Wasonga and Raphael Lotira Arasio Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU) Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University. 2022. *Indigenous Early Warning In Karamoja, Uganda: Application, Validity, and Entry Points for Integration with Conventional Forecasts*.

²¹⁵ WFP, FAO, EU - PRO-ACT. 2022. *Interim Narrative Report, January to December 2022*.

community meetings and public address systems in these efforts. However, focus group discussion feedback suggest limitations in reaching all smallholder farmers.²¹⁶

Finding 15: While WFP and the Government of Uganda did not have a shared vision for school feeding, WFP facilitated the Ugandan government joining the Global School Meals Coalition and advancing a draft national school feeding policy – key steps toward strengthened national ownership of home-grown school feeding. (EQ 2.1)

127. While the WFP vision for school feeding is based on the HGSF model, in which meals to children are provided by schools using locally sourced nutritious foods from smallholders, the Government of Uganda's vision is based on a parent-led school feeding model, in which the responsibility for school meal provision is given to parents and guardians (see text box).

Uganda's Parent-Led School Feeding Model

"The Uganda Education Act 2008 law gives the responsibility of feeding children while at school to parents and guardians. The Parent/Guardian Led School Feeding Program encourages parents to voluntarily send children to school with food. Because of this, there is little data available regarding the types of foods involved, the numbers of children receiving food, etc."

Source: GCNF. (2019). GCNF Global Survey - Republic of Uganda

128. A milestone in the evolution of the HGSF was achieved when the Government of Uganda joined the Global School Meals Coalition in 2023. This expressed government interest in HGSF and in being part of a wider global network on school feeding. It also required a commitment to developing and funding a school feeding policy. WFP contributed to this through advocacy and technical assistance,²¹⁷ and through providing financial support for the Government's participation in coalition meetings.²¹⁸ In that same year, WFP contributed to the Ministry of Education's drafting of a national school feeding policy, by facilitating consultations among national- and regional-level actors during the policy development process. The policy has not yet been finalized.

129. WFP and government staff interviewed noted that, despite the slow pace of adaptation of the HGSF programme, these positive developments illustrate progress towards a shared vision and national ownership of HGSF by the Government of Uganda. Although the HGSF programme has not yet been mainstreamed within the Ministry of Education and Sports or integrated in a policy, it is managed through government structures with close monitoring by departments of education at the subnational level.

Finding 16: WFP support to the health sector helped to strengthen moderate acute malnutrition management in Uganda. (EQ 2.1)

130. Throughout the CSP, WFP collaborated with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to enhance the treatment and prevention of moderate acute malnutrition. WFP contributed technical expertise to the review and implementation of essential policies related to moderate acute malnutrition, which include the integrated management of acute malnutrition and maternal, young child and adolescent nutrition. WFP funded the operationalization of these policies through training of service providers and caregivers in the community to strengthen the community health components in the policies. In this area, WFP contributions are more difficult to trace because it is not the only development actor that provides this support.

131. WFP nutrition programming is through health facilities and relies on health worker outreach efforts. WFP has strengthened the referral system for management of moderate acute malnutrition in the community, trained health workers in management of moderate acute malnutrition and provided moderate acute malnutrition treatment supplies in all service delivery points. WFP also supported integration of the moderate acute malnutrition information systems to the government health information system at the Ministry of Health (DHIS2) by funding the review and piloting of existing tools, and training healthcare workers on use and reporting of relevant data on moderate acute malnutrition.

²¹⁶ Some farmers received messages via radio, others reported having no radio, others had no recollection of such messaging.

²¹⁷ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

²¹⁸ KIIIs with government stakeholders.

Provision of supply chain services and expertise

Finding 17: Inter-agency on-demand services provided valuable operational support to partners but were not widely utilized. The country office's supply chain unit was crucial in providing regional corridor services from WFP Uganda to the East Africa region. (EQ 2.1)

132. During the CSP period, WFP on-demand services were accessed by United Nations and non-governmental organization partners on a cost recovery basis, and by the national Government (free of charge), mainly in relation to transport and storage facilities for emergency response, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, on-demand services were not used extensively among humanitarian actors in Uganda. The total value of services provided between 2018 and 2023 was USD 1.15 million with approximately 50 percent of charges related to services used by WHO (largely based on support provided during the COVID-19 response).

133. WFP also provided inter-agency support under the business operations strategy in alignment with the "One UN" agenda, and which includes services related to customs clearing, pest control, warehousing, security, office facilities, etc.

134. The WFP supply chain unit has not engaged in efforts to strengthen government and humanitarian actors' capacity to deliver emergency response. Instead, the unit provided capacity strengthening support to retailers by conducting training on food safety and quality, and business development, shop management, infrastructure and basic financial literacy. The WFP food safety and quality unit, within the supply chain unit, worked with the retail market development team to strengthen the capacity of WFP staff and partners to transfer knowledge of food safety and quality to retailers in the target markets.

135. The logistics cluster, for which WFP is the global lead agency designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, has not deployed in Uganda since 2018. However, the WFP country office logistics team had a similar function through the provision of on-demand services on full cost recovery (as noted above). During emergencies, such as for the locust control, Ebola and COVID-19 responses, donors provided funds for common services (storage, transport, engineering and logistics information management).

136. Uganda is a vital hub for the East Africa region in terms of logistics support. A key responsibility for the WFP Uganda's supply chain unit is to handle the transportation of food and non-food items both within the country and overland to neighbouring countries. Neighbouring WFP country offices are considered internal clients who benefit from corridor services (transport, handling, storage, customs clearance, etc.).

137. WFP has also contributed to the development of the National Grain Trade Policy 2018-2022, subnational ordinances on grain handling, and agriculture and market support training manuals with a focus on grain post-harvest handling, storage and overall market facilitation.²¹⁹

EQ2.2 - Cross-cutting themes

Finding 18: CSP activities were mostly gender-sensitive and addressed equitable participation and the role of women in decision making. They rarely addressed social relations with the goal of transforming the root cause of gender inequalities. CSP contributions to gender equality were primarily through gender-targeted interventions focused on women's economic empowerment. (EQ 2.2)

138. The CSP (2018-2022) aimed to introduce gender-responsive programming approaches.²²⁰ Attention was given to "vulnerable groups such as pregnant women, women with disabilities, the elderly and child-headed households during cash and food distribution and nutrition activities".²²¹

139. WFP activities made efforts to improve equitable access to and control over food security and nutrition. WFP monitoring data suggests that interventions contributed to shifting gender dynamics in

²¹⁹ WFP. 2020. *Linking Humanitarian and Development Assistance in Refugee Hosting Districts*.

²²⁰ WFP. 2017. *Uganda Country Strategic Plan (2018-2022)*.

²²¹ WFP. 2023. *Review of WFP Uganda Country Office Gender Action Plan (2018-2022)*.

decision making, with increasing numbers of refugee respondents reporting joint household decision making. However, this shift may come at the expense of women-only decision making, particularly in the Southwest, where women-only decision making was 51 percent at baseline in 2018 and 12.88 percent in the latest follow-up in 2023.²²² The evaluation on resilience programming found positive changes in the gender dynamics in household decision making, albeit with regional differences. The evaluation notes that “women were empowered through enhanced knowledge on agriculture and financial literacy and enhanced decision-making capacity.”²²³

140. The shift to cash as a transfer modality was informed by gender analysis, but there is less evidence of systematic analysis in other programme areas over the CSP period.²²⁴

141. Although the CSP did not provide explicit direction on women’s economic empowerment or financial inclusion, the WFP country office made contributions in this area in line with Objective 3 of the WFP 2022 Gender Policy (“Advance the economic empowerment of women and girls in food security and nutrition”), particularly over the last two years.²²⁵

“In April 2022, I was enrolled in Nutri-Cash. Since then, I have experience so much in my life. In the past, I had so many challenges, I couldn’t cover the food items needed for my children. Now, I can acquire the dietary foods. Our lives are ok now. My children are ok. The money has helped so much. I was trained on using the money... The money has (now) stopped. I now sustain myself with tomatoes and watermelon sales. I invest in this. I have also opened an account for myself, to save, outside of Nutri-Cash.”

Female FGD participant (host community, West Nile)

- Feedback on the pilot NutriCash programme is largely positive, highlighting its role in helping women meet basic needs and increase agency and economic empowerment, leading to greater access to and control over resources (see text box).
- Financial inclusion through cash-based transfers and financial literacy trainings were integrated in other activities (for example, activities 1, 2 and 6). Focus group discussions with refugees and local populations across activities indicated that some women beneficiaries were able to start small joint businesses and contribute to group savings, although some struggled to implement what they learned through trainings due to having insufficient funds to save.
- The 2021-2024 Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation project on digital financial inclusion and women’s economic empowerment in Nakivale refugee settlement supported the transition to digital cash transfers and provided training in financial literacy to refugee and host communities, with a focus on women. The project worked with men champions to combat negative effects of discriminatory gender norms, and with private financial service providers and the Uganda Central Bank, to design financial products, services and policies that improve economic opportunities for women.²²⁶ There has been an increase in confidence and usage of digital financial products and services among beneficiaries (from 67 percent at baseline to 98 percent at the end of the project).²²⁷ Further, 74 percent of respondents to the project endline assessment reported income increases, 46 percent reported increases in assets, and 59 percent had started a business related to digital financial inclusion.²²⁸
- Agriculture and market support (Activity 6) had the potential to contribute to women’s economic empowerment, but this did not materialize. A baseline study found that men were benefiting more from the programme than women (aggregating more, selling more and using more technology)

²²² WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

²²³ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

²²⁴ See for example: WFP and UNHCR. 2018. *Cash and Protection and Gender in Ugandan Refugee Settlements*.

²²⁵ WFP. 2022. *WFP Gender Policy 2022*.

²²⁶ WFP. 2024. *Enabling digital financial inclusion and women’s economic empowerment through cash transfers*.

²²⁷ WFP. 2024. WFP Uganda 2023 ACR – Draft.

²²⁸ WFP. 2023. *Digital Financial Inclusion for Women’s Economic Empowerment Endline Assessment*.

and that “the programme stands a risk of exacerbating the already existing gender inequalities”.²²⁹ The 2023 annual country report (ACR) reported that women and youth in agriculture and market support activities continued to mainly be involved in the lowest parts of the value chain and had limited decision making power and access to the benefits of production.²³⁰ Since 2022, the WFP partnership with the Mastercard Foundation expanded financial literacy to focus on youth entrepreneurship and job creation across the value chain, including post-harvest management and integration of gender considerations, which has the potential to address some of these disparities.²³¹

142. School meals provided incentives for parents to send girls to school, improving their access to education. A few interviewees noted that staying in school reduces the risk of child marriage. However, in the absence of gender analysis and explicit efforts to mainstream gender in programme design (which was not done at the outset), there is a risk of reinforcing traditional gender roles. For example, take-home rations targeting girls also reinforced girls’ traditional role of being responsible for bringing food to the family. WFP did not pursue partnerships and activities that integrated a strong gender and equity lens, raised awareness about girls right to education, or made linkages to SRHR through this school-based programming.²³²

143. The country office had a Gender Action Plan 2018–2022 to support gender mainstreaming. Its implementation was hampered by limited accountability for the plan, lack of monitoring, absence of a dedicated budget and inadequate capacity of WFP and cooperating partner staff in gender mainstreaming.²³³ The country office enrolled in the Gender Equality Certification Programme in 2023 and is implementing the required improvement plan.

Finding 19: WFP maintained a community feedback mechanism (CFM) throughout the CSP, but its coverage across geographic locations and CSP activities was uneven. Slow case resolution undermined beneficiary confidence in the mechanism. In 2023, the country office enhanced its strategy for community engagement to improve accountability to affected populations. (EQ2.2)

144. WFP Uganda established a centralized community feedback mechanism via a toll-free helpline in October 2017, to complement field-based helpdesks managed by non-government organization partners and community-based structures for channelling grievances (for example, village health teams, food and cash management committees). The helpline, and its corresponding centralized database (Sugar CRM), has nationwide coverage. Helpline calls are classified by case severity²³⁴ and processed accordingly.

145. Although the helpline’s geographic coverage is limited by the phone network, all cooperating partners are expected to set up help desks and allocate related resources in their budgets. While initial capacity assessments considered the capacity of cooperating partners for community feedback mechanisms, field-level agreement budgets do not clearly identify resources for helpdesks. Process monitoring and stakeholder consultations indicate that the visibility of WFP helplines and helpdesks is greater for general food assistance and nutrition activities than related to asset creation or livelihoods and school feeding.²³⁵ Available data do not, however, permit a comprehensive assessment of what percentage

²²⁹ WFP. 2020. *Gender Approach Paper: Moving Gender Equality from Rhetoric to Practice*.

²³⁰ WFP. 2024. WFP Uganda 2023 ACR – Draft.

²³¹ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

²³² Global evaluations also found that school feeding interventions tend to focus on numerical targets for equal inclusion of women and men and girls and boys, but have not identified, prioritized or monitored opportunities to achieve more gender-transformative results. WFP. 2020. *Strategic Evaluation of the Contribution of School Feeding Activities to the Achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals*.

²³³ WFP. 2023. *Review of WFP Uganda Country Office Gender Action Plan (2018-2022)*.

²³⁴ High priority/Category 1 (reports of misconduct, protection or conflict issues), Medium priority/Category 2 (requests for information or complaints that require inputs from field-based or specialized staff to resolve), Low priority/Category 3 (requests for information that helpline operators can resolve on the spot). Source: WFP. WFP Uganda Community Feedback Mechanisms (CFM), February 2024 Monthly Report.

²³⁵ WFP. 2023. *Process Monitoring Biannual Report, WFP Uganda Country Office, July–December 2023*.

of cooperating partners implemented community feedback mechanisms. NutriCash shares a complaints and grievance mechanism with DRDIP, a government-led initiative.²³⁶

146. At the time of the evaluation, aggregate data about the community feedback mechanism are limited to the data in the Sugar CRM database, which does not include data from the help desks operated by cooperating partners. These data provide only a partial picture of cases raised and case resolution.

147. Despite the country office's emphasis on resolving or referring 100 percent of cases, backlogs persist, particularly for high and medium priority cases (see Table 4 below) The country office struggles with timely resolution of more complex cases that require investigation. Focus group discussion participants in the refugee communities noted the existence of a community feedback mechanism helpline number, but some also reported frequent busy signals and no response to the calls.

148. The lack of aggregate data on use of different feedback mechanisms (helpline, help desks operated by cooperating partners, feedback channelled through community structures) limits gender differentiated analysis. However, the country office is aware that the community feedback mechanism helpline has less traction among women, in part due to its reliance on phone networks.²³⁷

Table 4: Community feedback mechanism helpline cases: 1 January–30 June, 2024

	High priority	Medium priority	Low priority	Other	Total
Resolved cases	340	3,075	115,604		119,019
Pending cases	149	617	-		766
Total cases	489	3,692	115,604	1,393	121,178
Percent case closure:	69.53%	83.29%	100.00%		98.22%

Source: Sugar CRM Please note that "Other" refers to blanks that are in the Sugar CRM database

149. Integrating the helpline and helpdesk into a more holistic community engagement and feedback mechanism system²³⁸ has highlighted the value of complementary community engagement methods.

150. The country office adopted an intense community consultation process prior to Phase 2 and Phase 3 prioritization of general food assistance for refugees. Key informant interviews in Kampala, audit reports and community consultations suggest that the approach used prior to Phase 3 was good practice, in that community feedback on the most vulnerable types of households informed a more inclusive concept of vulnerability that reflects reality on the ground. Consultation feedback informed the Phase 3 index-based model prioritizing the most vulnerable refugees in the settlements. Nonetheless, refugee leaders in the focus group discussions pointed out that they still felt that prioritization reflected a decision taken at an agency's headquarters, far away from the settlement.

Finding 20: Changes in modality, ration cuts and prioritization increased the protection risks for affected populations. (EQ2.2)

151. Most indicators and post-distribution monitoring reports suggest that WFP ensured that affected populations had safe access to assistance and services, without any barriers. In 2022 and 2023, for example, almost all beneficiaries reported accessing aid without any hinderances and safety challenges. In

²³⁶ Government of Uganda and UNICEF. 2023. *Social Assistance Targeting in Uganda – Implications for Social Cohesion in Communities*, September 2023.

²³⁷ WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR.

²³⁸ In 2023, CFM was integrated with a stronger community engagement role for the country office as part of the RAM team.

2023, 96 percent reported that they were treated with dignity, consistent with results from the previous years.²³⁹

152. However, the protection landscape for men and women deteriorated as ration cuts, prioritization, and new modalities of assistance (shift to cash) were introduced in refugee settlements.

153. In 2021-2022, the proportion of refugee households reporting increased gender-based violence because of ration cuts dropped from 40.33 percent to 26.67 percent.²⁴⁰ However, reports of community tensions due to ration cuts rose from 12.33 percent to 18 percent, a nearly 50 percent increase.²⁴¹ In 2024, half of the responses mentioned an increase in conflict, family division and abandonment by household heads. Responses indicated that ration cuts (among other reasons) contributed to lack of food and financial resources leading to disagreements over resource allocation and exacerbated tensions within households.²⁴²

154. Similarly, the Phase 1 community consultation report found increased concerns in communities regarding crime, theft, SGBV, child labour, transactional sex and teenage pregnancies after the prioritization.²⁴³ Consultations in 2022 prior to Phase 3 implementation noted a host of protection-related risks, such as increased tensions between refugees. Focus group discussions conducted for this evaluation cited a resulting increase in tensions within refugee settlements and an increase in theft among refugees. These concerns were emphasized in focus group discussions with women, who noted an increase in family separations, with husbands planning to repatriate to their country of origin.

155. In 2023, WFP transitioned from banking location delivery and cash-in-hand transfer methods to agency banking, and subsequently to mobile money distribution. In addition to expected efficiency gains (see Finding 30), the shift also aimed to increase safety and protection and minimize unauthorized withdrawal, theft and violence. However, some refugee settlements, particularly Kiryandongo and Kyangwali, responded poorly to this change, experiencing issues with mobile transfers including limited agent network, poor network coverage, high transaction costs and poor digital literacy among affected populations.²⁴⁴ WFP worked to mitigate these issues by partnering with additional service providers and conducting trainings. It also engaged in financial literacy training to address domestic violence within households, highlighting the importance of gender-neutral joint decision making.

Finding 21: The CSP had only limited integration of environment and climate change in programmatic activities. While WFP made salient contributions through strengthening shock-responsive systems, early warning and anticipatory action in Karamoja, the country office did not systematically track or assess the results of its environmental sustainability efforts. (EQ 2.2)

156. The CSP recognizes climate change as a cross-cutting issue that significantly contributes to hunger challenges in the country (for example, through food shortages, climate shocks, etc.), and addresses responses to climate shocks.

157. PRO-ACT²⁴⁵ was the most visible WFP activity focused on climate change and the environment, with a specific focus on strengthening national and subnational shock-responsive systems and scaling up anticipatory action in Karamoja²⁴⁶ (see Finding 14 on shock response).

158. WFP also supported beneficiaries to adopt environmentally friendly livelihood practices such as beekeeping and fish farming, using energy-saving stoves for cooking and woodlots for biomass, planting indigenous trees (for fruit harvesting, removal of carbon dioxide, prevention of soil erosion, etc.), developing water-saving irrigation systems and planting drought-tolerant and nutritious crops such as orange-fleshed sweet potatoes. Related activities were not implemented in all areas and were carried out

²³⁹ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR –Draft.

²⁴⁰ WFP. 2022. PDM Qtr 4 2022 CO Report.

²⁴¹ WFP. 2022. PDM Qtr 4 2022 CO Report.

²⁴² WFP. 2024. PDM Qtr 1 2024 CO Report.

²⁴³ UNHCR and WFP. 2021. *Uganda Community Consultations, Prioritization Phase 2*.

²⁴⁴ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

²⁴⁵ PRO-ACT and its predecessor are a collaboration with FAO and OPM, funded by the EU (EC-DEVCO) and Denmark (DANIDA).

²⁴⁶ PRO-ACT is currently only implemented in Karamoja. WFP Uganda plans to integrate PRO-ACT into other geographic regions with refugees and host communities.

without a structured emphasis on climate risk management across programmes. Consulted beneficiaries said they continue to face many challenges with the changing climate, including its negative effects on harvests and food security.

159. The country office took additional measures in the latter part of the CSP. Until 2021, the country office had no environmental sustainability indicators for corporate reporting. While some documents suggest that environmental screenings were conducted (particularly for SO2 Activity 3 in 2021 and 2022), it is not evident that screenings were done systematically. In 2023, a corporate indicator on screening environmental and social risks in field-level agreements, contracts and memorandums of understanding was added. According to the WFP 2023 decentralized evaluation on self-reliance and resilience,²⁴⁷ WFP assessed environmental and social risks prior to implementation in some project districts (for example, Kotido, Moroto, Isingiro, Adjumani and Lamwo) but there is no evidence of studies on the environmental impact of interventions. WFP Uganda has standard operating procedures for the disposal of WFP spoiled food commodities that respond to government standards; however, the evaluation team was not able to corroborate if they are consistently followed.²⁴⁸

160. Energy assessments of WFP Uganda's offices and warehouses conducted in 2023 by specialized engineering companies indicate that WFP Uganda's facilities have room to reduce energy consumption by improving deficient electrical systems, transitioning to LED lighting and installing solar panels, among other measures.²⁴⁹

Finding 22: Overall, the CSP was implemented with adherence to humanitarian principles. However, the ability of WFP to fully adhere to the principle of humanity was limited by the contextual circumstances. (EQ2.2)

161. WFP Uganda employed its operational capacities to meet the immediate needs of people and protect the ability of individuals and communities to live in safety and dignity. WFP adhered to impartiality and gave priority to most urgent cases through interventions that targeted Ugandan and refugee women, as in the case of NutriCash and moderate acute malnutrition treatment in refugee-hosting districts. It enhanced community engagement mechanisms (see Finding 19) and continuously responded to beneficiary inputs on how to improve official feedback mechanisms and address inclusion and exclusion errors in the targeting of food assistance. The evaluation found no evidence of challenges to maintain the independence and neutrality of WFP, and WFP strived to reach the most vulnerable and food-insecure populations. However, in a context of protracted crisis, where there are growing needs and limited resources, WFP encountered constraints in being able to align with the principle of humanity. In 2022, for those people assisted, WFP was able to provide, on average, only 52 percent of the minimum daily kilocalories needed.²⁵⁰

EQ2.3 – Sustainability

Finding 23: The positive effects of the WFP social protection and shock-responsive system capacity strengthening interventions are likely to be sustained. However, previously dormant coordination mechanisms and activities that were revived through these interventions still rely on external funding. The HGSF programme faces institutional and financial sustainability challenges. (EQ 2.3)

162. WFP contributions to strengthen social protection and shock-responsive systems have a high potential for institutional sustainability. Government staff, United Nations agencies and WFP staff interviewed underlined national and subnational social actors' increased ownership of social protection and shock-responsive social protection, and increased motivation to continue progress achieved to date. This is evident in ongoing efforts to further strengthen beneficiary information systems (for example, through the National Social Registry), prominent roles played by government actors such as the MGLSD, Office of the Prime Minister and UNMA in leading the achievement of milestones, and in the leadership of subnational

²⁴⁷ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

²⁴⁸ WFP. 2022. *SOPs for Disposal of WFP Spoiled Food Commodities*.

²⁴⁹ 2023 WFP Uganda energy assessments reports for Arua (office and Bidibidi, Palorinya, and Rhino camp warehouses), and Kotido, Moroto, and Tororo offices.

²⁵⁰ WFP. 2023. *Impacts of the Cost of Inaction on WFP Food Assistance in Uganda*.

governments to articulate their own needs through district-level planning documents, projects, and coordination mechanisms. The 2023-2028 National Social Protection Strategy led by the MGLSD reflects a shift in the directionality of social protection in Uganda. It includes shock-responsive social protection, school feeding and the expansion of social protection to refugees, all of which are areas that had been absent from the government agenda. An initial decision to introduce a blanket 60 percent reduction of all budgetary allocations to subventions²⁵¹ in the 2023-2024 national budget, which affected the SAGE programme, was overturned following advocacy led by the UPFSP.²⁵²

163. There are also concerns about the long-term financial sustainability of the WFP social protection and shock-responsive social protection systems strengthening work, however. The need for donor support to revive previously dormant activities and mechanisms may signal a reliance on external funding. Continuity of district social protection coordination committees and the district disaster management committees will depend on the extent to which there is continued funding for their facilitation. Similarly, there are concerns about funding for the publication of early warning bulletins, a practice that was revived with support through PRO-ACT.

164. Government ownership of the WFP-supported HGSF model remains a challenge. At the end of the CSP period, there were signs of positive changes in the enabling environment for school feeding (see Finding 15).

165. The extent to which the HGSF programme is able to transition from an externally supported programme towards full government ownership is affected by: differences in visions for school feeding; the nature and evolution of the partnership between WFP and the Ministry of Education; the extent to which the Karamoja experience with school-based programming is seen as a valid pilot for countrywide adoption; and country office capacity to engage in policy, strategy and partnerships that would support school feeding. The 2021 SABER study for Uganda notes that an institutionalized approach to school feeding is justified because the Government's universal primary education policy, which requires parents to feed their children, has not achieved its objectives in many parts of the country.²⁵³ Although government officials may agree on the need to institutionalize school feeding, its costs are seen as prohibitive in part because it is often treated as an education matter alone.²⁵⁴

166. In Karamoja, the provision of school meals through the HGSF model is dependent on external funding and WFP is the sole provider.²⁵⁵ The Government made a very limited contribution to the annual HGSF budget, amounting to an allocation of UGX 400 million nationwide per year (approximately USD 113,590). The WFP annual country report for 2022 reported on a ten-year roadmap for the transition of the national ownership of the HGSF programme that began in 2021,²⁵⁶ but there was no evidence that this remains ongoing or has been completed.

167. WFP did not define or communicate clear exit strategies for CSP activities reviewed for the evaluation. Finding 14 reports on PRO-ACT's contributions to strengthening information flow between district and national levels. Despite general sustainability parameters in the memorandum of understanding, government and non-government organization stakeholders noted concerns about the sustainability of PRO-ACT following the inevitable exit of WFP and FAO, pointing out the lack of incentives for government funding and lack of cost-sharing arrangements between district and national government.

168. District-level interviewees in the health sector were uncertain about the future of moderate acute malnutrition treatment, given the WFP transition to its new integrated nutrition programme. WFP staff noted, however, that the new programme, which is still being designed, will contain a strategy in which moderate acute malnutrition treatment is phased out based on categorization of districts by vulnerability

²⁵¹ Funds appropriated to government votes for onward transfer to other entities. Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER). 2023. *ISER's position on the 2023 Social Protection Budget*.

²⁵² WFP. 2024. *Applying Outcome Harvesting Methodology and Conducting an Evaluability Analysis for WFP CCS Programme*.

²⁵³ Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports. 2021. *SABER report on School Feeding, Health and Nutrition in Uganda*, June 2021.

²⁵⁴ As opposed to a nutritional, health and wealth creation issue. Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports. 2021. *SABER report on School Feeding, Health and Nutrition in Uganda*, June 2021.

²⁵⁵ See Republic of Uganda, Ministry of Education and Sports (2021). *SABER report on School Feeding, Health and Nutrition in Uganda*, June 2021, p. 22.

²⁵⁶ WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR.

and in which nutrition-sensitive interventions are emphasized. The draft strategy was not available to the evaluation team.

169. WFP also implemented projects under compressed timelines, such as the Karamoja-Turkana Cross-Border Resilience and Climate Adaptation Project, which limited the possibility for properly sequencing community-level capacity building activities and providing the follow up required to sustain new ventures, such as beekeeping and OFSP vine production in Kaabong.

170. Key informant interviewees stressed the importance of working through government structures and systems for sustainability, including channelling funding through the Government. Yet, WFP to date has worked primarily through non-government organization cooperating partners. WFP Uganda is the first country office in the region to pilot the harmonized approach to cash transfers and is monitoring lessons from that experience.

Finding 24: In Karamoja, dependency on WFP limits prospects for sustainability of results of CSP activities (EQ 2.3 and EQ 2.1)

171. The sustainability of the WFP agriculture and market support approach depends largely on smallholder farmers' links to larger markets and local and regional demand for agricultural produce. In Karamoja, both focus group discussions and key informant interviews suggest that smallholder farmers often view WFP as their primary buyer. This dependency was brought to the fore in 2024, when WFP informed district local governments and farmers' organizations supported by the agriculture and market support intervention in Karamoja that it would not be purchasing certain oversupplied commodities (especially maize). In May 2024, these organizations supported by the WFP agriculture and market support intervention had excess food in storage that was intended for WFP but remained unsold due to the WFP decision and the lack of other buyers who would purchase food at the same scale. The country office intensified efforts to link those smallholder farmer groups to potential buyers. However, even if a short-term solution is found in 2024, dependency risks persist as WFP purchase volumes exceed those of the local private sector and depend on donor resources. Government purchases are affected by scarce budgets and political interest.²⁵⁷

172. Interviews with WFP staff, government staff, UN agency representatives and cooperating partners pointed to dependency on external aid in Karamoja as a factor that has limited the achievement of long-term changes in food security and nutrition outcomes in the region, and the sustainability of benefits without the facilitation of WFP in the future.

EQ2.4 – Nexus approach

Finding 25: WFP developed and is testing a model to support refugees in moving from dependence on humanitarian aid to more self-reliance. However, this change came late in the CSP cycle. WFP programming approaches recognized and supported coexistence among refugee and host communities.

173. The CSP proposed a strategic change towards promoting a transition from food assistance to self-reliance for refugees, although it did not define the nature of "self-reliance".²⁵⁸ Initially, there were only small-scale investments in some aspects of resilience programming for refugees, but no integrated effort to reduce dependence on external aid. In 2023, WFP Uganda designed a self-reliance model that provides a holistic package of support that enabled refugees to move from dependency on humanitarian assistance towards an ability to meet their own essential needs.

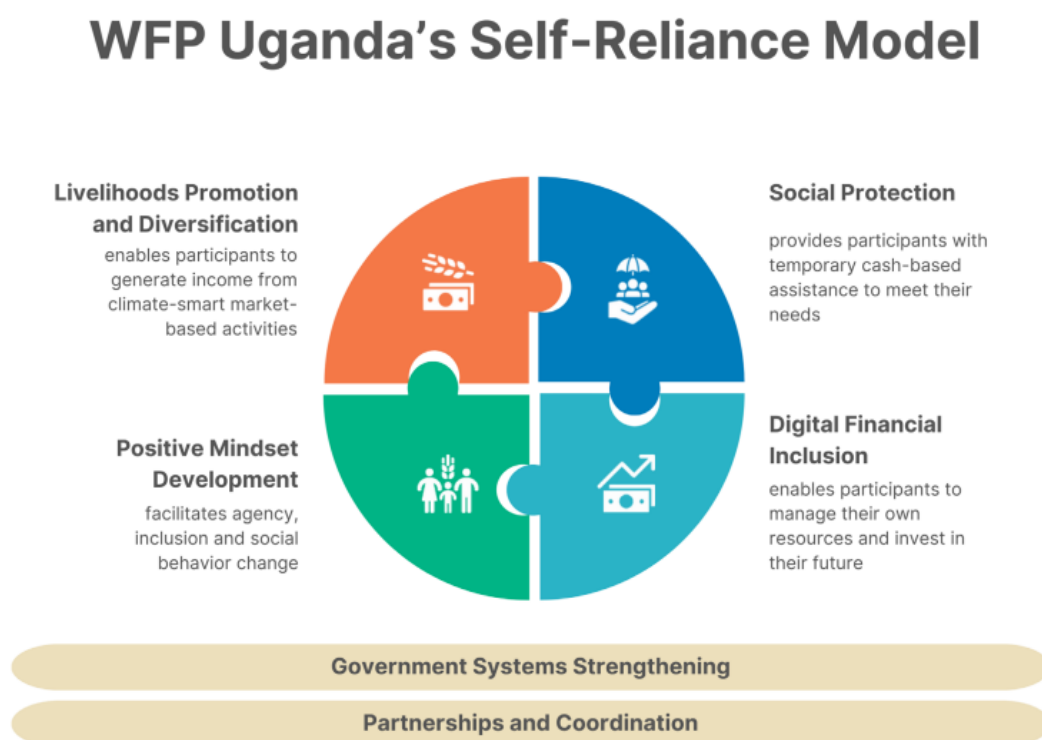
174. Although still in early stages, the model aims to support "graduation" as an approach, in line with the pledges of the Government of Uganda at the Global Refugee Forum to create a "minimum of 300,000 viable economic opportunities for refugees and host communities by 2027" and the dialogue on the

²⁵⁷ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

²⁵⁸ Ibid. The decentralized evaluation notes that the CSP was oriented towards a narrow definition of self-reliance in food security and nutrition, as opposed to the broader "essential needs" definition that is now espoused by the self-reliance model.

graduation concept in the refugee response in Uganda.²⁵⁹ The model (see Figure) builds on the government-led expansion of the social protection system through pilot initiatives, such as NutriCash, that target both host and refugee communities and that provide senior citizen grants that would apply to all who meet the eligibility criteria. Expansion of an inclusive social protection system for refugees while they transition to self-reliance helps WFP and its partners manage the back-and-forth transition between development and humanitarian interventions in Uganda in line with a nexus approach.

Figure 13: WFP Uganda – Self-reliance model



Source: WFP Self-Reliance Brief, 2024.

175. **Self-reliance index:** Additionally, WFP provides support to the livelihoods and resilience sector working group (Uganda Refugee Response) for the development of a self-reliance measurement framework that aims to strengthen coordination, programmatic quality and harmonization of all actors working within the refugee livelihoods and self-reliance space and that will be launched in 2024. The minimum standard indicators will measure self-reliance of refugees and host communities; it is considered a critical tool for consistency among partners supporting self-reliance as part of the refugee response.

176. **Peaceful coexistence of host communities and refugees:** Although conflict sensitivity is not explicit in strategies and programming documents, the WFP approach was consistent with Uganda’s CRRF in that its programming (other than general food assistance) benefited refugee and host communities, and it carefully monitored and managed sensitivities among these populations. Focus group discussions in the settlements and surrounding areas referred to different types of exchanges between settlements and host community – sharing of food, market transactions, with only a few mentions of friction. Disparities in access to land and land ownership create tensions among the groups (with differences between West Nile, Southwest, and urban areas), and one of the concerns raised in focus group discussions was about the “block farms” proposed in West Nile as part of the self-reliance model. Some focus group discussion participants confirmed qualitative data from other sources that identified instances where the host community reclaimed land leased to refugees once crops were ready for harvest.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁹ Uganda Learning, Evidence Accountability and Research Network and Save the Children. 2024. *Graduation Compendium: Building a Common Understanding of Graduation Programmes in the Uganda Refugee Response*.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

177. Nevertheless, most stakeholders noted that there have not been open or larger scale conflicts between refugee and host communities in recent times, even in the context of reducing rations and implementing prioritization. Social protection programmes such as NutriCash were also found to have positive effects on social cohesion because of their categorical criteria for selection of host and refugee beneficiaries that foster relations between the two groups, savings and loan groups that are sometimes open to non-beneficiaries and because beneficiaries are motivated to share knowledge with non-beneficiary mothers, including on feeding practices of young children, farming of nutritional food, etc.²⁶¹

178. **Regional role:** Given the ongoing unrest in East Africa, the flow of refugees is not expected to slow down, and some government stakeholders interviewed pointed out the potential for a stronger WFP role regionally in addressing the factors that “push” refugees out of their countries. In this CSP, there were cross-border projects between Uganda and Kenya oriented towards agricultural productivity and creating access to markets. The evidence on their effectiveness is limited, but the concept of cross-border initiatives and regional strategies remains relevant for an approach to the nexus that considers the peace-development-humanitarian nexus from a regional perspective.

179. Uganda also faces other internal challenges such as climate shocks and disasters leading to internal displacement. In Karamoja, unpredictable climatic conditions and insecurity due to cattle raids compound this situation. Available programming documents for Karamoja lack explicit analysis of conflict sensitivity, but WFP initiatives are well linked to local government and take into consideration local dynamics. The work of WFP through local non-government organizations with Karamojong staff and ample experience in the region is valued by respondents. In addition, PRO-ACT enabled a shift to preparedness and anticipatory actions to complement livelihood programming. Programming in Karamoja has been more integrated, from a resilience perspective, than in other regions of Uganda²⁶² and thus, in principle should strongly contribute to the nexus. However, field work for the CSPE found limited evidence for a transition from humanitarian to development interventions, demonstrating the complexity of the Karamoja context.

EQ3: To what extent has WFP used its resources efficiently?

Expenditure analysis and implementation timeliness

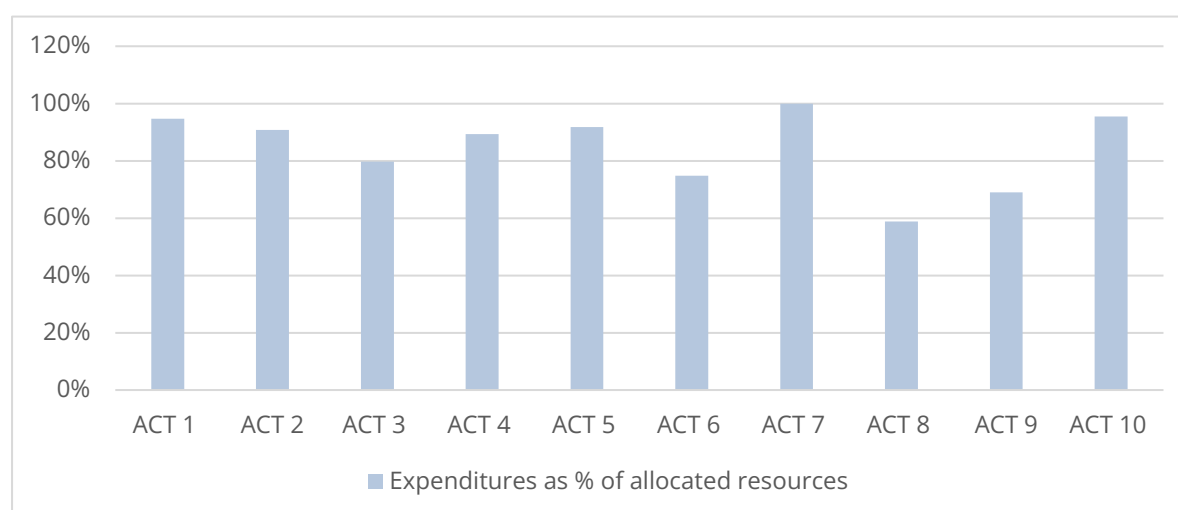
Finding 26: Most CSP activities’ expenditures aligned with annual targets, though refugee general food assistance implementation, NutriCash, school feeding and agriculture and market support activities experienced some timeliness issues.

180. By July 2024, five of the nine CSP activities (excluding discontinued Activity 7) had spent 89 percent or more of allocated resources for 2018-2024. Activities 3 (asset creation and livelihood), 6 (agriculture and market support), 8 (social protection) and 9 (shock-responsive systems) had lower cumulated expenditures, at 80 percent of allocated resources or less. (See Figure and Figure .)

²⁶¹ UNICEF. 2023. *Social Assistance Targeting in Uganda: Implications for Social Cohesion in Communities*.

²⁶² WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

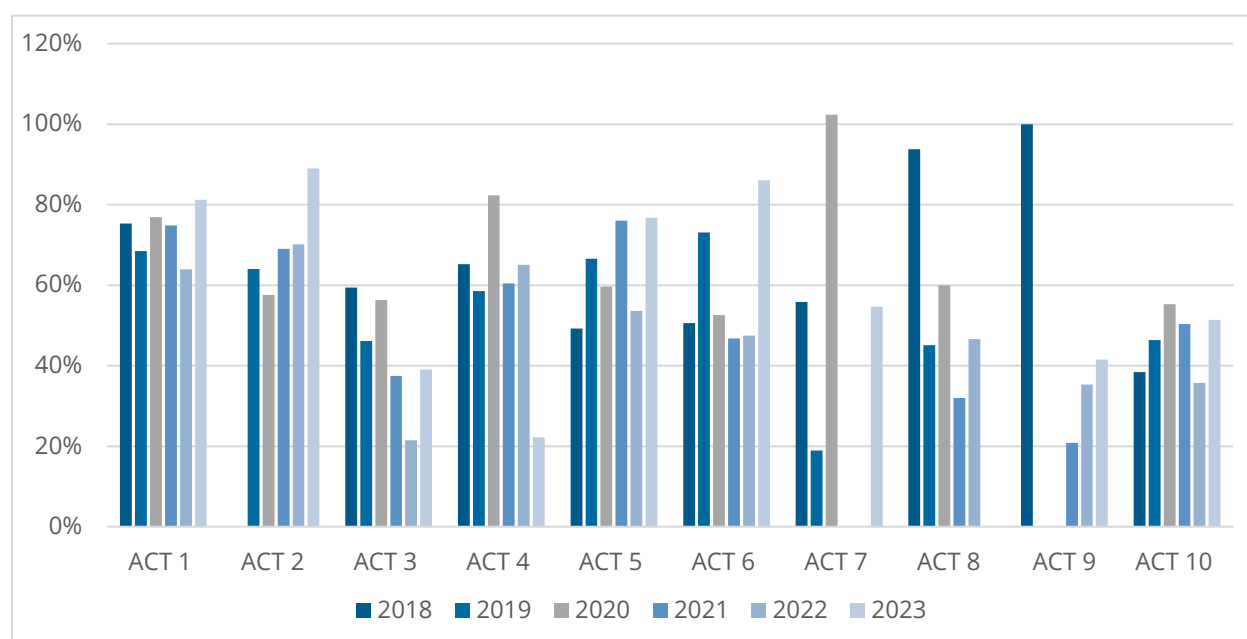
Figure 14: Cumulative expenditures as a percentage of allocated resources by activity (2018-2024)



Source: ACR portfolio budget data.

181. Consulted WFP staff attributed lower expenditure rates for activities 8 and 9 from 2020 onward to flexible scheduling of institutional capacity strengthening under the CSSP and PRO-ACT, contrasting with direct assistance to affected populations. Delays also stemmed from the slow implementation of planned activities by government ministries, departments and agencies. While data indicated some timeliness issues in intervention implementation, the lack of comprehensive planned versus actual delivery data limits full assessment.

Figure 15: Annual expenditures as percentage of available resources by activity (2018-2023)



Source: ACR portfolio budget data.

182. In the focus group discussions, beneficiaries primarily reported delays in cash transfers.²⁶³ The 2023 process monitoring reports confirmed general food assistance distribution delays, citing “poor network connectivity.”²⁶⁴ NutriCash beneficiaries reported delays of three to eight months in receiving transfers, often due to Equity Bank’s agency banking issues. Key informant interview with country office

²⁶³ FGD participants in the Nakivale settlement reported delays of between two weeks to a month in receiving cash transfers.

²⁶⁴ WFP. 2023. *Process Monitoring Biannual Report, July-December 2023*.

staff confirmed such operational challenges with Equity Bank. However, routine monitoring and post-distribution monitoring reports for NutriCash did not corroborate these issues.

183. In Karamoja, focus group discussions indicated that WFP school feeding delivery was generally timely, but late OFSP vine delivery prevented schools from cultivating OFSP for meals in 2023.

184. Asset creation and livelihood activities experienced frequent delays. The annual expenditure as a percentage of available resources for Activity 4 decreased from 65 percent in 2018 to 22 percent in 2023. Process monitoring reports showed that up to 44 percent of asset creation and livelihood sites, including in Karamoja, were behind schedule in 2023, with slight improvements in 2024.²⁶⁵

185. Focus group discussions highlighted delays in seed delivery (often post rainy season) and in WFP produce purchase due to lengthy procurement processes. A 2024 evaluation found that such delays caused produce spoilage, poor food quality and losses.²⁶⁶ Such delays were also noted by the internal review of the HGSF model.²⁶⁷

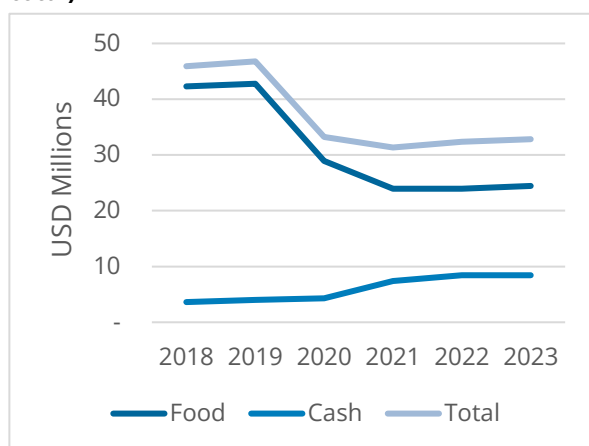
186. There was no evidence of delays in lean season response or moderate acute malnutrition treatment food delivery. The evaluation team's visits to health facilities showed adequate stock and timely replenishments of specialized nutritious foods for moderate acute malnutrition treatment.

Cost reduction and resource optimization

Finding 27: There have been limited cost savings in general food assistance delivery. (EQ 3.2)

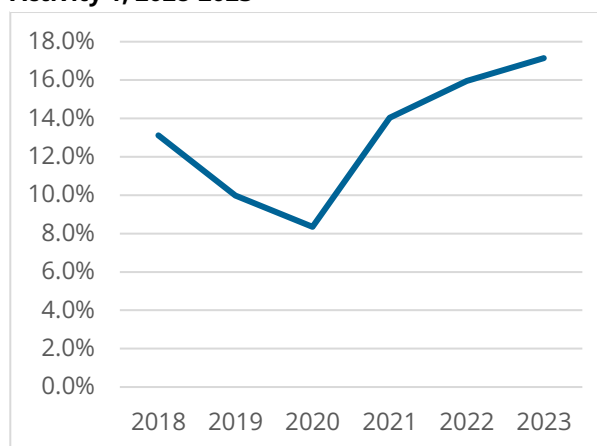
187. As shown in Figure , overall, Activity 1 total costs decreased between 2018 and 2023, by 28.4 percent. However, the 2019-2021 period brought a marked decrease in total costs, by 44 percent, reflecting a period of transition to cash-based transfers and ration cuts. Between 2021 and 2023, total Activity 1 costs increased, though to a smaller extent compared to the decreases seen in the 2019-2021 period, by 4.8 percent, with food transfer costs rising marginally (2.1 percent), and cash transfer costs increasing (13.7 percent). Figure 17 indicates that transfer costs grew to 18 percent of total cash transfer expenditures (cash transfer value plus costs), between 2018 and 2023.

Figure 16: Expenditures on transfer costs of Activity 1, 2018-2023 (food, cash and total)



Source: WFP CBT data²⁶⁸

Figure 17: Expenditures on cash transfer costs as a percentage of cash transfer value plus costs, Activity 1, 2018-2023



²⁶⁵ WFP. 2024. *2024 Quarter 1 Process Monitoring Report, January–March 2024* and WFP. 2023. *Process Monitoring Biannual Report, July–December 2023*.

²⁶⁶ WFP. 2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

²⁶⁷ WFP. 2021. *Transition to HGSF, Inclusive and Resilient Food Systems for School Feeding: Linking Agriculture to Education – Internal Programme Review Report*.

²⁶⁸ **Figure** includes expenditures on costs of food and cash transfers only (e.g. transport, storage, cooperating costs, supply chain management and other management costs). It does not reflect the value of the food and cash transfers.

188. These trends and the limited effects on cost savings to date were likely driven by the factors outlined below:

- **Cash scale-up:** In line with the accelerated scale-up of cash transfers following the outbreak of COVID-19, numbers of cash-based transfer beneficiaries under BR06 in 2021 increased,²⁶⁹ raising set-up costs. BR07 in 2022 further increased food and cash-based transfer beneficiaries and needs-based plan costs for new bank and mobile money accounts openings.²⁷⁰
- **Refugee influx and augmentations of general food assistance coverage:** BR07 increased general food assistance beneficiaries due to refugee influx in 2022 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan. BR08 (2023) increased the cash transfer value for 100 percent rations from USD 8.3 to USD 12.4 per month and extended in-kind assistance to new arrivals from three to six months.²⁷¹
- **Outsized increases in cash transfer costs compared to value of cash transferred:** Beginning in 2020, general food assistance cash transfer values were reduced through ration cuts, in 2020-2021 and through the roll-out of general food assistance prioritization during 2021-2023. Table 12 in Annex XII has full details of ration sizes over time. While WFP reduced rations for beneficiaries, the costs for delivering cash transfers grew more between the 2018-2020 period and the 2021-2023 period (by 345.2 percent) than the actual amount of money transferred to beneficiaries (increased by 41.2 percent), indicating rising operational costs per dollar transferred.²⁷²
- **Escalating cooperating partner costs:** The rise in cash transfer costs were affected by cooperating partner costs for cash transfers for Activity 1, which increased between 2020 and 2023 from USD 1.3 million in 2020 to USD 2.9 million in 2023.²⁷³ Budget revisions 6, 7 and 8 also entailed a net increase in cooperating partner costs for cash transfers under Activity 1, by USD 6.4 million, between 2022 and 2025.²⁷⁴ However, narratives for the budget revisions did not provide rationale for increases in cooperating partner costs. Annual performance plans (APPs) discuss the persistent concerns with delays in cooperating partner invoicing, creating a backlog of invoices dating back to 2017, but do not specify what activity area was affected and any implications for cash transfer costs.²⁷⁵
- **Delivery and management costs:** Delivery costs for cash transfers under Activity 1 increased from USD 1.8 million in 2020, to USD 3.2 million in 2022, and subsequently to USD 2.4 million in 2023. This may be due to country office investments in a digital Beneficiary Information & Assistance Management System for cash transfers under SO1, beginning in 2022. Annual performance plans, however, did not specify the amount of the investment.²⁷⁶ Furthermore, management costs for cash transfers under Activity 1 also increased, largely due to increases in costs related to salaries for local staff, from USD 521,125 in 2020 to USD 2.2 million in 2023.²⁷⁷ Available documents, however, did not provide information to explain this increase.

²⁶⁹ BR06 planned for an increase of 153,764 beneficiaries for refugee GFA, overall. All of which were cash beneficiaries. WFP. 2021. BR06.

²⁷⁰ WFP. 2022. BR07.

²⁷¹ WFP. 2023. BR08.

²⁷² WFP CBT data.

²⁷³ There was a significant increase especially seen between 2020 and 2021, from 1.3 million to USD 3.9 million. Source: IRM Analytics, CPB Plan vs Actuals Report, accessed 17 July 2024.

²⁷⁴ Of note, BRs 6 and 7 entailed a net decrease of CP costs in 2022, by USD 673,156, while 2023 and 2024 entailed net increases in CP costs by USD 3.2 million each year, across BRs 6, 7, and 8. Neither the narratives nor detailed BR spreadsheets for BRs 1 and 5 provided information on changes in CP costs.

²⁷⁵ The notion of persistent delays in CP and resultant backlog of invoices is noted in several APPs, notably both end-year and mid-year APPs for 2020, the end-year APP for 2021 and the mid-year APP for 2022. Furthermore, "major delays" in invoice and advance processing for CPs and financial service providers were included in risk registers for all years in the 2019-2023 period, and was rated as very likely, with moderate residual risk seriousness for all years in the period.

²⁷⁶ WFP (2023). *CO Uganda Annual Performance Plan 2022*. And WFP (2023). *CO Uganda Annual Performance Plan 2023*.

²⁷⁷ IRM Analytics, CPB Expenditures Report by Year and Commitment Item, accessed 26 November 2024.

189. The prioritization review mechanism establishment and appeal vetting costs also affected medium term efficiency gains.²⁷⁸ Other refugee operations reported similar challenges and costs associated with the design and roll-out of prioritization but provided limited evidence on efficiency gains.²⁷⁹

Finding 28: In Karamoja, lean season response coverage used vulnerability-based targeting. WFP began optimizing moderate acute malnutrition treatment in 2023-2024, but it is still early to assess effects of those changes (EQ 3.2)

190. Lean season response coverage in Karamoja (2022-2023) aimed to reach the most vulnerable and optimize resource use. Prioritization approaches varied by IPC phase and global acute malnutrition rates, with outcomes of such prioritization difficult to confirm.²⁸⁰ During the hunger crisis in 2022, the country office provided all districts with protective rations, and additional nutrition assistance to three districts with the highest global acute malnutrition rates.²⁸¹

191. The new integrated WFP nutrition programme optimizes moderate acute malnutrition treatment resources. Beginning in 2023, WFP categorized districts in Karamoja to phase out the provision of moderate acute malnutrition treatment in certain areas.²⁸² WFP staff interviewed noted that this resulted from 2020 donor funding cuts for the Karamoja Nutrition Programme, prompting programme redesign to target the most vulnerable areas for moderate acute malnutrition treatment and provide only nutrition-sensitive interventions in other areas. Ration sizes remained uniform across household and individual levels. As of July 2024, the new programme's roll-out was ongoing.

Supply chain and logistics performance

Finding 29: WFP Uganda's supply chain unit met food assistance delivery performance standards, despite pipeline breaks affecting country office operations during the earlier part of the CSP period. The unit played a valued support role in the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF). (EQ 3.3)

192. The Uganda country office met Logistics Execution Support System (LESS) performance standards. For example, post-delivery losses remained well below the 2 percent target from 2020 to July 2024, except in December 2020 due to commodity losses deriving from extended food storage during COVID-19.²⁸³ Pipeline breaks, caused by production delays, import issues, or clearance holdups, were sometimes aggravated by funding shortfalls.²⁸⁴ While some breaks were mitigated with cash top-ups, others resulted in general food assistance ration cuts. As discussed under Findings 8 and 20, ration cuts negatively affected food and nutrition security outcomes among refugees, and contributed to community tensions, strains on household relations and increased incidents of gender-based violence.²⁸⁵ Since 2023, there have been no pipeline breaks, though they remain a high risk.²⁸⁶

193. Uganda's supply chain and logistics unit supported the GCMF for both national and regional food assistance operations. During the CSP period, WFP Uganda procured 621,400 metric tons of food through the GCMF, increasingly from local and regional suppliers (Table 5).

²⁷⁸ No evidence available on the cost of the exercise.

²⁷⁹ Alem, D. 2021. *Insights from vulnerability-driven optimisation for humanitarian logistics*; and WFP. 2021. *UNHCR-WFP Collaboration on Assistance to Syrian Refugees in Jordan Learning Review: Best Practices, Challenges and Lessons Learned*.

²⁸⁰ See WFP. 2022. *Lean Season Response Plan DETAILED*, March 2022; and WFP. 2023. *Concept of Operation (CONP) for the Drought and Lean Season Response in Karamoja Sub-Region*, June 2023. Concepts of Operations for other LSRs during the CSP period were not provided to the ET.

²⁸¹ WFP. 2022. *Lean Season Response Plan DETAILED*, March 2022

²⁸² No document was provided on this new approach.

²⁸³ Country office data and WFP, 2024, Report on global losses for the period from 1 January to December 2023

²⁸⁴ WFP. 2022. *Decision Memorandum*, 18/11/2022.

²⁸⁵ Beneficiaries consulted through FGDs did not distinguish between ration cuts made due to pipeline breaks and those made due to the roll-out of the GFA prioritization.

²⁸⁶ As reflected in WFP. 2023. *Uganda Annual Performance Plan Report 2023*.

Table 5: Country office purchases from GCMF

Year	Country office purchase from GCMF in metric tons (mt)	Country office purchase from GCMF in USD (commodity only)	Country office purchase from GCMF in USD (food and external transport costs)	International (percentage)	Local/regional (percentage)
2018	181,300	55 M	56.7 M	18	82
2019	151,800	58.7 M	67.4 M	25	75
2020	73,900	32.6 M	35 M	15	85
2021	85,500	37.6 M	39.3 M	4	96
2022	80,300	56.1 M	58.4 M	1	99
2023	31,400	25.1 M	25.6 M	0.5	99.5
YTD 2024	17,200	13.3 M	13.7 M	0.5	99.5
Total	621,400	278.5 M	298.1 M	14%	86%

Source: WFP Uganda.

194. Despite local procurement progress, roll-out of the LRFPP had limited success as internal stakeholders viewed it as an “expensive” procurement initiative rather than a strategic approach to local purchase, food systems and market development.

195. As a flagship initiative for WFP, the LRFPP intentionally leverages donor funding for food purchases and cash-based transfers to support local social and development objectives, etc. The Uganda country office has been the largest purchaser of food in East Africa under the LRFPP in terms of volume²⁸⁷ but has faced challenges in supporting strategic outcomes in the CSP. These include the absence of monitoring and evaluation approaches to measure impacts, cross-functional linkages, forward contracting, traceability and public-private partnerships. With few dedicated financial and human resources available at the country office, progress in these areas has been slow.²⁸⁸

Cash-based transfers and cost efficiency

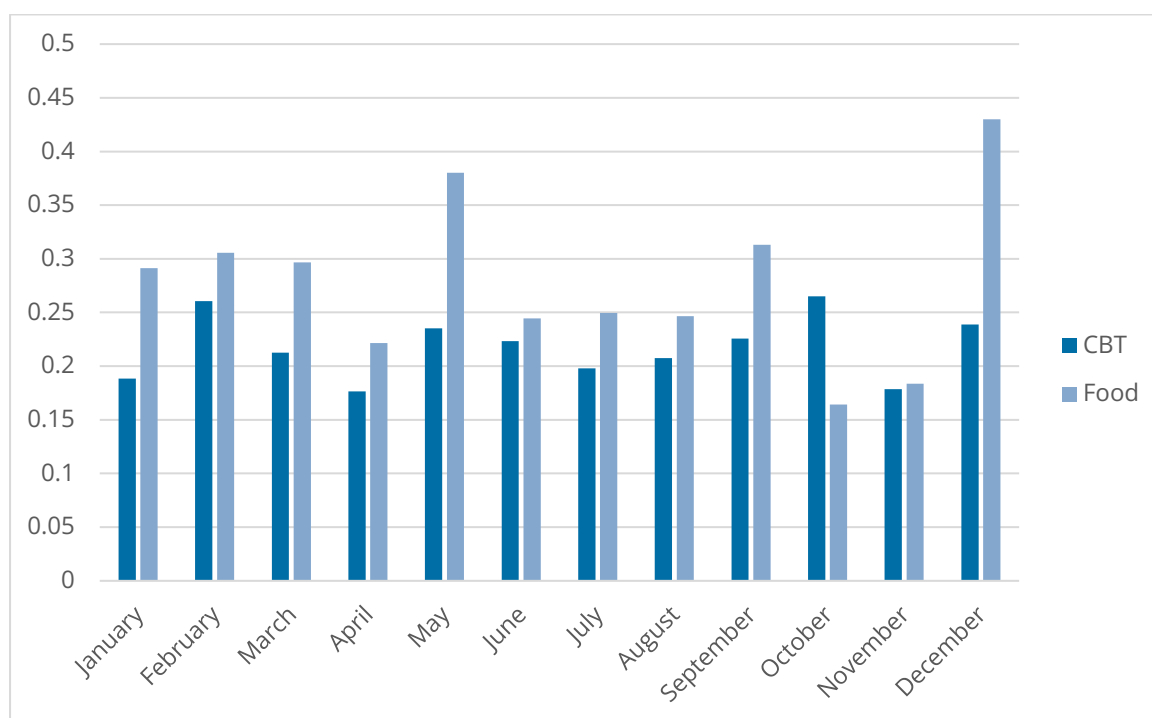
Finding 30: Based on recent data, the shift to cash-based transfers generally reduced transfer costs per beneficiary compared to in-kind assistance, despite operational challenges with agent banking and mobile money usage. (EQ 3.3)

196. In 2023, WFP provided cash-based transfers to 61 percent of the refugee population receiving general food assistance. WFP data for 2023 (Figure) confirm that the average transfer cost per beneficiary for cash-based transfer was lower than for in-kind food assistance across 11 out of 12 months in the year.

²⁸⁷ WFP. 2024. *Evaluation of Local and Regional Food Procurement Pilot Programmes in Eastern Africa (2021-2023)*.

²⁸⁸ Based on KIIs.

Figure 18: 2023 monthly cost per beneficiary for food and cash (USD)



Source: Intensity of Assistance Analysis Dashboard Q4 2023, analytics.wfp.org, accessed 26.08.2024.

197. Delivering cash versus in-kind food assistance saw a shift to agency banking, which also brought new challenges in addressing agent capacity limitations. Cash-based transfer scale-up in 2021/2022 increased reliance on mobile money platforms. This ongoing effort initially faced feasibility issues due to Uganda's underdeveloped digital infrastructure, the evolution of which was reinforced by WFP and financial service provider partners. This included digitization efforts through agency banking and mobile money that are being leveraged by other humanitarian and development actors to support refugee assistance activities in various sectors. This has resulted in enhanced cost efficiencies for the refugee response.²⁸⁹

198. The percentage of refugees in Uganda receiving general food assistance through cash transfers gradually increased from 21 percent in 2018 to 55 percent in 2021. This, coupled with the double entitlement distributions during the pandemic, enhanced the operational efficiency of WFP in providing food assistance and reducing the time beneficiaries spent at food distribution points, thus limiting the risk of potential exposure to COVID-19.²⁹⁰

Finding 31: Retail market engagement by supply chain interventions initiated in 2023/2024 began to provide options for market development and a more cost-efficient means of assistance within refugee settlements. (EQ 3.3)

199. Key informants highlighted the importance of supply chain support for cash-based transfer interventions and retail market development in promoting financial inclusion and innovation. Initially, retailers within refugee settlements received only cash payments but later were able to offer digital payment options (mobile money or digital vouchers). WFP engagement activities helped retailers connect with banks and mobile money services, enhancing digital inclusion and business opportunities, such as with wholesalers. This improved markets in refugee-hosting districts. Supply chain, agriculture and market support, and vulnerability analysis and mapping teams now jointly monitor market self-reliance and functionality.

²⁸⁹ WFP. 2022. ACR 2021, p.14.

²⁹⁰ WFP. 2022. ACR 2021, p.14.

EQ4: What are the critical factors, internal and external to WFP, explaining performance and results?

Finding 32: CSP implementation was affected by a sharp decline in donor contributions in 2022 and 2023 and dependence on short-term funding that was earmarked to activity level. (EQ 4.1)

200. WFP resource mobilization was challenged by the global funding landscape. The Uganda country office maintained efforts throughout the CSP period to adapt to funding shortfalls through programmatic adjustments.

201. Except for strategic outcomes 4 and 5, all strategic outcomes were relatively under-resourced compared to needs-based plan targets. As of July 2024, most strategic outcomes were resourced at less than 60 percent, at a time when 82 percent of the CSP had been implemented.²⁹¹ The country office therefore had to compromise on some of aspects of its plans, such as reaching more beneficiaries with an insufficient ration and cutting back programmatic activity.

Table 6: Needs-based plan and allocations by activity, as of July 2024

WFP Uganda CSP (2018-2025) cumulative financial overview					
Focus area	Strategic outcome	Activity	NBP	Allocated resources	Resourcing level (%)
Access to food	SO 1	Act. 01 (URT1)	1,516,877,546	898,259,319	59.22%
		Act 02 (URT2)	28,743,127	18,226,041	63.41%
	Sub-total SO1		1,545,620,673	916,485,360	59.30%
	SO 2	Act. 03 (ACL1)	49,847,747	18,869,384	37.85%
		Act. 04 (SMP1)	43,659,578	30,377,019	69.58%
	Sub-total SO2		93,507,325	49,246,403	52.67%
	SO 3	Act. 05 (NTA1)	74,709,425	43,941,132	58.82%
	Sub-total SO3		74,709,425	43,941,132	58.82%
Capacity and livelihood strengthening	SO 4	Act. 06 (SMS1)	32,972,232	22,868,337	69.36%
		Act . 07 (SMS2)	1,564,284	655,475	41.90%
	Sub-total SO4		34,536,516	23,523,811	68.11%
	SO 5	Act. 08 (SPS1)	25,026,672	22,303,669	89.12%
		Act. 09 (SPS2)	3,037,769	3,466,500	114.11%
	Sub-total SO5		28,064,441	25,770,169	91.82%
	SO 6	Act. 10 (ODS1)	17,039,142	8,446,382	49.57%
	Sub-total SO6		17,039,142	8,446,382	49.57%
	Non-strategic outcome specific		0	4,296,694	
	Total direct operational cost		1,793,477,521	1,071,709,952	59.76%
	Direct support cost		80,233,617	73,853,771	92.05%
	Total direct costs		1,873,711,138	1,145,563,724	61.14%
	Indirect support cost		120,627,443	68,409,564	56.71%
	Grand Total		1,994,338,581	1,213,973,288	60.87%

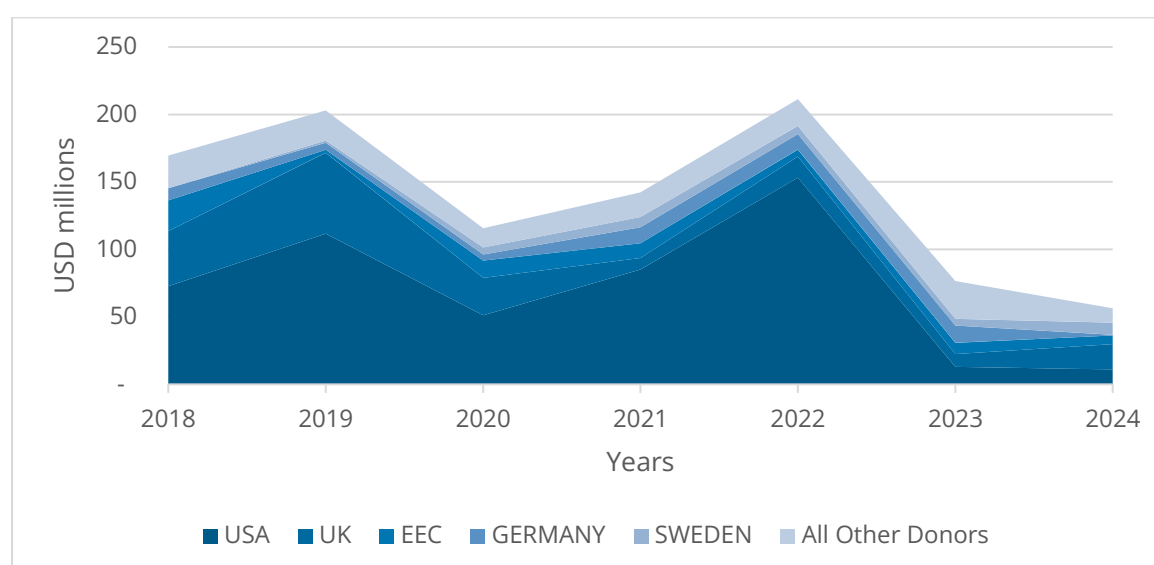
Source: Request 04.1 – ACRI-A_a_Standard_Country_Report_(CRF_2022-2025)_v34 “Uganda Country Portfolio Budget (2018-2025), Cumulative Financial Overview as at 31 December 2025 (Amount in USD).

²⁹¹ As of July 2024, 79 months of the total 96 months of the CSP period. The evaluation team used NBP instead of implementation plans because of difficulties in discussing progress on “rolling” implementation plans that change annual targets.

202. Several factors influenced the adequacy of available resources for CSP activities:

- **Funding shortfalls for humanitarian assistance; uncertainty in timing of confirmation of funding for SO1:** Since COVID-19, donor contributions for humanitarian assistance, including for refugee assistance and emergency response, have declined.²⁹² There have also been delays in the confirmation and delivery of funding. These factors have led to reductions in ration sizes for refugees under Activity 1, beginning in 2020, due to delay in 60 percent of funding and adjustments to the lean season responses in 2022 and 2023 (Activity 2), to cover only two of the five targeted districts.²⁹³
- **Shortfall in funding for school feeding in 2023:** The WFP school feeding programme under SO2 Activity 4 was under-resourced. In 2023, funding for the programme was delayed, which necessitated 20 percent ration cuts to school meals.²⁹⁴ These cuts remain in 2024.
- **Shifting priorities among traditional donors** (see Figure): Substantial decreases in contributions from the US (beginning in 2022) and the UK (beginning in 2020), both of which were key contributors to Activity 1, led to funding shortfalls. The reduction of UK funding led to a decision to discontinue the Karamoja Nutrition Programme in 2020 under SO3 Activity 5. While WFP was able to secure funding for moderate acute malnutrition treatment in Karamoja,²⁹⁵ there was a lack of funding for prevention of malnutrition, resulting in the suspension of the MCHN programme from 2018 to 2021.²⁹⁶ On the other hand, contributions from Germany increased between 2018 and 2023, from USD 9.2 million to USD 12.8 million, reflecting Germany's growing interest in funding resilience-building initiatives.
- **Funding from non-traditional donors:** The country office secured funding from new donors, such as the Mastercard Foundation (beginning in 2022) and Novo Nordisk (beginning in 2022). Funding from these private donors and other entities represented only 0.5 percent of total contributions to the CSP.

Figure 19: Donor contributions to CSP, top five donors and total (2018-2024)



Source: Distribution Contribution and Forecast Stats 2024-06-24

²⁹² Haider, Huma. 2022. *Humanitarian ration cuts: impacts on vulnerable groups*.

²⁹³ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

²⁹⁴ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

²⁹⁵ Sources of funding included Strategic Resource Allocation Committee (SRAC), UN AIDS, and Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ). WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR; WFP. 2021. 2020 ACR.

²⁹⁶ WFP ACRs for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

203. In relation to the predictability of funding, donor contributions through multi-year grants represented 7.9 percent of contributions during the 2018-2024 period and the majority of this was for SO4 Activity 6 and SO5 Activity 8. SO4 Activity 6, agriculture and market support activities, were funded through multi-year funding from the US (through USAID's Feed the Future programme), Germany and the Mastercard Foundation. According to WFP staff, this multi-year funding for agriculture and market support allows for longer-term planning and contracting of cooperating partners.

204. SO5 was well resourced overall, and was funded above annual needs-based plan targets for each year during the 2020-2023 period. Funding was mainly from Sida for the CSSP under Activity 8, and from the European Union for PRO-ACT under Activity 9. Both the CSSP (Activity 8) and PRO-ACT (Activity 9) are multi-year programmes. Sida funding was provided through multi-year grants, while European Union funding was not. Predictable amounts of funding through multi-year grants are well suited to capacity strengthening interventions, which aim to affect change in the long term.

205. SO2 Activity 3 was not funded through multi-year grants during the CSP period, until 2023 when it received multi-year funding for the roll-out of the self-reliance model for refugees and for resilience-building interventions in Karamoja.²⁹⁷ It was especially under-resourced compared to the needs-based plan. WFP staff interviewed said this had implications for the scale of asset creation and livelihood interventions, which were implemented primarily through small short-term projects. Short-term donor funding for asset creation and livelihood interventions limited the time to prepare and implement interventions that should have a longer-term focus on strengthening smallholder resilience.

Figure 20: Direct contributions by level of earmarking per year (2018-2024) (USD)

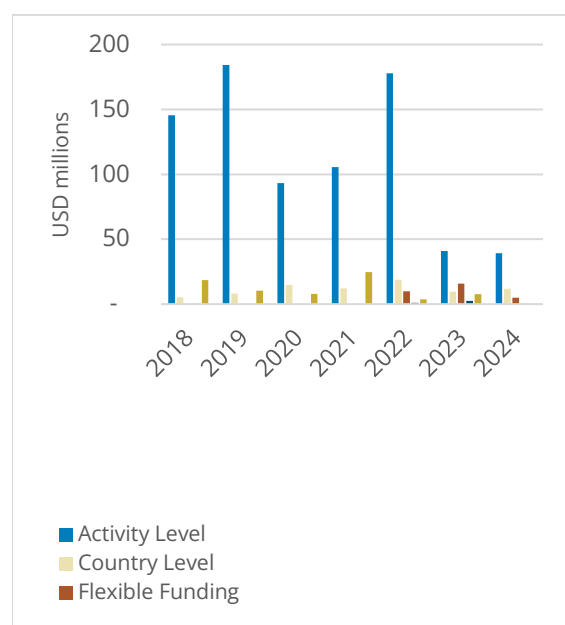
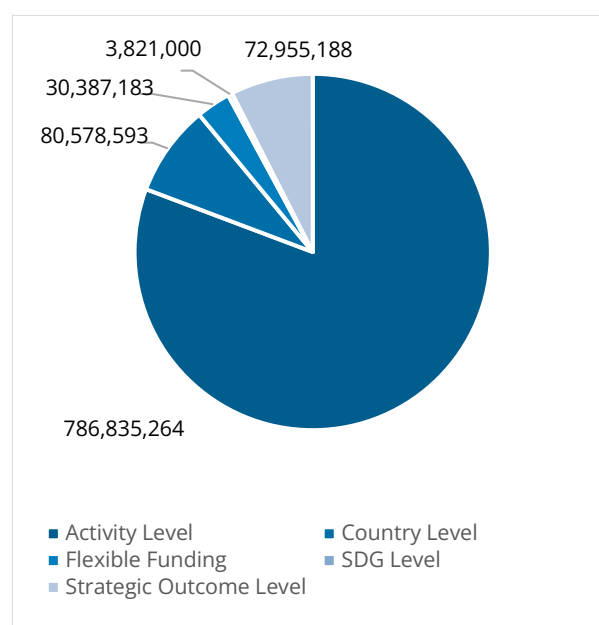


Figure 21: Direct contributions by level of earmarking, total (2018-2024) (USD)



Source: WFP, Uganda earmarking data 2024-04-08.

206. As illustrated in figures 20 and 21, the large majority of donor contributions were earmarked to the activity level throughout the CSP period, representing 81.9 percent of total contributions to the CSP. The decline in earmarking (Figure) takes place in a context of overall reduction in resources. WFP staff

²⁹⁷ WFP. 2024. 2023 ACR – Draft.

interviewed noted that earmarking posed challenges in the layering of activities across strategic outcomes because the timelines for implementation and geographic priorities did not align.

207. The introduction of new, non-traditional donors, such as the Mastercard Foundation and Novo Nordisk, fostered innovative approaches such as opportunities for youth employment and more sustainable food system approaches to support home-grown school feeding interventions in Karamoja. These donors provided a more commercial, predictable and longer-term approach, but also introduced different expectations for engagement, communications, reporting and accountability, which placed additional demands on the country office. However, these donors also prompted increased accountability and visibility of certain aspects of programme implementation, which interviewees saw as a net positive.

Finding 33: WFP strategically partnered with key government ministries, departments and agencies, which significantly contributed to country capacity strengthening (CCS) and enabled other CSP results, particularly in social protection and shock-responsive systems. However, relationships with other relevant ministries remained largely activity-based and ad hoc, potentially limiting broader impact. (EQ 4.2)

208. WFP partnership with government ministries, departments and agencies, especially with the Office of the Prime Minister and the MGLSD, shaped the nature and extent of results. The following partnerships' characteristics facilitated mutual success.

- **Multi-level engagement:** The strongest partnerships with ministries, departments and agencies included continuous engagement at both strategic and technical levels. In both the Office of the Prime Minister (the Department of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Management and the CRRF Secretariat) and MGLSD, there was continuous technical engagement through WFP-seconded staff as well as more strategic engagement through coordinating bodies, such as the CRRF steering committee. With the Ministry of Health, WFP had more systematic engagement only with the Department of Nutrition in line with WFP's long-standing relationship and programming support in that area. In the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), key informant interviewees noted that the relationship remained at the technical level, mostly in the context of specific projects (for example, PRO-ACT or development of the self-reliance model and index). WFP had only limited strategic engagement with MAAIF, which was surprising given WFP emphasis on food security and its work on livelihoods in the agricultural sector. WFP also had no engagement with the Ministry of Finance, which country office informants saw as a limitation for financial sustainability of many of the programmatic areas and for potential future expansion of HACT.
- **Clear terms of engagement:** Strategic partnerships thrived on clear, mutually understood terms of engagement, typically formalized in memorandums of understanding. These included shared visions of policy and mapping of government capacity needs and the potential support of WFP. This approach is reflected in social protection partnerships (MGLSD and DRDIP), but less so in school feeding with the Ministry of Education.
- **Alignment and use of government systems:** During the CSP, WFP used aspects of government implementation structures and government reporting systems such as the Education Management Information System for the school feeding programme and the District Health Information Systems (DHIS2) for the moderate acute malnutrition programme. In the health sector, nutrition-specific interventions were implemented through government health facilities, where health workers offered treatment and prevention services for moderate acute malnutrition. However, the supply chain component was not integrated into the government systems. Alignment with government systems was strongest in the context of WFP partnerships with Office of the Prime Minister and MGLSD, where it included use of existing targeting mechanisms and implementation structures, and channelling funds directly to the Government using the harmonized approach to cash transfers.

209. During the CSP, the country office adopted a comprehensive, ecosystem approach to country capacity strengthening in the areas of social protection and shock-responsive social protection, which demonstrated the following strengths:²⁹⁸

- clear framework for capacity strengthening based on a shared mapping of capacities;
- strategies to strengthen capacity at both national and subnational levels;
- support for “tangible” capabilities such as systems and procedures;
- a focus on structural changes such as policies, legislation, public finance;
- different forms of engagement to support changes in relationships, including coordination mechanisms (relationships between WFP and the Government and among other actors);
- a focus on the “intangibles”, like shifts in attitude, behaviour, mental models and ownership; and
- support for actors who advocate for changes in government policy (for example, Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Social Protection).

210. Seconding staff for technical coordination benefited partnerships between WFP and the ministries, departments and agencies, allowing government partners to develop new tools and policies (such as the Self-Reliance Index, the early warning system, or proposed disaster risk financing) and WFP to maintain ongoing policy engagement. This strategy was most effective when dedicated government staff worked closely with secondees, as seen in MGLSD. Additionally, WFP participation in coordination mechanisms, for example, in support of the CRRF Secretariat, facilitated joint planning and implementation.

Finding 34: WFP adopted a new approach to non-government organization partnerships to enable local capacity to be developed. However, several factors hindered achievement of this objective. While WFP did not draw on private sector partners to enhance performance in the early years of the CSP, recent shifts to a more strategic engagement with the private sector are promising. (EQ 4.2)

211. The country office adapted its approach to partnership over the period to better align with its programmatic needs and “Grand Bargain” commitments to increase local partners’ institutional capacities. In 2020, the country office introduced three-year strategic partnerships with international and strong national non-government organizations, aiming to improve results and reduce transaction costs. The approach aimed to expand the range of cooperating partners and their remit beyond traditional general food assistance and nutrition programmes in the refugee response, through inclusion of cross-cutting components and resilience activities. WFP also introduced a co-design phase and the requirement for lead partners to work with community-based organizations at the subnational level as co-partner or subgrantee.

212. While this effort was recognized as positive practice,²⁹⁹ it did not fully meet the intended result of strengthening local capacity.³⁰⁰ According to the country office, the objective was that, after three years of capacity building, WFP would be able to sign field-level agreements directly with at least 20 percent of the co-partners at subnational level. In the end, field-level agreements were signed with only 5 percent of the organizations. Ugandan non-government organizations, however, still play a critical role in providing general food assistance (in-kind and cash-based transfer) in the refugee response, reaching 67 percent of the total persons of concern.³⁰¹ Figure shows that the share of field-level agreements signed with Ugandan non-government organizations has grown since 2018, with the number of field-level agreements signed with local non-government organizations exceeding number of field-level agreements signed with international non-government organizations in 2021, 2022 and 2024.

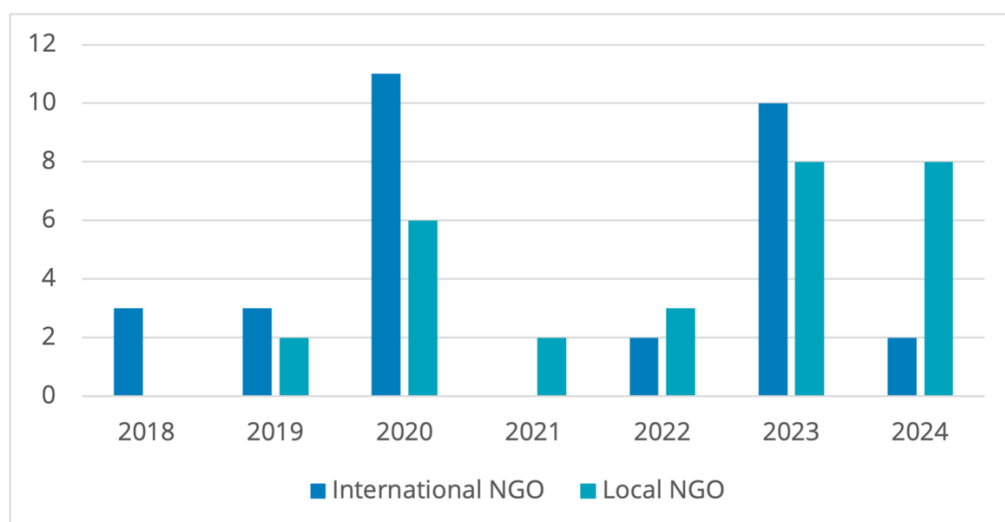
²⁹⁸ Based on KIIs and WFP. 2024. *Applying Outcome Harvesting Methodology and Conducting an Evaluability Analysis for WFP CCS Programme*.

²⁹⁹ WFP. 2023. *Internal Audit of WFP Operations*.

³⁰⁰ Key concerns included the unintentional result of aggravating the power imbalance between international and local NGOs and approaches to capacity development that were not monitored nor well-tailored to local organizations. WFP. 2023. *Review of the Multi-Year Partnership Agreement that Uganda Country Office signed with NGO partners for the period 2020-2022*.

³⁰¹ Figures provided by the WFP Uganda country office.

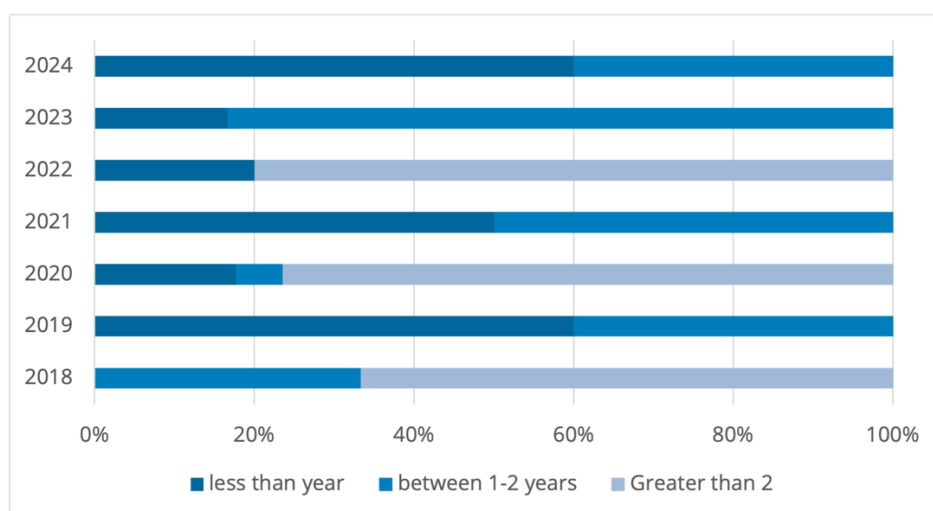
Figure 22: Number of field-level agreements signed 2018-2023, international and local non-government organizations



Source: FLA Tracking 2020-2024 (WFP Uganda country office)

213. The move to longer-term partnership agreements was generally positive from the perspective of cooperating partners, as it allowed for a longer time horizon and more stable staffing over the period. Uganda country office data suggests that most field-level agreements with cooperating partners, local and international non-government organizations combined, were for more than one year.

Figure 23: Duration of field-level agreements 2018-2023 (international and local non-government organizations)



Source: FLA Tracking 2020-2024 (WFP Uganda country office).

214. Despite a good working relationship, key informant interviews with local non-government organizations raised the known challenges of working with WFP corporate systems and requirements to deliver specific contractual milestones, with insufficient advance of funds in relation to the value of the field-level agreement. While this is often not a significant issue for international non-government organizations with adequate capital reserves, it constitutes a major issue for local non-government organizations, whose financial resources are constrained. Cooperating partners interviewed advised that, over time, this can compromise service delivery, hinder capacity development, and is worsened by long delays in the reimbursement of project costs. According to country office key informant interviews, there continues to be lack of clarity in the position and approach of WFP to the localization agenda and a tension between such aspirations and corporate systems and fiduciary requirements.

215. Initially, WFP did not draw on private sector partners to enhance performance. Recently, WFP shifted to more strategic engagement with the private sector, including through collaborating with financial service providers for the delivery of cash-based transfers, and an initiative to improve youth employment funded by the Mastercard Foundation. Additionally, local procurement work with grain traders under the LRFPP opened opportunities for a more facilitative and indirect approach to food sourcing and food systems development.³⁰²

216. WFP has supported private sector platforms that provide opportunities to support food system transformation. WFP was instrumental in the establishment of the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network (SBN) in 2022 and the development of the network's first strategy, in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN). The platform supports businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, in aligning with national nutrition priorities by fostering collaboration across businesses, government and other stakeholders.³⁰³

217. Other private sector engagements supported smallholder farmers, such as in West Nile region where smallholder farmers faced difficulties obtaining agricultural inputs, tools and market access, resulting in high post-harvest losses and poor income. By collaborating with Omia, an agricultural inputs distributor, local distributors could be activated to deliver inputs directly to smallholder farmers. In 2023, Omia expanded to include solar irrigation as a service and became the first investee with Danish Refugee Council's Refugee Investment Facility, securing concessional impact-linked loans to deliver their services to refugees and host communities in northern Uganda.³⁰⁴

218. According to key informant interviews, the country office recognized that businesses can often implement and innovate more effectively and sustainably than non-government organizations. Linked to the IGNITE Innovation Hub for Eastern Africa (based at the WFP regional bureau in Nairobi), WFP Uganda set up an innovation office in Kampala to support the Food Systems Challenge.³⁰⁵ In turn, the country office established long-term agreements with two Uganda based innovation hubs, which allowed streamlining the identification and activation of projects with a wider range of partners. The approach also supports more financially and operationally effective partner management mechanisms whereby WFP can, via the innovation of long-term agreements, initiate requests for project proposals. The local innovation hub partner can then assess and vet private sector companies and their proposals and plug their solutions to WFP operations.³⁰⁶ Although still in early stages, key informants advised that by overcoming bureaucratic delays this approach enables WFP to test innovative solutions more cost effectively and quickly.

Finding 35: WFP relationships with United Nation partners have been critical to support implementation of the CSP, even though not all relationships maximized the benefits of a partnership. (EQ 4.2)

219. WFP worked closely with the UNCT, with greater levels of engagement with a few key entities, as outlined below. These partnerships were most supportive of CSP implementation when there was engagement at both technical and strategic levels, clear terms of engagement (including communications and information sharing), and recognition of each partner's comparative advantage. For example:

- **UNHCR:** WFP collaboration with UNHCR has been crucial for the success of the refugee programme. Despite long-standing data sharing issues, joint operations improved during the CSP period through work on refugee food assistance prioritization. Initially, the organizations faced challenges including differing opinions on definitions of concepts and eligibility criteria, and communication and transparency issues. The UNHCR-WFP Joint Programme Excellence and Targeting Hub provided support, though it also added different perspectives and more time to the

³⁰² Private sector engagement was strengthened in 2024 by the supply chain and procurement unit in collaboration with AMS to explore mechanisms to tackle major national food safety and quality issues related to concerns over the high levels of aflatoxin affecting maize harvests.

³⁰³ *Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Uganda Strategy 2022/23-2029/30*

³⁰⁴ WFP Uganda Innovation Logbook 2024.

³⁰⁵ [WFP Innovation Accelerator](#).

³⁰⁶ WFP oversees the selection and implementation process in collaboration with the innovation hub partner. This process is much faster than the standard WFP CP-FLA process - 2 weeks vs 6 months.

process. Despite complexities, the collaboration resulted in joint roll-out of prioritization with the Office of the Prime Minister and other actors and stronger field-level cooperation across the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR and WFP. There is now a foundation for further collaboration to reduce duplication through joint programming in livelihoods, develop a shared helpline and conduct joint post-distribution monitoring.

- **UNICEF:** According to key informant interviewees, WFP and UNICEF complemented each other in nutrition efforts, with WFP addressing moderate acute malnutrition cases, thereby reducing UNICEF's severe acute malnutrition caseload. WFP also filled a gap in the system by working on nutrition as part of a broader food system approach. Because UNICEF and WFP both work on prevention of malnutrition there are, nonetheless, opportunities to work more closely to maximize coherence. In the joint implementation of the CSSP, or NutriCash, initiative, UNICEF focused on health systems strengthening (health facilities, last mile services) and WFP on the cash transfers and nutrition-sensitive programming. However, the project's targeting strategy did not enable synergies between these two components. As a result, NutriCash beneficiaries did not consistently benefit from a health systems strengthening component.
- **FAO:** Despite early efforts to establish a more expansive memorandum of understanding, collaboration remained primarily at the technical level with FAO. Joint work on PRO-ACT in Karamoja led to further collaboration on improving food systems in the Teso subregion. The engagement was strengthened over time, though interviews suggest there is potential for deeper cooperation.
- **ILO:** As the CSP gave greater emphasis to social protection, the relationship with ILO grew in prominence. At a strategic level, ILO and WFP co-coordinate outcomes on employment and productivity and continue to define synergies in social protection where each entity brings different areas of expertise and perspectives on social protection. On a technical or programme level, there were reported successes in engaging with local government in Karamoja and efforts to create a digital village directory to inform availability of social protection data for programming were also supported. There are plans to work together to integrate refugees into the social protection system. Operationally, WFP field presence allows non-resident ILO team members to work in Karamoja, West Nile and Southwest.
- **UNCDF:** In 2024, an agreement was reached with UNCDF to accelerate digital and financial inclusion programming through agriculture and market support programming, which is in its early stages.³⁰⁷

220. There was no strategic engagement with UN-Women during the CSP,³⁰⁸ which is identified as a gap in the country office partnership arrangements to support more gender-responsive approaches. There have been punctual collaborations at the field level though.³⁰⁹

Finding 36: Despite organizational realignments, human resource capacity was not fully aligned with the strategic demands of the CSP over the past six years. The country office structure was an impediment to a more integrated programmatic approach. (EQ 4.3)

221. The country office underwent an efficiency and restructuring exercise in 2020,³¹⁰ reducing positions from 693 to 475. As of May 2024, the country office workforce included 473 staff (43 percent of whom are women).³¹¹ A relatively high number of staff were on short term contracts (65 percent), and recruiting a diverse workforce remained challenging.³¹²

³⁰⁷ WFP. 2023. *2023 Annual Report: Strengthening food systems to promote increased value chain employment opportunities for youth in Uganda*.

³⁰⁸ An MoU was under development at the time of this evaluation.

³⁰⁹ In Arua, UN-Women provided gender training to staff and supported gender assessments for NutriCash and other programme activities.

³¹⁰ The term "Efficiency and Restructuring Exercise" was used by country office staff to describe this exercise; they did not use the term "organizational realignment".

³¹¹ WFP. 2024. *Staff Driven Report 14.05.2024*.

³¹² The country office has also faced challenges to attract candidates to meet aspirations of diversity with regards to gender and persons with disability.

222. Several capacity and skill set gaps affected CSP implementation in the context of shifting programme demands;³¹³

- insufficient expertise in gender equality and women's empowerment, and inadequate support for developing these capabilities in staff and management;³¹⁴
- a lack of assessment of necessary staff skills for a shift towards capacity strengthening; and
- coordination of HGSF was under an “officer in charge” for years, limiting strategic engagement.

223. As part of the 2024 organizational realignment, a skills audit was conducted and a new learning and development plan established. The evaluation team was informed that a new organizational structure was to be implemented, and most existing staff placed onto new contracts, but the details of this process were not available for the evaluation report.

224. The recent realignment aimed to support cash-based transfer scale-up, align supply chain and retail market engagement with programme strategy and strengthen monitoring mechanisms. However, it was implemented at the end of the CSP period, raising concerns about its impact on the next CSP.

225. In addition, the CSP inherited a structure that perpetuated “silozation” of activities, which negatively affected internal coordination and integration across activities.³¹⁵ While the country office made adjustments, key informant interview suggest further room for improvement.³¹⁶

Finding 37: Although WFP has strengthened monitoring and assessment functions, the wealth of data generated is often not analysed and used to support CSP performance due to limited country office staff and knowledge management capacity and corporate monitoring indicators that did not help track all CSP effects. (EQ 4.3)

226. The country office formally established a research, assessment and monitoring unit (RAM) in 2022, thereby consolidating previously dispersed functions into one unit that reports to Head of Programme. The unit aims to support transparency and accountability, quality and reliability of information, and data-driven and evidence-based decision making processes.³¹⁷ Since 2022, the following changes strengthened the monitoring and assessment of the CSP:

- improved coordination and workflow between country office and area office, to reduce duplication and seek efficiencies;
- integration of a community engagement and feedback mechanism, within RAM, allowing for greater integration of qualitative data from beneficiaries into a function of transparency and accountability;
- a less frequent, but more robust longitudinal approach to post-distribution monitoring for general food assistance for refugees, based on quantitative data (panel survey of 4,000-5,000 individuals) and qualitative data twice a year;³¹⁸ and
- process monitoring that is based on risk-based monitoring framework.

227. The 2024 realignment took an additional step by giving all monitoring and evaluation officers a reporting line to the RAM unit to improve visibility, coordination and knowledge sharing of monitoring activities, which had been recommended by an internal audit in 2023.

³¹³ It has been recognized that there is a need for greater capability in management, capacity strengthening, retailer and market engagement, cash transfer management and financial inclusion, and other key areas related to strategic engagement and operations.

³¹⁴ See for example WFP.2023. *Benchmark Results: Gender Equality Certification Programme*.

³¹⁵ The evaluation on resilience also comments on this inherited structure. WFP.2024. *Draft v1: Decentralized Evaluation of promoting self-reliance with livelihood, asset creation and resilience interventions in Uganda 2020-2023*.

³¹⁶ The supply chain and logistics unit and programme were subsequently placed structurally under the DCD, which improved the level of operational coordination.

³¹⁷ Three pillars of RAM outlined in WFP. 2023. *Mid-Term Review*.

³¹⁸ Three “waves” have taken place: April-May 2023, September 2023, April 2024.

228. The country office generates a high volume of data through numerous evidence-gathering activities, including post-distribution monitoring, FSNA, and specific activity monitoring surveys. This constant data collection, however, faces several challenges:

1. Many CSP effects are not captured due to limitations in cooperating partner reporting, WFP corporate indicators and monitoring approaches. For example, corporate indicators and related data have not helped track the evolution of the CSP strategic shifts towards food systems and institutional capacity strengthening.
2. Despite the abundance of data, their use for strategic decision making, advocacy and communications is limited. Reasons include:
 - user-unfriendly data platform (MODA);
 - outdated analysis tools (reliance on excel, limited access to Stata);
 - limited staff time and skills for data analysis and visualization; and
 - limited capacity for translating data into actionable insights.
3. The country office's culture of autonomy of monitoring and reporting within the country office has led to fragmented monitoring and reporting practices, with activity areas developing their own tools and dashboards that aren't more widely used for other country office needs.
4. There is a recognized opportunity for greater collaboration between RAM and the communications team to improve use of evidence and results with audiences outside of WFP.

3. Conclusions and recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

Conclusion 1: The CSP was aligned with national priorities. Its relevance to evolving contexts in Uganda was limited by fragmented implementation and little integration across activities and sectors. The future CSP should provide clearer direction that leverages existing WFP comparative advantages in crisis response, logistics and food and nutrition security.

229. The design of the CSP responded to national and subnational priorities. The initial portfolio was largely oriented to support the Government in hosting growing numbers of refugees. WFP subsequently adapted the CSP implementation to ensure relevance to the evolving programme contexts in Karamoja and refugee settlements.

230. The CSP lacked a clear theory of change, and adaptations led to shifts in priorities for the country office, hampering internal coherence and synergies between strategic outcomes. Over time, the CSP diminished in relevance as a guiding framework as other priorities took hold (for example, prioritization of general food assistance for refugees) and new opportunities for reorienting strategies emerged (for example, PRO-ACT for introducing appropriate shock-responsive approaches to preparedness in Karamoja), with budget revisions providing a means for continued relevance. The future CSP should provide clearer direction that leverages the existing WFP comparative advantages in crisis response, logistics and food and nutrition security.

231. WFP implemented a range of activities in different geographic areas, but siloing and resourcing dynamics (see conclusion 2) led to insufficient linkages between activities. For example, efforts to support asset creation and livelihoods missed out on potential linkages to markets. While there were pockets of greater programmatic integration over the CSP period, WFP was often spread too thinly to be relevant in addressing the root causes of food insecurity, for example, through robust livelihood programming.

232. Future programming could be more focused, providing more holistic support over a longer period, with WFP playing a more strategic role to create an enabling environment and relying more on government structures to deliver programming.

Conclusion 2: WFP was responsive to contextual changes in Uganda but its ability to fully achieve and sustain CSP results was hampered by funding modalities and shortfalls, as well as dramatic increases in the needs of refugees and other vulnerable populations. Tough decisions were needed to mitigate the effects of the decline in resources, which initially affected WFP positioning for the collective response to refugees and affected its programme in Karamoja.

233. WFP interventions provided benefits to refugees and vulnerable populations in Uganda, especially through direct food assistance and nutrition programmes. However, food and nutrition security outcomes deteriorated among refugee populations due to increasing numbers, reduced food production from climate shocks, rising food prices and decreasing funding for food assistance leading to smaller ration sizes. In Karamoja, data suggest that despite WFP and its partners' efforts, household food security is still elusive.

234. A significant decline in donor contributions led to the decision to optimize available resources through prioritization of general food assistance for the refugee response and this had initial deleterious effects on nutrition and food security for refugee populations. Similarly, in Karamoja funding cuts led to reduced scope of community-based supplemental feeding and the transition in 2024 to an integrated nutrition programme, which led to phasing out moderate acute malnutrition treatment and a shift to community-based approaches based on categorizing districts by vulnerability. Earmarked funding also restricted the ability of WFP to implement the CSP as envisioned because it limited a more strategic integration of programme and supply chain activities.

235. WFP utilized available resources effectively to implement most CSP activities, achieving a high percentage of expenditures against annual targets. The shift towards cash-based transfers improved efficiency of delivery but volatility in prices may have eroded the net benefit for beneficiaries.

Conclusion 3: WFP is still learning how to be an enabler as well as an implementer. There have been some successes but also challenges in this transition from implementation to enabling.

236. WFP demonstrated effectiveness in strengthening national and local capacities in health, social protection and shock-responsive systems, with promising prospects for future sustainability in some areas. However, government and other partner dependency on WFP as a funding channel for institutional donor resources remains a challenge, particularly in regions like Karamoja, which complicates long-term resilience and self-reliance strategies. WFP will therefore need to explore, with the Government, alternative sources of funding and investment.

237. Integration of WFP interventions with government structures yielded positive results, especially in social protection, in relation to data systems, coordination and planning, and project implementation. Successful approaches to realizing the enabler role of WFP included strategies such as conducting capacity mapping with the Government, working through government systems in the MGLSD and the Office of the Prime Minister, and the secondment of staff to government departments (specifically, technical assistance). The use of government systems by WFP in other sectors was inconsistent, however.

238. In school feeding, WFP built on decades of support for the Government that led to WFP playing a greater role in direct implementation. As the national school feeding policy is being finalized, there is an opportunity to clarify roles and responsibilities and move towards enabling national and district government, schools and parent-teacher committees to take on more responsibilities and financing and expand school feeding in other parts of the country where food security indicators show a need.

239. To enhance the shift from “doer” to “enabler”, WFP could consider further government capacity strengthening initiatives, recognizing the related implications for country office capacity to provide technical assistance, and for its work through cooperating partners and the private sector. Pressure to do things as cheaply as possible may run counter to the WFP dual mandate of not only doing but also enabling (in other words, the tension between short-term, emergency-only focused thinking and longer-term, development-focused thinking). For WFP to fully embrace its role as a trusted enabler, it may therefore require further shifts in the mindsets and skillsets of both WFP staff and government partners.

240. Although WFP was unable to scale up new forms of partnerships with the private sector, these partnerships will need to feature more prominently as WFP shifts to being an enabler of cross-sectoral collaboration.

Conclusion 4: WFP Uganda began to explore a food systems approach during the CSP, but these efforts are incipient and difficult to assess. There is potential for greater effectiveness through enhanced multisectoral engagement, innovative solutions and strategic partnerships to support market systems development.

241. WFP private sector engagements, particularly those related to activities under SO4, were effective in supporting local production by linking agriculture to home-grown school feeding and through implementing innovative pro-smallholder farmer contracting approaches for local purchasing. While this work helped to support some aspects of local markets and food systems development, such as the introduction of post-harvest technologies, the approach was limited in scale. The programmatic linkages between agriculture and market support, asset creation and livelihood, and supply chain management through local procurement (LRFPP) became clearer in the latter stages of the CSP. Although SO4 and SO6 were subsequently structurally aligned within the country office, operational silos remained.

242. To further address food insecurity and nutrition, more focus is needed on developing local solutions that are aligned to the country and subnational contexts. There is room for WFP to play a stronger, more strategic role as a thought leader to promote enabling policies, research and development, and multisectoral engagement, not only in agriculture but in relation to other sectors like trade, environment, health, education and social protection.

Conclusion 5: While the CSP made efforts to address cross-cutting issues like gender, environment and accountability to affected populations, a more systematic approach is required.

243. The CSP aimed to integrate cross-cutting issues like gender, environment and accountability. Effective implementation of gender-sensitive or gender-responsive approaches was hindered by poor resourcing, lack of a clear mainstreaming strategy and monitoring mechanism, as well as gaps in capacity and accountability for the country office Gender Action Plan 2018-2022.

244. Recent changes and the country office enrolment in the Gender Equality Certification Programme reflect leadership commitment to enhancing the role of WFP in this area in preparation for fostering a more responsive approach that addresses the root causes of gender inequality. Country office commitment to strengthening integration of cross-cutting issues has also been reflected in recent gender mainstreaming training for staff and on cross-cutting issues for cooperating partners to promote integration of these issues in their planning and implementation of WFP interventions.

245. Climate change and the environment have been reflected in select CSP activities, primarily in its support of early warning systems (PRO-ACT) and activities promoted by asset creation and livelihood. However, as noted earlier, the level of integration across the CSP was limited and there is a need for more systematic environmental screening across initiatives.

246. Although WFP implemented a feedback system for affected populations, its coverage varied across activity areas. Despite system improvements during the CSP, the main concern is the capacity of WFP to respond to or resolve feedback from community members. The country office has begun to emphasize community engagement throughout the programme cycle in a wide array of activities, which is a positive evolution to ensure their perspectives are reflected in the design and implementation of WFP initiatives.

3.2. Recommendations

247. The evaluation led to the following four strategic recommendations and two operational recommendations related to the design and implementation of the next WFP Uganda CSP, which is scheduled for approval by the Executive Board (EB) in November 2025. These recommendations were informed by learning workshops with the country office and external stakeholders held in September 2024.

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
Recommendation 1: Enhance programmatic integration and coherence among activities in order to maximize synergies and effectiveness.	Strategic	Country office management		High	December 2025
1.1 Develop an overarching CSP theory of change that is linked to the “nested” theories of change for Karamoja activities and the refugee response and that reflects various contexts and needs; review and update the theory of change during CSP implementation.		Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	Country office programme and supply chain units	High	March 2025
1.2 Adopt a more integrated approach to activity planning and implementation, including through supply chain and programme integration and thematic integration, for example. Other examples include the integration of activities under the concepts of self-reliance and social protection		Country office programme unit	Country office human resources (given that workforce considerations must be factored in) and supply chain units	High	November 2025
1.3 Develop a country office monitoring and evaluation, or a research, assessment and monitoring, plan that integrates monitoring and evaluation into all activities; prioritizes methods, reporting formats, visualizations and timing that facilitate the use of data in decision-making and advocacy; and outlines a knowledge management framework, including procedures for capturing and sharing learning among activities.		Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	Country office management and programme and supply chain units	Medium	January 2026
Recommendation 2: Clearly define and strengthen WFP's role as an enabler of sustainable government capacity and systems, particularly in the areas of self-reliance, social protection – including school meals and shock-responsive systems – nutrition, and food systems transformation.	Strategic	Country office management	Eastern and Southern Africa regional office and headquarters divisions Country office supply chain, nutrition, agriculture market support, social protection and human resources units	High	November 2025 (for definition) and end of CSP (for strengthening)

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
2.1 Develop comprehensive transition strategies for each key programme area that include clear milestones and timelines for transferring ownership to the Government; the Government's resource commitments, including dedicated budget allocations; capacity strengthening plans at the national and subnational levels; measurable indicators for monitoring progress towards full transition; and explicit exit strategies tied to the achievement of capacity-related benchmarks.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office social protection (includes school feeding) and other units	High	March 2026
2.2 Strengthen government systems and operational capacity by supporting data collection, analysis and utilization capability; building technical capacity for the measurement of self-reliance; and exploring the use of the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers for social protection programmes, including school meals, at the district level.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office finance unit Headquarters (requires greater clarity regarding the corporate guidance on the Harmonized Approach to Cash Transfers)	High	End of CSP
2.3. Establish a clear framework for WFP's role in emergency preparedness and response that clarifies internal roles and responsibilities regarding support for government shock-responsive social protection systems and operational preparedness; includes concrete plans for handover as government capacity increases; specifies triggers for WFP's service provision in emergencies; and outlines WFP's responsibilities as logistics provider of last resort.		Country office programme unit and strategic outcome managers	Country office supply chain and programme units	High	November 2025
Recommendation 3: Develop a more strategic and sustainable approach to partnerships, especially with government ministries, private sector entities and local organizations.	Strategic	Country office management		High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
3.1 The country office should prioritize and establish more formalized, strategic partnerships with key government ministries beyond the office of the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, including, for example, a revised partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the Government, WFP and school-based actors.		Country office programme unit	Country office partnerships unit	High	January 2026
3.2 Develop a clear and resourced action plan for engaging local NGOs and building their capacity as strategic, advocacy and implementation partners.		Country office programme unit	Headquarters Operational Partners Unit	Medium	November 2025
3.3 Develop a clear and resourced action plan for engaging private sector actors and building their capacity in transforming food systems.		Country office partnerships unit	Country office supply chain and programme units	Medium	November 2025
Recommendation 4: Improve the design and sustainability of resilience-building and self-reliance interventions for refugees and vulnerable people.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	High	January 2026
4.1 Refine and scale up, if warranted, the self-reliance model as the main strategy for the “changing lives” agenda, integrating agriculture and market support, asset creation and livelihood, and nutrition-sensitive activities, retail market development, and other activities in refugee and host communities, from the design and proposal stage. Refinements could include harmonizing targeting criteria with government social protection systems; defining specific outcome indicators and related monitoring systems based on the self-reliance index; setting evidence-based criteria for geographical expansion; and revising entry and graduation criteria for participating households.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and supply chain units	High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
4.2 Strengthen the design of asset creation and livelihood interventions through extended timeframes aligned with realistic self-reliance milestones; tailored packages of complementary activities based on household capacity; the continued integration of digital financial services and literacy training; progression pathways from basic to advanced livelihood activities; regular market assessments and linkages with retail market development activities aimed at ensuring the relevance of interventions; and the systematic monitoring of income diversification outcomes.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, partnerships and supply chain units	High	January 2026
4.3 Enhance support for smallholder farmer groups through an emphasis on value addition; access to markets; clear targets for increased market participation and incomes; and enhanced partnerships with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives and private sector actors.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain unit	High	January 2026
Recommendation 5: Strengthen the advancement of cross-cutting priorities by establishing systematic approaches to gender responsiveness, environmental sustainability and accountability to affected people across all CSP activities.	Operational	Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring unit	High	January 2026
5.1 Implement a gender-responsive approach by allocating appropriate dedicated budgets for gender-specific interventions; establishing clear gender-responsive indicators for each programme area; creating activity-specific gender action plans with milestones and targets, required technical expertise, including for partners, and advocacy strategies to influence the enabling environment; and developing a gender knowledge management system that captures and shares good practices, documents evidence of gender-responsive changes, and informs programmatic adjustments.		Country office programme unit	Country office gender and protection, research, assessment and monitoring, and knowledge management units	High	January 2026

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
5.2 Strengthen the environmental sustainability of WFP's programming by conducting systematic environmental impact assessments for all activities; developing activity-specific environmental mitigation plans; and integrating nature-based solutions into programming and mapping opportunities across activities.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and supply chain units	High	January 2026
5.3 Continue to enhance accountability through a robust community feedback mechanism and meaningful participation under all activities and in all locations, especially activities not related to general food assistance.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and gender and protection units	High	January 2026
Recommendation 6. Enhance WFP's thought leadership and catalytic role in food systems transformation through multisectoral engagement and innovative solutions.	Strategic	Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units Regional office	Medium	June 2028
6.1 Scale up innovative private sector partnerships and market-based solutions to address food security and nutrition challenges. This could include establishing a structured private sector engagement strategy; creating innovative financing mechanisms that leverage private sector investments and support scalable market solutions; and developing specific value chain interventions to address key market inefficiencies.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units Regional office	Medium	June 2027
6.2 Strengthen and expand strategic engagement with relevant ministries, United Nations partners, especially FAO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), academia, local organizations and others to promote an integrated approach to food systems transformation. This could include continuing to strengthen formal coordination mechanisms and thematic working groups; continuing and expanding joint initiatives with other United Nations entities, especially FAO and IFAD, academia, and local organizations; and tracking collective progress and gaps in coordination.		Country office programme unit	Country office supply chain and partnerships units	Medium	June 2027

Recommendations and sub-recommendations	Recommendation type	Responsible WFP office and divisions	Other contributing entities	Priority	Deadline for completion
6.3 Build the evidence base for food systems transformation, including by strengthening government capacity in data collection and analysis and evidence-based policy-making, and adopting a stronger knowledge management and knowledge sharing function.		Country office programme unit	Country office research, assessment and monitoring, and communications units	Medium	November 2026

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