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**WELT
HUNGER
WHH HILFE**

FINAL

REPORT

CONDUCTING A FEASIBILITY
STUDY OF A MULTI-SECTORAL
PROJECT IN SOUTHWESTERN
UGANDA.

VIG
VASHI IMPACT GROUP

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Full meaning
CSA	Climate-smart agriculture
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FFS	Farmer Field Schools
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KII	Key Informant Interviews
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PwD	Persons with Disability
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
rCSI	reduced Coping Strategy Index
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WHH	Welthungerhilfe
VIG	Vashi Impact Group
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welthungerhilfe (WHH), in partnership with ACORD Uganda, Kabarole Research and Resource Centre (KRC), Joint Effort to Save the Environment (JESE), and Tumaini for Refugee Women, commissioned a feasibility study to assess the viability of a multiyear resilience programme in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali refugee settlements. The programme aims to strengthen food security, youth employment, gender equality, peacebuilding, and local partner capacity. Uganda's progressive refugee policy provides opportunities for integration, but reduced humanitarian funding, climate shocks, and strained host refugee relations necessitate a robust, contextually appropriate intervention.

Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods approach, combining a household survey of 364 families in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali with 36 key informant interviews and 12 focus group discussions. These primary data sources were complemented by a desk review of WHH proposals, BMZ guidance, partner profiles, and relevant policy documents to provide additional context. Throughout the process, strict ethical safeguards were observed, including informed consent, conflict sensitive and gender responsive practices, and adherence to WHH's safeguarding standards.

Results

- **Food security and livelihoods:** An average rCSI score of 19.25 for refugee and 6.82 for host communities signals moderate to high household food insecurity, with most relying on subsistence farming. The overall food consumption score was acceptable for 49.5% of the households alluding to the availability of food with diverse nutrients, 36.3% are borderline with moderate risks, and 14.3% have poor access to nutritious food. Livelihood opportunities are limited, and nearly 93% of youth aged 15–30 indicated they were unemployed, with over 95% and 81% unemployment rates across refugees and host community youth respectively. In terms of the net household monthly incomes, 44% of refugees earn below UGX. 50,000 and 49% between UGX. 50,000 to 200,000; this is in comparison to the host communities 17% and 55% respective monthly incomes signalling the severe economic vulnerabilities within the respondents' primary livelihoods.
- **Gender dynamics:** Female headed households, representing about 49% of respondents, were disproportionately vulnerable. Women face restricted access to assets and decision-making, while gender-based violence was consistently reported in focus group discussions.
- **Social cohesion:** Around 73% host and 67% refugee households noted community disputes or tensions, largely due to domestic issues and competition over business land, water, and natural resources.
- **Institutional capacity:** Local authorities and partners reported operating with fewer than half of the required technical staff which constrains coordination, service delivery, and support for livelihoods and protection.
- **Environmental pressures:** 43% of households experienced crop failure in the past year due to droughts or floods. Land degradation and dependence on rain-fed agriculture continue to undermine resilience and increase vulnerability to climate shocks.

Feasibility Analysis

Relevance: The proposed project is highly relevant to the needs of refugees and host communities in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali. Survey data showed that over 60% of households face food insecurity, while youth unemployment remains widespread. The intervention directly addresses these pressing challenges by focusing on food security, livelihoods, gender equality, and peacebuilding, aligning with Uganda's progressive refugee policy and district development priorities.

Coherence: The design is coherent with national frameworks and international commitments. It complements Uganda's refugee response strategy and aligns with WHH's thematic focus on climate resilience, youth employment, and gender justice. Coordination with OPM, UNHCR, and district

authorities ensures consistency with existing settlement response plans, while partnerships with ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini strengthen local ownership.

Efficiency: The project demonstrates efficiency through the use of proven, cost-effective approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, Village Savings and Loan Associations, and climate smart agricultural practices. Phased implementation and contingency planning allow resources to be deployed flexibly in response to shocks. However, efficiency will depend on strengthening partner capacity and ensuring adequate staffing and financial oversight.

Effectiveness: The intervention is designed to achieve measurable outcomes in food security, youth employment, gender transformation, and social cohesion. Indicators such as household dietary diversity, youth employment rates, and participation of women and persons with disabilities provide a clear basis for tracking progress. Effectiveness will be enhanced by embedding adaptive learning mechanisms and participatory monitoring to test assumptions and adjust strategies.

Impact: The project has strong potential to generate positive impact by reducing food insecurity, improving livelihoods, and fostering peaceful coexistence. Climate smart agriculture and youth skilling are expected to increase household resilience, while gender transformative approaches will contribute to long term shifts in social norms. The integrated design ensures that benefits extend beyond immediate outputs to broader community stability and resilience.

Sustainability: Sustainability prospects are positive if interventions are embedded in local systems and promote community ownership. Partnerships with district authorities, community facilitators, and producer groups will help ensure continuity beyond donor funding. Environmental sustainability is supported through agroecological practices, while institutional sustainability requires ongoing capacity building and integration into government service delivery.

Theory of Change (ToC): The ToC provides a logical framework linking inputs to outcomes and impacts. It assumes that improved food security, youth employment, gender equality, and social cohesion will collectively strengthen resilience and reduce dependence on humanitarian aid. To enhance evaluability, indicators should be more closely mapped to causal pathways, particularly intermediate outcomes such as behaviour change, adoption of practices, and conflict reduction. Explicit feedback loops between monitoring, community reflection, and adaptive decision making will strengthen the plausibility of the ToC in volatile contexts.

Risks and Mitigation Strategies

- **Operational risks:** These stem from limited partner capacity, logistical delays, and weak coordination, which can be mitigated through targeted capacity building, phased implementation, and flexible workplans.
- **Financial risks:** Financial risks, including inflation, exchange rate volatility, and potential misuse of resources, require budget contingencies, strong financial controls, and supplier agreements to safeguard efficiency.
- **Political risks:** Political risks such as policy changes, election related unrest, and local interference can be addressed by maintaining neutrality, strengthening liaison with government authorities, and designing adaptable models.
- **Social risks:** Social risks, notably refugee–host tensions, exclusion of vulnerable groups, and entrenched gender inequalities, call for inclusive targeting, joint activities, and gender transformative approaches to ensure equity and cohesion
- **Environmental risks:** These risks from climate shocks and land degradation demand climate smart agriculture, sustainable land management, and diversified livelihoods to build resilience.

Conclusions

The feasibility study concludes that the proposed multi-year resilience programme is both timely and relevant, addressing critical challenges of food insecurity, youth unemployment, gender inequality, social tensions, and environmental vulnerability in Uganda's refugee settlements. Evidence from household surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions confirms that the intervention is technically sound, operationally viable, and aligned with national refugee policies and district priorities. While risks related to partner capacity, financial volatility, political sensitivities, and climate shocks remain, these can be effectively mitigated through adaptive management, strong coordination, inclusive targeting, and climate smart practices. Overall, the programme demonstrates strong potential to improve livelihoods, strengthen social cohesion, and promote sustainable resilience if implemented with robust monitoring, continuous learning, and integration into local systems.

Recommendations

Design and Implementation

- Establish explicit learning and adaptation mechanisms through quarterly reflection workshops and real-time monitoring dashboards.
- Align indicators with Theory of Change pathways to capture intermediate outcomes such as behaviour change, adoption of practices, and social cohesion.
- Mainstream gender transformative and conflict sensitive approaches across all outputs, supported by mandatory staff training and gender disaggregated data collection.
- Strengthen partner capacity via systematic training, succession planning, and documentation of processes to ensure continuity and quality delivery.
- Adopt the proposed Street Business School model as the primary approach for youth economic empowerment, enabling young people to conduct guided, localised market assessments, match their skills to demand, and identify viable niche livelihood opportunities.

Policy and Partnership

- Formalise coordination with OPM, UNHCR, and district authorities tos integrate project outputs into district development plans and national refugee frameworks.
- Leverage partnerships with FAO, ILO, UNDP, and specialised NGOs to enhance technical expertise and ensure inclusion of persons with disabilities.
- Roll out safeguarding training and establish confidential reporting mechanisms to uphold humanitarian principles and mitigate reputational risks.

Further Research and Piloting

- Pilot climate resilient agricultural practices such as drought tolerant crops, water harvesting, and agroecological methods, documenting lessons for scaling across settlements.
- Embed structured refugee–host dialogue on shared natural resource management within proposed and existing peacebuilding and environmental activities by strengthening joint community platforms to prevent and resolve resource-based conflicts and promote sustainable, cooperative resource use.
- Develop sustainability and exit strategies by embedding interventions into local government systems, promoting community ownership models such as cooperatives, and conducting sustainability audits prior to project closure.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

Welthungerhilfe (WHH) is a leading international development and humanitarian organisation working to combat hunger, strengthen resilience, and promote sustainable development among vulnerable populations. Guided by principles of dignity, justice, and self-determination, WHH partners with governments, civil society, communities, and local actors to deliver integrated, community-driven solutions. In Uganda, WHH has a long-standing presence focusing on food and nutrition security, climate-resilience, youth & women economic development, gender justice, and emergency response, particularly in refugee-hosting districts.

Uganda hosts over 1.9 million refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The Southwest settlements of Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali face overlapping challenges, including reduced food assistance, limited livelihood opportunities, youth unemployment, high levels of gender-based violence, environmental pressure, and tensions between refugees and host communities. Despite Uganda's progressive refugee policies, structural and market barriers continue to constrain sustainable livelihoods. In response, WHH has designed a multi-year, integrated resilience programme to improve food security, youth employment, gender equality, peaceful coexistence, and local partner capacity, in partnership with ACORD Uganda, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini for Refugee Women. This feasibility study assesses the relevance, contextual fit, feasibility, and sustainability of the proposed programme, drawing on evidence from refugees, host communities, authorities, UN agencies, and partners to inform design, strengthen risk mitigation, and ensure alignment with WHH's commitment to locally led, gender-responsive, and resilient development.

1.2. The Context

Uganda hosts a large refugee population under a progressive refugee policy that allows freedom of movement, access to land, and inclusion in national service systems (OPM & UNHCR, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Refugees are mainly settled in Kyangwali, Nakivale, and Oruchinga, where host districts already face high poverty levels, fragile infrastructure, and limited livelihood opportunities (UNHCR, 2024; UNDP, 2023). Despite a supportive legal framework, reduced humanitarian funding, climate variability, and growing pressure on land and natural resources are straining both refugee and host communities. Coordination is led by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) with UN agencies, district local governments, and NGOs, though local institutional capacity remains constrained (OPM & UNHCR, 2023; UNDP, 2023).

Refugee and host households experience widespread food and nutrition insecurity, declining agricultural productivity, and limited income-generating opportunities (WFP, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Reductions in food assistance have increased reliance on subsistence farming and informal labour, while access to inputs, skills training, and markets remains limited (FAO, 2022; WFP, 2023). Youth unemployment is high due to inadequate vocational training, limited capital, and weak labour market linkages (ILO, 2022). Persistent gender inequalities restrict women's access to livelihoods, assets, and decision-making and heighten vulnerability to gender-based violence, while competition over shared resources contributes to social tensions (UN Women, 2021; NRC, 2023). As a result, there is strong demand for integrated interventions that strengthen self-reliance, improve food security, and promote peaceful coexistence (IGAD, 2021; UNDP, 2023).

1.3. Overview of Proposed intervention

The proposed intervention by WHH and its partners aims to improve food and nutrition security, livelihoods, social cohesion, and gender equality among vulnerable refugees and host communities through integrated, community-driven approaches. It combines climate-smart agriculture, youth skills development, peacebuilding, and gender-transformative actions to strengthen resilience and promote sustainable coexistence. The intervention will support households to increase food production and dietary diversity through Farmer Field Schools (FFS), nutrition education, and market linkages. Youth will

be supported through vocational, life skills and entrepreneurship training to improve employability and self-reliance. Peacebuilding activities will strengthen cooperation over shared resources, while gender-transformative approaches will promote equitable decision-making and reduce gender-based violence. The project will be implemented in Kyangwali Refugee Settlement in Kikuube District, and in Nakivale and Oruchinga Refugee Settlements in Isingiro District, including surrounding host communities. The areas were selected due to high levels of vulnerability, protracted displacement, and pressure on natural resources. The primary target groups for the projects are refugees and vulnerable host community members, with a focus on women, youth, persons with disability and households with high levels of food and nutrition insecurity. Secondary targets include local leaders, community facilitators, and implementing partners who play a role in sustaining project outcomes. The intervention prioritises inclusive participation, ensuring representation of women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PwDs).

1.4.   Rationale and objectives of the feasibility study

WHH has commissioned Vashi Impact Group (VIG), a women-led research and advisory firm, to conduct a feasibility study to assess and validate the proposed multi-year resilience programme planned for implementation in the refugee settlements of Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali in Southwest Uganda. The project seeks to strengthen food security and nutrition, youth employment, gender equality, peacebuilding, and local partner capacity through an integrated, community-driven approach. Before final submission of the project proposal document to the donor, WHH requires a comprehensive, evidence-informed analysis to verify whether the programme design is contextually appropriate, technically sound, operationally viable, and responsive to the needs of refugees and host communities. As such, the feasibility study generated insights from refugees, host communities, government actors, UN agencies, and the four implementing partners, including ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini to assess whether the proposed interventions are achievable within the current settlement dynamics. In line with BMZ requirements, the study examined project relevance, assumptions, design logic, partner capacities, risk factors, gender and conflict sensitivities, and sustainability prospects. Study findings will inform programme refinement, strengthen contextual alignment, and enhance the robustness of WHH's final proposal. The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. **To assess the overall relevance and appropriateness of the proposed project** in relation to the needs, priorities, and vulnerabilities of refugees and host communities in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali.
2. **To review the technical feasibility of planned interventions** across food and nutrition security, youth skilling and employment, gender transformation, peacebuilding, and environmental sustainability, and determine whether the proposed strategies are realistic and achievable.
3. **To examine the institutional and operational capacity of implementing partners** (ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini) and assess their readiness to deliver project activities in compliance with required standards.
4. **To identify contextual, operational, safeguarding, gender, environmental, and market-related risks**, and assess the underlying assumptions that shape the project's Theory of Change.
5. **To evaluate the sustainability prospects of the project**, including community ownership, integration with government systems, environmental considerations, and durability of benefits beyond the project period.
6. **To provide evidence-based recommendations** for strengthening the design, delivery model, risk mitigation plan, partnership arrangements, and monitoring and accountability mechanisms prior to final donor submission.

The feasibility study sought to directly address these objectives and research questions set out in the terms of references.

CHAPTER 2: METHODOLOGY

2.1. Study design and approach

This feasibility study adopted a mixed-methods design to assess the relevance, technical soundness, operational viability, and sustainability of the proposed multi-year resilience project. The approach combined quantitative household-level data with qualitative insights from refugees, host communities, implementing partners, government institutions, and market actors. This allowed the study to test the underlying assumptions of the proposed ToC, the proposed results framework, assess contextual and operational feasibility, and identify risks and enabling conditions from multiple perspectives. Central to the methodological approach was the recognition that feasibility extends beyond technical design to include social acceptability, institutional capacity, gender and conflict sensitivity, market functionality, and implementation realities within refugee-hosting contexts. The study therefore prioritised engagement with diverse stakeholder groups, triangulation of evidence, and attention to intersectional vulnerabilities across gender, age, location, displacement status, and livelihood profiles.

2.2. Data collection methods

Data for the feasibility study were collected using a combination of desk review, quantitative household surveys, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). The mixed-methods approach was selected to ensure comprehensive coverage of both household-level conditions and broader institutional, markets, and community dynamics relevant to assessing the feasibility of the proposed intervention.

2.2.1. Desk Review

A focused desk review was conducted to inform the feasibility assessment and refine the primary data collection tools. Documents reviewed included WHH's narrative proposal, results framework and Theory of Change, BMZ/bengo application guidance, and partner organisational profiles and capacity assessment reports for ACORD Uganda, KRC Uganda, JESE, and Tumaini for Refugee Women. The scope was broadened by reviewing external documents (see References for the list of reviewed documents).

2.2.2. Quantitative household survey

Primary quantitative data were collected through a structured household survey administered across Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali refugee settlements and adjacent host communities. A total of **364 households** were successfully interviewed, comprising 203 households in Nakivale, 101 households in Kyangwali, and 60 households in Oruchinga. The survey captured data on household demographics, food security, livelihoods, access to land and services, exposure to shocks, and gendered vulnerabilities. Data collection was conducted in person by 4 trained enumerators between December 7 to 18, 2025, who spoke the local languages and were aware of the context using structured questionnaires, with flexibility to use hard-copy tools where digital data collection was constrained.

2.2.3. Qualitative key informant interviews

A total of **36 key informant interviews (KIIs)** were conducted using **purposive sampling**, guided by approved field instructions and national-level engagement plans. Stakeholders were selected based on their roles, responsibilities, and contextual knowledge of settlement dynamics, programme implementation, and coordination mechanisms. Identification and mobilisation followed the agreed pathways through **OPM refugee desk offices, district technical departments, Refugee Welfare Council (RWC) leadership, sector leads, and designated focal points from implementing partners**. Of the 36 KIIs, **28 interviews were conducted at settlement level,** and **8 interviews were conducted at cross-settlement or national level**. Settlement-level interviews were distributed across the three target locations, with **10 KIIs conducted in Nakivale**, 8 **in Oruchinga**, and **10 in Kyangwali**, reflecting differences in population size, programme intensity, and operational relevance. Across the three settlements, settlement-level KIIs included **11 district and settlement-level government officials** (including District Agricultural, Community Development, and Commercial Officers), **9 RWC leaders and community representatives**, **3 peer or comparable organisations** active in livelihoods, food security, and gender

programming, and **5 market and value-chain actors** such as produce buyers, agro-input suppliers, and local traders. Community-level KIIs were conducted **in person** by **three trained facilitators over eight field days**, in line with the agreed fieldwork plan. The **8 cross-settlement and national-level KIIs** were conducted **remotely** by the VIG core team and included **4 representatives from implementing partners** (ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini) and **4 WHH technical and programme staff**.

Community level interviews were conducted in-person by **3** trained facilitators for 8 days while those with peer organisations and implementing partners were conducted remotely by the 4 VIG core staff. KIIs focused on institutional capacity, coordination mechanisms, market feasibility, operational constraints, gender and protection risks, and alignment of the proposed intervention with local realities.

2.2.4. Focus group discussions
The study conducted **12 focus group discussions**, engaging approximately **72 participants** across refugee and host community groups. FGDs were held separately with refugee men, refugee women, youth (18–30 years), host community members, and livelihood or VSLA group participants. FGDs were distributed across the three target settlements, with **5 FGDs conducted in Nakivale**, **2 in Oruchinga**, and **5 in Kyangwali**, reflecting differences in settlement size, population composition, and programme intensity.

Across the three settlements, FGDs were held separately with **refugee men (3 FGDs)**, **refugee women (3 FGDs)**, **youth aged 18–30 (2 FGDs)**, **host community members (2 FGDs)**, and **livelihood or VSLA group participants (2 FGDs)**. Nakivale and Kyangwali hosted the full range of group types, while Oruchinga included FGDs with **refugee men and refugee women**, ensuring proportional representation within the smaller settlement context.

Discussions explored community perceptions of needs, feasibility of proposed activities, social cohesion and refuge-host relations, gender norms, and anticipated barriers to implementation. FGDs were organised in a gender- and age-sensitive manner to support safe participation and open discussion, particularly on sensitive issues. The FGDs were conducted in-person by the same facilitators who conducted the KIIs at community level.

Across all primary data collection activities, interviews and discussions were conducted in local languages commonly spoken in the settlements, with subsequent translation into English during transcription and data cleaning. Fieldwork was coordinated with Refugee Welfare Councils, community leaders, and the Office of the Prime Minister to ensure ethical access, appropriate mobilisation, and compliance with settlement regulations. Detailed sampling tables and data collection tools are provided in the **Annexes** to maintain clarity and conciseness in the main report.

2.3.   Analytical framework and feasibility criteria
The analysis assesses the design coherence, contextual fit, and practical feasibility of the proposed intervention. It examines alignment with priority needs and target groups (relevance), consistency with rights-based principles and existing initiatives (coherence), realism of the delivery model within planned resources and timelines (efficiency), plausibility of the Theory of Change and implementation logic (effectiveness) and potential contribution to longer-term outcomes (impact), and prospects for sustaining benefits through local systems and capacities (sustainability).

2.4.   Ethical considerations
The feasibility study was conducted in line with WHH ethical standards, the OPM research guidelines, and the Do-No-Harm approach. Participation was voluntary and based on free, prior, and informed consent, obtained in local languages. Participants were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw at any stage without any negative consequences. Confidentiality and data protection were ensured through the anonymisation of all data and the secure handling and storage of research materials, with no personally identifiable information included in analysis or reporting. The study applied conflict-sensitive and gender-responsive approaches throughout, including appropriate group composition and

the use of trained facilitators to address power dynamics and sensitive topics. WHH safeguarding standards, including Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH), were systematically integrated into all field activities, with non-intrusive facilitation and referral to existing, appropriate support services where needed.

2.5.   Challenges and Limitations
Several cross-cutting challenges were encountered during the feasibility study, and more specifically during the data collection phase. These are outlined below.

Challenges
Mobilisation of participants: The study encountered challenges with timely mobilisation of participants across all three settlements of Nakivale, Kyangwali and Oruchinga settlements. In Kyangwali, the mobilisers initially allocated were hesitant to comply and provided several constraints that delayed mobilisation for FGDs and KIIs. In Oruchinga, mobilisation was constrained by the limited availability and effectiveness of designated mobilisers, many of whom were office-based staff and unable to adequately support field-level engagement, resulting in low turnout in some areas. These mobilisers were seconded by partner organisations and were supposed to assist with mobilisation and coordination of the data collection exercise at the community level. To mitigate these challenges, the research team engaged Refugee Welfare Council (RWC II) leaders to support mobilisation within the refugee settlements, while LC II leaders assisted with mobilisation in host communities. In addition, the OPM Settlement Commandant facilitated access by sharing contacts for district-level representatives and making direct introductions where required.

In Oruchinga, community-based mobilisers and local leaders were directly engaged, and the researcher supported mobilisation efforts in the field to ensure participation. The combined measures significantly eased mobilisation constraints and enabled the successful completion of FGDs and KIIs across both locations. While in Nakivale, mobilising participants for FGDs required the engagement of local mobilisers, which involved additional costs and coordination efforts. Furthermore, participants often expected refreshments during FGDs, which placed additional financial pressure on the fieldwork process. The challenges were mitigated by hiring mobilisers in advance and incorporating participant refreshments into field-level planning to ensure adequate turnout and sustained engagement during discussions.

Logistical and Power Supply Constraints: Fieldwork across Kyangwali, Oruchinga, and Nakivale was affected by logistical constraints, particularly unstable power supply and limited access to charging facilities within the settlements. In Kikuube District, ongoing road construction required the relocation of electricity poles along planned road corridors, resulting in frequent power outages. Across all three settlements, these constraints limited the researcher's ability to consistently charge electronic devices, affecting access to digital data collection tools and timely transcription. To mitigate this challenge, the facilitator adopted the use of hard-copy data collection tools during fieldwork and relied on alternative power sources, including solar charging, to power mobile devices. Transcription and data processing were therefore conducted in the evenings after field activities, once devices had been sufficiently charged. The adaptive measures ensured continuity of data collection and documentation despite infrastructure-related limitations.

Timing of the feasibility study: Challenges were also encountered in securing appointments mainly with peer organisation as most of these were preparing for the annual shutdown in December. This includes the UN agencies. Some of these were prepared to participate in the study but in January 2026, a time-period falling outside the data collection period.

Political sensitivities: The feasibility study was conducted during the build-up to the elections in Uganda. Therefore, participation of targeted groups was complicated by security concerns and the general

engagement of in campaign activities. For security reasons, some of the participants were hesitant to participate and/or recorded in case their comments were taken out of context.

Limitations of the study

This section outlines the key limitations encountered as a result of the challenges cited above and may have influenced the scope, depth, or interpretation of the findings.

Inability to record some interviews: Some interviews were not recorded as the respondents did not consent to be recorded and due to electricity challenge. The facilitators took down notes, but this limits the details that can be captured during a discussion.

Reduced real-time supervision and quality monitoring: The reliance on remote supervision for data collection activities meant that comprehensive feedback to facilitators and enumerators could only be provided during the end-of-day debriefing sessions. This limited the ability to correct interviewing approaches in real time, which may have affected the consistency of data collection across the settlements.

Inaccuracies introduced during translations: Although translation procedures were applied, the use of multiple local languages introduced a risk of meaning distortion or loss of nuance. Subtle expressions, technical terms, or culturally specific concepts may not have been translated with full precision, potentially affecting the accuracy and comparability of qualitative data.

CHAPTER 3: RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the situational analysis, outlining the current socio-economic, environmental, and institutional conditions affecting refugees and host communities in the target areas. Drawing on quantitative and qualitative data, the analysis highlights key vulnerabilities, capacities, and structural constraints shaping livelihoods, resilience, and social cohesion, and provides the evidence base for the proposed intervention design. These issues were largely guided by the indicators in the Impact Matrix (Project proposal document).

3.1.   Socio-economic Demographic Characteristics of respondents

A total of 364 households were interviewed in the three refugee settlements and host communities. Out of these, 49% were females and 51% were males, showing an almost equal gender distribution of respondents attained during the survey. Most of the respondents (72%) were household heads and 21% spouses to the household heads, this strengthens the reliability of information related to livelihoods, resource use, and coping strategies. The average household size is 4.6 persons, with nearly two-thirds of households comprising four or more members, indicating relatively high dependency and pressure on household resources. Household composition typically includes one to two children (67%) and one to two working-age adults (77%), while 21% of households include at least one elderly member, further increasing care responsibilities and support needs within households.

Table 1:Summary of Socio-economic demographic characteristics of respondents

Sex of Household Head			
Sex of Household Head	**Host**	**Refugee**	**Grand Total**
Female	42	136	178
Male	46	140	186
Grand Total	**88**	**276**	**364**
Respondent's Role			
Respondent's Role	**Host**	**Refugee**	**Grand Total**
Adult child (18+ years)	5	11	16
Household head	59	202	261
Non-relative living in household	1	1	2
Relative (parent, sibling, cousin, in-law)	1	6	7
Spouse of household head	22	56	78
Grand Total	**88**	**276**	**364**
Household Size			
Household Size	**Host**	**Refugee**	**Grand Total**
1-3 members	34	88	122
4-5 members	31	101	132
6 or More members	23	87	110
Grand Total	**88**	**276**	**364**
Household members Age composition			
Household members Age composition	**Host**	**Refugee**	**Grand Total**
0–4-year-olds	39	148	187
5–11-year-olds	50	187	237
12–17-year-olds	36	155	191
18–29-year-olds	49	160	209
30–59-year-olds	73	210	283
60+ year olds	24	51	75

3.2.   Household Composition & Vulnerability

Type of vulnerability

A substantial proportion of households experience multiple vulnerabilities, most notably the presence of breastfeeding women (22%), members with chronic illness (18%), survivors of violence (18%), and elderly individuals requiring additional support (17%). While 15% of households reported no specific vulnerabilities, the overall profile points to widespread exposure to interconnected health, protection, and caregiving risks across the population (**see annex 1.1**).

This was also echoed in the qualitative data, including KIIs and FGDs, where participants consistently identified **female-headed households, older persons, people with disabilities, widows, and child-headed households** as the most vulnerable groups across all settlements. The households face overlapping constraints, including limited labour capacity, weak access to land and capital, and reduced ability to diversify income sources. The reduction or withdrawal of food and cash assistance has further exposed these households to risk.

"The most affected people are female-headed households, the elderly and persons with disabilities. When food support was reduced, these households had no way to cope." **(RWC Leader, Nakivale, KII)**

Women participants highlighted that female-headed households carry a disproportionate burden of responsibility for household survival, combining care obligations with limited economic opportunities.

"As women heading households, we struggle the most. We are responsible for children, food, school fees, everything, yet we have no land and no capital." **(Female FGD, Oruchinga)**

These structural vulnerabilities constrain households' ability to recover from shocks and limit their participation in livelihood and food security interventions.

Shelter and Duration of Stay

The assessment sought to determine the type of shelter and the duration of stay among the refugees who participated in the study. Findings show that shelter conditions vary considerably, with only 42% of households living in OPM/UNHCR-allocated shelters, while 40% reside in informal or temporary structures, highlighting significant levels of housing insecurity and instability (Table 2).

Table 2:Shelter Conditions and Length of Stay of refugee respondents

Category	Indicator	Percentage (%)
Shelter Type	OPM / UNHCR allocated shelter	42
	Informal / temporary structure	40
	Renting from host community	7
	Living with relatives or friends	6
	Renting from the community and refugees	1
	No response	4
Settlement Duration	More than 6 years	40
	4–6 years	18
	1–3 years	17
	6–12 months	16
	Less than 6 months	4
	Born in settlement / host community	2
	Did not respond	3

Of the 97% refugee households that responded to this question, most households are long-term residents, with over 40% having lived in the settlement for more than six years, 18% for 4-6 years, 17% for 1-3 years, while only 4% have lived within the settlement for less than 6 months and 2% have been born there. This indicates protracted displacement and demonstrates the need for long-term, development-oriented interventions rather than short-term emergency assistance.

Current Access to External Assistance

Assistance coverage is uneven, with 41% of households receiving no assistance, while others rely on a mix of food, cash, or education support. Only 17 households reported having access to nutrition leaders within the household and this is primarily through health and nutrition partners. According to key informants, the packages differ among host and refugee communities and duration of stay of refugees at the settlements.

Table 3:Coverage of assistance offered to respondents

Indicator	Percentage (%)
No assistance	41
Cash assistance only	17
Food assistance only	8
Food and cash assistance	14
Education support	19

Major Shocks (Last 12 Months)

Exposure to shocks is high, with illness or death (49%) and crop failure (43%) being the most commonly reported shocks, highlighting livelihood fragility and health-related vulnerabilities (**see annex 1.2**). This was confirmed by qualitative evidence that shows that all three settlements reported increasing population pressure, driven by new refugee arrivals, natural population growth, and protracted displacement. Statistics show that in Uganda there were 1.95 million refugees by October 2025 with an estimated 600 daily arrivals in Kyangwali and Nakivale (Oruchinga is relatively stable with minimal new arrivals beyond family reunifications) as of May 2025, driven by conflict and displacement in the neighbouring countries of DRC, Burundi and Rwanda (Wikipedia). Of the total, around 91% of refugees lived in settlements (OPM). This demographic trend has intensified competition for land, services, and livelihood opportunities, with direct implications for household vulnerability.

"The population keeps increasing due to new arrivals and births, but the land and services remain the same." **Government Official, Kyangwali, KII**

In Nakivale and Oruchinga, shrinking land allocations were repeatedly linked to declining household food production and rising dependence on external support.

"The land is not enough anymore. Plots are smaller, and families are larger, so people cannot produce enough food." **District Agriculture Officer, Nakivale, KII**

Qualitative data also shows that these pressures are compounded by external shocks, particularly recurrent drought and climate variability, alongside policy-driven reductions in food and cash assistance. Together, these factors have heightened vulnerability, especially for households with limited assets and labour capacity.

Access to services and energy

Refugees living in designated settlements may face administrative controls (such as needing permission to relocate to towns or for longer distances), while those living outside official settlements may forfeit certain services. While most households reported no mobility restrictions (65%), one in five (20%) experienced restricted mobility, which may limit their access to essential services, training opportunities, and livelihood activities (**See Table 1.3 in the Annexes**). Through qualitative data, it was observed that while no evidence of formal or policy-imposed restrictions on refugee movement. However, the data indicates that mobility is effectively constrained in practice by economic, social, and safety-related factors. Limited income and high transport costs restrict refugees' ability to travel to markets, training centres, and employment opportunities, while women and girls face additional barriers linked to unpaid care responsibilities and concerns about safety when moving longer distances or travelling at certain times. As a result, although refugees are legally able to move freely, poverty, gendered norms, and

protection risks significantly limit actual mobility, with implications for participation in livelihoods, skills development, and community engagement.

"(Women) fear moving long distances for training because of harassment and insecurity."
Women FGD, Oruchinga

"Some trainings are very far, and without transport money, many youths cannot attend."
Youth FGD, Nakivale

At the same time, basic energy access remains constrained, with households largely dependent on solar lamps and battery torches for lighting and relying heavily on collected firewood for cooking (72%), a pattern that contributes to environmental degradation and exposes women and children in particular to heightened protection and safety risks.

Furthermore, as evident from the qualitative data, since household resources seem to become increasingly constrained, many families reported resorting to **negative and erosive coping strategies**. These include skipping meals, reducing food consumption for adults, withdrawing children from school, and engaging in precarious or harmful livelihood activities.

*"Some days we eat only once, and sometimes the parents don't eat so the children can eat."***Male FGD, Nakivale**

FGDs in Kyangwali and Oruchinga further highlighted links between food insecurity and more severe distress outcomes, such as child labour, early marriage, and transactional sex.

"When there is no food and no work, people start doing things they would not normally do, like sending children to work or girls getting married early." **Youth FGD, Kyangwali**

These coping strategies were widely recognised by participants as **unsustainable and harmful**, reinforcing cycles of vulnerability rather than supporting long-term resilience or self-reliance.

3.3.   Livelihoods & Food Security

3.3.1. Monthly Household Income and Income Seasonality
Refugees exhibit far lower income thresholds than host communities, with heavy concentrations in the lowest tiers: 44% earn 0–50,000 UGX vs. 17% of hosts; 32% earn 50,001–100,000 UGX vs. 27% of hosts. Few refugees reach mid to high incomes (17% for 100,001–200,000 UGX, 7% for 200,001–400,000 UGX and <1% for more than 400,000 UGX), compared to hosts (27% for 100,001–200,000 UGX, 19% for 200,001–400,000 UGX and 9% for more than 400,000 UGX). This highlights refugees' acute economic vulnerability due to livelihood restrictions in Ugandan settlements, against hosts' modest advantages amid rural poverty (**See Table 1.4 in the Annexes**)

Gender patterns further amplify disparities among refugees, female headed households with more refugee women in the lowest tier (49% vs. 40% male headed households); among hosts, male headed households dominate mid-range income levels. Overall, 72.8% of households agree or strongly agree that income fluctuates significantly by season, intensifying instability

Table 4:Household Income and Income Stability

Monthly Household Income	0 – 50,000 UGX (Very low income / minimal earnings)	50,001 – 100,000 UGX	100,001 – 200,000 UGX	200,001 – 400,000 UGX	Above 400,000 UGX	Grand Total
	15	24	24	17	8	88
Female	12	11	9	10		42
Male	3	13	15	7	8	46
Refugee	121	89	46	18	1	275
Female	66	49	17	4		136
Male	55	40	29	14	1	139
No Response						1
Grand Total	136	113	70	35	9	364

3.3.2. Livelihood Activities
Sources of livelihoods

Household livelihoods are diverse yet informal and fragile. 31% of households are engaged in casual labour as the primary activity (21% for agricultural and 10% for non-agricultural), 24% survive on WFP/NGO assistance, and 22% from crop farming (mainly maize/beans for subsistence). WFP/NGO support is prominent among females (28%) and refugees at 29% (with 35% for female refugees), signalling dependency. 25% males are engaged in crop farming, with 43% overall in agriculture related activities (including casual agricultural labour, crop farming and livestock keeping). Agricultural performance is weak, with 52% of farming households reporting worse or much worse yields than normal, due to production constraints and shocks. These patterns highlight acute vulnerability, heavy reliance on aid, and limited resilient income options necessitating targeted interventions in sustainable agriculture, skills training, and livelihood diversification to reduce dependency and build shock resilience.

Table 5:Primary Livelihood Activities for the respondents

Livelihood Activity	Female	Host	Refugee	Male	Host	Refugee	Grand Total
Casual Labour – Agricultural	**36**	3	33	**39**	4	35	**75**
Casual Labour – Non-Agricultural	**16**	4	12	**20**	2	18	**36**
Charity / Community Support	**5**		5	**6**	1	5	**11**
Crop Farming	**35**	20	15	**46**	25	21	**81**
Livestock Keeping	**2**		2	**3**	1	2	**5**
Petty Trade / Small Business	**25**	10	15	**19**	8	11	**44**
Transport Services	**5**	2	3	**13**	3	10	**18**
WFP / NGO Assistance	**50**	2	48	**36**	1	35	**86**
Other	**4**	1	3	**4**	1		**8**
Grand Total	**178**	**42**	**136**	**186**	**46**	**140**	**364**

This is also corroborated through qualitative evidence, as the most reported livelihood activities across all settlements include **small-scale crop farming, petty trade, casual labour, and service-based activities** such as boda-boda riding, salon work, mobile money services, and washing clothes. These activities are often pursued simultaneously as households attempt to spread risk and supplement limited incomes.

"Most people depend on farming, petty trade and casual labour. But the income from these activities is very small and not reliable." **(RWC Leader, Oruchinga – KII)**

In both Nakivale and Kyangwali, agriculture remains a central livelihood strategy; however, its viability is increasingly constrained by shrinking land allocations, declining soil fertility, and erratic rainfall.

"Even though agriculture is our main livelihood, the land is very small and the yields are low, so farming alone cannot sustain a family." **(Men FGD, Nakivale)**

Livestock rearing and poultry keeping were described primarily as **secondary or supplementary livelihoods**, accessible to a limited number of households with sufficient space or start-up capital.

Production Constraints and Post Harvest losses

A total of 233 farming households indicated that they face production constraints. These were further asked to state the constraints that they mainly faced and these are presented in **Table 1.5 in the annexes**. Land scarcity is the most critical constraint, affecting over 80% of farming households, followed by lack of money for labour, pests, rainfall variability, and declining soil fertility.

In addition to the production constraints, 26% of these households experienced post-harvest losses, which further compounded their livelihood challenges. While most households (67%) did not report such losses, for those affected, post-harvest losses significantly exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and undermined already limited food and income security. Households that experienced losses cited poor storage facilities (65%) and spoilage from moisture or rain (63%) as the leading causes of post-harvest losses (**See Table 1.6 in the annexes**). This highlights the need for improved storage infrastructure and moisture-resistant practices to curb the losses and ensure farmer incomes and food security are boosted.

As evidenced through qualitative data, small land allocations and low production volumes significantly constrain households' ability to manage crops beyond harvest, while limited access to capital reduces investment in basic post-harvest handling, storage, and transport. Climate-related shocks, such as recurrent dry spells and unpredictable rainfall, disrupt harvesting and drying processes, increasing the risk of spoilage. Poor road infrastructure and transport challenges further delay access to markets, extending the time produce is stored at household level. In the absence of adequate storage or processing facilities, these interconnected constraints heighten exposure to post-harvest losses and undermine already fragile food and income security. According to study participants, low yields and small plots limit households' capacity to sustain themselves, forcing difficult trade-offs between food and income generation.

"The land is very small and the yields are low, so farming alone cannot sustain a family" **(Men FGD, Nakivale).**

"The land is too small to farm for both food and income. You must choose one, and even that is not enough" **(District official, Oruchinga – KII).**

According to an agriculture officer, the limited production also reduces opportunities for market engagement.

"People produce very little, so there is nothing left to sell in bulk or take to bigger markets" **(Agriculture Officer, Kyangwali – KII).**

Other factors, such as lack of capital, inadequate storage, and high transport costs, further constrain household livelihoods. According to market actors and local officials, these combined challenges increase reliance on casual labour and petty trade and limit the potential for surplus production or collective marketing. Collectively, these findings illustrate the systemic barriers to productive livelihoods and the

need for integrated interventions that address land, capital, post-harvest management, and market access.

Awareness of and application of sustainable and climate-resilient farming or land-management practices

Eighty percent (80%) of households adopt climate-resilient practices (such as mulching, crop rotation), with refugees leading at 78% and hosts at 85%. This offers a strong baseline for scaling agroforestry and peer models but requires host catch-up to mitigate inequity. Refer to annex 1.16 for a detailed analysis of the various sustainable and climate-resilient farming and land management practices employed.

Table 6:Respondent knowledge and application of Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Practices

Household Category	Yes	No	No Response	Total
Refugees	215	60	1	276
Hosts	75	13	0	88
Total	**290**	**73**	**1**	**364**

3.3.3. Food Security
Food Consumption Score (FCS)

Overall, 49.5% of households have acceptable FCS (>35), showing good food access and diverse diets, 36.3% are borderline (21.5-35) with moderate risks, and 14.3% are poor (0-21) with severe gaps. Host communities fare better, with 84.1% acceptable and just 4.6% poor, while refugee households are more vulnerable with only 38.4% acceptable, 44.2% borderline, and 17.4% poor revealing disparities in staples, proteins, dairy, and legumes necessitating targeted interventions for refugees, such as market access or nutrition aid.

Table 7:Food consumption score for refugee and host community respondents

Respondent	Acceptable Food Consumption (≥35)	Borderline Food Consumption (21.5-35)	Poor Food Consumption (0-21)	Total
Host	74	10	4	88
Refugee	106	122	48	276
Total	**180**	**132**	**52**	**364**

Across all settlements, households access food through a mix of **small-scale farming, market purchases, and humanitarian assistance**. However, access is increasingly constrained by shrinking land allocations, reduced yields, and rising food prices.

"The land we have is not enough to produce food for the whole year, so we depend on buying food, but prices are very high." **(Men FGD, Nakivale)**

In Nakivale and Oruchinga, reduced plot sizes were repeatedly cited as limiting household food production, forcing families to rely on markets even when incomes are unstable.

"People are forced to buy food because what they produce cannot last, yet many have no steady income." **(RWC Leader, Oruchinga, KII)**

In Kyangwali, households similarly reported that food access is closely tied to income availability, with market dependence increasing during dry seasons and periods of crop failure.

Reduced Coping Strategy Index (rCSI)

An average rCSI score of 19.25 for refugee and 6.82 for host communities signals moderate to high household food insecurity, aligning with IPC Phase 2 (Crisis) where coping behaviors like relying on less-preferred foods, borrowing, portion limits, or adult consumption restrictions occur over the past 7 days,

weighted by severity. This falls around the moderate to severe food insecurity score, indicating notable but not severe strategies overall.

Over two-thirds (68%) of households rely on coping strategies, facing food access issues in medium or low rCSI categories, requiring targeted aid like cash transfers for the 19% in low food security households, alongside trend monitoring for the medium group.

Table 8:Reduced Coping Strategy Index for refugee and host community respondents

Household food security category	Refugees (%)	Host community (%)	Total (%)
High	40	4	32%
Medium	50	48	49%
Low	10	48	19%

Furthermore, more than half of households (57%) reported a worse food situation following the WFP ration reductions, indicating strong dependence on food assistance. On the contrary, 10% indicated that the food situation got better after the ration cuts, while the situation remained the same for 13% of the households (**See Table 1.7 in the annexes**). Those whose situation improved might have also benefited from other developmental packages such that the reduction in the rations did not negatively affect them.

This is also reflected within qualitative evidence which details that as food access becomes increasingly constrained, households reported widespread use of **negative food-related coping strategies**. These include reducing meal sizes, skipping meals, prioritising children over adults, and relying on borrowing or food-sharing arrangements.

"Sometimes we eat only once a day, and parents give the little food to children first."
(Women FGD, Oruchinga)

Men and youth FGDs across settlements further highlighted more severe coping strategies linked to food shortages, including school dropout, child labour, and engagement in risky activities.

"When there is no food, children are sent to work, and some youths do anything just to survive."
(Youth FGD, Kyangwali)

These coping strategies were widely recognised as **short-term and harmful**, contributing to longer-term vulnerability rather than resilience.

3.3.4. Nutrition situation

The Minimum Dietary Diversity for Women (MDD-W)
MDD-W is an indicator of whether or not women of reproductive age (aged 15 to 49 years) have consumed at least five out of ten defined food groups in the previous 24 hours. The higher the proportion of women in the sample reaching this threshold, the higher the chance that women in the population are consuming micronutrient adequate diets. Results from the study show that MDD-W is critically low, with only 14% of refugee women and 40% of hosts achieving adequate dietary needs. Overall, 79% of women have inadequate dietary diversity signalling severe dietary monotony and gaps, worst among refugees due to food aid limits, market barriers, and economic pressures. Hosts show modest resilience but remain vulnerable, demanding urgent nutrition sensitive actions like diverse vouchers to protect women's health and halt intergenerational malnutrition among others. Uganda's FSNA 2025 reports a national MDD-W of around 35-45% for women of reproductive age, with rural and refugee-hosting regions in Southwest closer to 25-35%, aligning with the study findings for host communities but worse for refugees due to aid dependency and market barriers; this reflects FSNA's emphasis on economic pressures and food price hikes exacerbating micronutrient deficiencies.

Table 9:Women's Dietary Diversity (MDD-W) Food Group for refugee and host respondents

Indicator	Category	Refugees	Host	Total
Women's Dietary Diversity (MDD-W)	Adequate (≥5 groups)	40(14%)	35(40%)	75(21%)
	Inadequate (<5 groups)	236(86%)	53(60%)	289(79%)

Recommended practices for feeding pregnant and breastfeeding women

High ANC/PNC knowledge (68%) indicates readiness for nutrition-sensitive interventions tied to existing health platforms within the targeted locations while gaps in dietary practices (under 60% for variety and supplements) suggest opportunities for targeted behaviour change campaigns (**See Table 1.7 in the annexe**s).

Breastfeeding children within the households

Only 20% of respondents (71/364 households) report breastfeeding children at home, with refugees having 20% and hosts 19% of them within their households. This indicates a slightly higher prevalence of infants/toddlers (12–23 months) in refugee households, likely due to higher fertility rates, younger demographics, or disrupted family structures in Uganda's settlements.

Table 10:Respondent households with breastfeeding children

Breastfeeding child within the household	Refugees	Hosts	Total
Yes	54(20%)	17(19%)	71(20%)
No	87(32%)	21(24%)	108(30%)
Don't know	4(1%)	0(0%)	4(0%)
No Response	131(47%)	50(57%)	181(50%)

Feeding practices for children aged 6–23 months

Among respondents, 61% recognise continuing breastfeeding up to 2 years and 60% introducing soft/semi-solid foods at 6 months respectively as key practices; these present higher among refugees (63% and 60%, respectively) than hosts (46% and 58%). FSNA 2025 echoes this nationally citing 65% households recognise exclusive breastfeeding for children under 6 months, but complementary feeding diversity for 6-23 months at 20-30% and minimum meal frequency at 40-50%. This shows similarities in awareness levels for refugees and slightly higher for host communities with a drop for meal frequency (at least 3–4 meals/day: 26% overall; 38% refugees vs. 59% hosts), food variety (across groups: 16% overall; 30% refugees vs. 33% hosts), and avoiding tea/sugary drinks (8% overall; 12% refugees vs. 24% hosts), with 13% unsure/no correct answers (20% refugees vs. 20% hosts). This baseline receptivity to breastfeeding and feeding initiation supports Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) messaging, but persistent gaps in dietary diversity, meal frequency, and sugary drink avoidance underscore needs for targeted education, especially among hosts, improve child feeding practices in Uganda's refugee hosting districts.

Table 11:Respondents knowledge of recommended feeding practices for children aged 6–23 months

Feeding practices for children aged 6–23 months	Refugees		Hosts		Total	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Continue breastfeeding up to 2 years	175	63%	46	52%	221	61%
Feed soft/semi-solid foods starting at 6 months	166	60%	51	58%	217	60%
Provide at least 3–4 meals per day depending on age	105	38%	52	59%	157	43%

Provide a variety of food groups	83	30%	33	38%	116	32%
Avoid giving tea/sugary drinks	32	12%	21	24%	53	15%
Don't know / No correct answers	55	20%	18	20%	73	20%

Across all settlements, households reported consuming monotonous diets dominated by staple foods, with limited intake of protein-rich foods, fruits, and vegetables. This was attributed to a combination of low food production, limited purchasing power, and rising food prices.

"Most of the time we eat the same food. We cannot afford fruits, meat or vegetables regularly."
(Women FGD, Nakivale)

Participants noted that even when food was available, it was often insufficient in both quantity and nutritional quality, particularly during dry seasons and periods of livelihood stress.

"You may have food, but it is not balanced. It is just one type, and it does not give strength."
(Men FGD, Oruchinga)

These patterns indicate widespread challenges related to dietary diversity, rather than complete lack of food alone. Additionally, certain population groups were consistently identified as being at higher risk of poor nutrition outcomes. These include **young children, pregnant and lactating women, older persons, and households with limited labour capacity**. Women participants highlighted that nutritional sacrifices are often made at the household level to protect children.

"When food is little, women and adults eat less so that children can eat."
(Women FGD, Kyangwali)

However, participants also noted that prolonged reliance on such strategies negatively affects women's health and household wellbeing over time.

Access to information on nutrition
Sixty six percent (66%) of respondent's report knowing where to access nutrition information, compared to 33%; this indicates robust information channels, likely via health facilities and community programs within the settlement areas **(see table 1.9 in the annexes)**.

Overall, respondents across KIIs and FGDs highlighted clear links between **food insecurity and health/nutrition outcomes**, noting that poor diets contribute to illness, weakness, and reduced ability to work. Illness, in turn, further limits households' capacity to generate income and secure adequate food, reinforcing a cycle of vulnerability.

"When people do not eat well, they fall sick often, and then they cannot work to get food."
(Health-related Stakeholder, Kyangwali, KII)

Climate-related shocks, particularly drought and erratic rainfall, were also reported as indirectly affecting nutrition by reducing food availability and increasing dependence on low-quality diets.

"Because of drought, crops fail and people eat less nutritious food, which affects children the most."
(District Official, Nakivale, KII)

Availability of kitchen/backyard gardens
Kitchen gardens are limited to 17% (11% refugees, 35% hosts), constrained by the lack of seeds and tools, poor soil quality, water shortages, and pest infestations. FSNA 2025 finds homestead gardening at 20-25% nationally, dropping to 10-15% in refugee areas like Nakivale, with identical barriers (drought, pests); both findings stress untapped potential for diversity via vouchers or inputs, especially amid climate shocks noted in FSNA for 2025's erratic rains **(see table 1.10 in the annexes)**. These findings suggest that

while kitchen gardening has potential to improve dietary diversity, its uptake and effectiveness are constrained by resource and environmental limitations.

Have a kitchen/backyard garden	Host community		Refugee		Total	
	Freq(n)	Percent	Freq(n)	Percent	Freq(n)	Percent
Yes	31	35%	30	11%	61	17%
No	57	65%	244	88%	301	83%
No Response	0	0%	2	1%	2	1%
Total	88	100%	276	100%	364	100%

3.3.5. Land Access
Household Access to more than an acre of arable land
Of the 64% households with access to land, only 7% have more than one acre of land for cultivation (with 28% (25) host vs 1% (2) refugee households with that access). This limits the potential for meaningful agricultural production and underscores the structural limitations facing land-based livelihood strategies.

Figure 3.1:Respondents with access to arable land
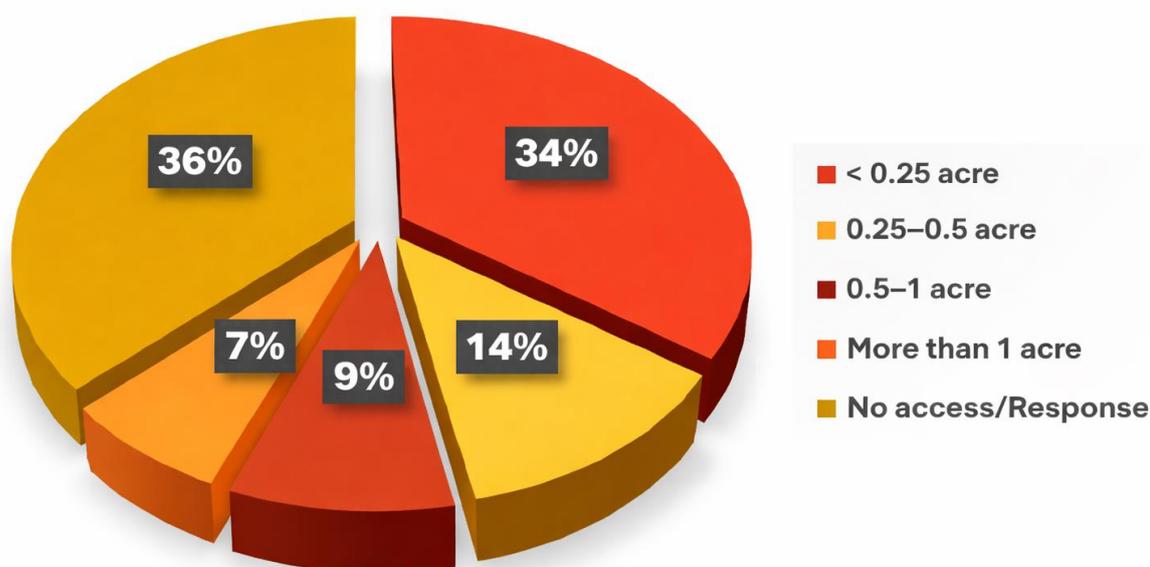
Refugee households overwhelmingly hold tiny plots with 42% having less than 0.25 acres and a total of 48% holding under 0.5 acres. Hosts, by contrast, dominate mid to large holdings (50% having more than 0.5 acres), reflecting better land access. This stark disparity underscores refugees' severe land constraints in camp settings, limiting viable crop farming.

Table 13:Average land holding size cultivated by respondents with access to arable land

Land Size	Refugees		Hosts		Total	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
< 0.25 acre	116	42%	7	8%	123	34%
0.25–0.5 acre	40	14%	11	13%	51	14%
0.5–1 acre	5	2%	28	32%	33	9%
More than 1 acre	2	1%	25	28%	27	7%
No access/Response	113	41%	17	19%	130	36%
Total	**276**	**100%**	**88**	**100%**	**364**	**100%**

3.4. Markets & Value Chains
3.4.1. Market Access

Market participation among households remains highly limited. Only 22 out of 364 households (6%) reported a regular buyer for their produce, while 209 (57.5%) had no regular buyer and 133 (36.5%) produced nothing for the market. Host communities showed slightly higher engagement (14.8% with regular buyers) compared to refugees (3.3%). Among those attempting market engagement, key barriers included low prices (56.2%), absence of reliable buyers (39.8%), poor transport (30.9%), lack of market information (30.6%), and long distances to markets (29%). Issues with product quality, storage, and middlemen exploitation further erode profitability, entrenching subsistence livelihoods.

Table 14:Respondents Access to Buyers and Market Challenges

Category	Access to Regular Buyer for Produce			
	No	Not applicable (no production)	Yes	Grand Total
Host	**64**	**11**	**13**	**88**
Female	32	7	3	42
Male	32	4	10	46
Refugee	**145**	**122**	**9**	**276**
Female	82	50	4	136
Male	63	72	5	140
Grand Total	**209**	**133**	**22**	**364**

3.4.2. Income stability

Income stability is severely constrained by limited access to productive assets and financial services. Over half of households either have no land or access less than 0.25 acres, restricting agricultural output and surplus generation. Financial inclusion remains extremely low, with 53.3% of households lacking access to any savings or loan mechanism and formal financial access being negligible. Even among those with access, regular saving is limited, reflecting weak financial resilience. Shock preparedness is critically low, with two-thirds of households not confident at all in their ability to withstand major economic or health-related shocks.

Table 15:Respondents Access to Financial Services, Saving Behaviour, and Shock Resilience

Indicator	Category	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Access to Loans / Savings	No access	194	53.3
	Informal (VSLA / groups)	139	38.2
	Formal (Bank / SACCO)	28	7.7

Saving Frequency	Weekly	105	28.8
	Monthly	37	10.2
	Occasionally / Rarely	23	6.3
	No savings access	198	54.4
Confidence to Withstand Shocks	Not confident at all	241	66.2
	Slightly confident	72	19.8
	Moderately confident	30	8.2
	Confident / Very confident	18	4.9

Financial inclusion is extremely low. More than half of households (53.3 percent) reported no access to any savings or loan mechanism, while 38.2 percent relied on informal mechanisms such as VSLAs, and only 7.7 percent accessed formal financial institutions. Saving behaviour is weak, with 54.4 percent reporting no savings access and fewer than 30 percent saving on a weekly basis. Household resilience to shocks is critically limited. Two-thirds of households (66.2 percent) reported being not confident at all in their ability to withstand major shocks, while fewer than 5 percent expressed confidence, highlighting high vulnerability to health, climate, and economic shocks.

As corroborated within qualitative evidence as well, most households rely on informal and irregular income sources such as casual labour and petty trade, resulting in fluctuating earnings that limit households' ability to plan expenditures or save.

> *"Income is not predictable. One day you earn something, the next day nothing."*
> **(Men FGD, Kyangwali)**

Women and youth, in particular, reported unstable income patterns linked to limited capital, competition in small markets, and seasonal demand for goods and services.

> *"Small businesses bring income sometimes, but it is not enough or regular."*
> **(Women FGD, Nakivale)**

Additionally, qualitative data also sheds light on limitations posed to value chains and market access. Across all settlements, value chains are predominantly **localised and informal**, centred on food commodities, basic consumer goods, and small service-based enterprises such as salons, mobile money services, milling, and petty retail. Inputs for these activities are largely sourced from nearby towns or mobile traders, often at high cost.

> *"We buy most of our supplies from town, and by the time they reach here, transport costs have already increased the price."* **(Market Actor, Nakivale, KII)**

Agricultural value chains are particularly constrained. Small plot sizes, low production volumes, and limited access to storage or processing facilities prevent households from engaging meaningfully in surplus production or collective marketing.

> *"People produce very little, so there is nothing left to sell in bulk or take to bigger markets."*
> **(Agriculture Officer, Kyangwali, KII)**

As a result, most households remain positioned at the **lowest end of value chains**, capturing minimal value from their activities.

Overall, local value chain performance is constrained by high input costs, price fluctuations, limited working capital, weak consumer demand in low-purchasing-power settlement markets, and poor infrastructure especially unreliable roads that increase transport costs and reduce trader participation; women-led enterprises face additional barriers such as restricted mobility, time burdens, and limited access to capital. Despite these challenges, stakeholders highlighted clear opportunities for improvement, including targeted skills development, apprenticeships, stronger linkages between producers and traders, and collective approaches such as producer groups or savings-linked enterprises, which can enhance bargaining power, reduce individual risks, and increase market participation.

3.5. Youth Skills & Employment

3.5.1. Employment status

Among 206 households reporting youth aged 15–30 years, formal employment is extremely low with only 15 youth (7%) holding such jobs and businesses, earning an average of UGX 194,444 (USD 52) monthly. This underscores pervasive youth unemployment in refugee and host communities, driven by limited skills, market access, and legal barriers in Uganda's informal heavy economy. Hosts show slightly higher employment (5 youth) than refugees (3), with no clear gender disparity but varying income distributions.

Table 16:Employed Youth Monthly Incomes

Employed youth	Youth Monthly income thresholds (UGX)						
	50,000	100,000	150,000	200,000	250,000	500,000	Grand Total
Female		**200,000**	**150,000**	**400,000**		**500,000**	**1,250,000**
Hosts			150,000	400,000		500,000	1,050,000
Refugee		200,000					200,000
Male	**50,000**			**200,000**	**250,000**		**500,000**
Hosts					250,000		250,000
Refugee	50,000			200,000			250,000

Youth across Kyangwali, Nakivale, and Oruchinga face **persistent and systemic barriers to meaningful employment**, despite strong interest in skills development and income generation. While numerous training initiatives have been implemented over time, **the transition from skills acquisition to sustainable employment remains weak**, resulting in frustration, disengagement, and prolonged unemployment among young people.

3.5.2. Access to skills training

Among 206 households with youth aged 15-30, 50% report having school or formal training in relation to the 49% that do not, this indicates moderate but uneven education engagement. This highlights the need for scaling training to the 49% gap, targeting unemployed youth and boosting employability/incomes.

Table 17:Respondents Access to youth skilling

Access to youth skilling	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Yes	104	50%
No	101	49%
No Response	1	1%

Youth in all settlements reported access to some forms of vocational or skills training, including tailoring, mechanics, carpentry, hairdressing, ICT, and driving. However, access to training is uneven, and the **quality, relevance, and affordability of available training opportunities vary significantly**.

"Training exists, but it is expensive and not everyone can afford it."
(Youth FGD, Nakivale)

In Kyangwali and Oruchinga, youth also noted that training opportunities are often located far from where they live, increasing transport costs and limiting participation, particularly for young women.

"Some trainings are very far, and without transport money, many youths cannot attend."
(Youth FGD, Oruchinga)

As a result, training uptake tends to favour youth with relatively better resources, leaving the most vulnerable excluded.

3.5.3. Barriers to employment and training

Barriers to youth participation in training and employment are primarily structural. The most frequently reported barriers include lack of information on opportunities (34%), financial constraints (33%), and limited availability of training centres (31%). Education gaps, language barriers, and documentation challenges further restrict participation.

Table 18:Respondents perception to the Barriers to Youth Engagement

Barriers to Training / Employment	Yes		No		No Response	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Lack of information on opportunities	125	34%	80	22%	159	44%
Lack of money for fees / transport	119	33%	86	24%	159	44%
Limited training centres nearby	113	31%	92	25%	159	44%
Lack of required education	110	30%	95	26%	159	44%
Language barriers	101	28%	104	29%	159	44%
Lack of documentation/permits	72	20%	133	37%	159	44%
Household responsibilities (e.g., childcare, chores)	55	15%	150	41%	159	44%
Safety concerns / movement restrictions	22	6%	183	50%	159	44%
Disability-related barriers (voluntary mention only)	13	4%	192	53%	159	44%
Negative attitudes or discrimination (ethnic, gender, refugee status)	21	6%	184	51%	159	44%
No suitable jobs available in settlement	33	9%	172	47%	159	44%
Cultural restrictions (e.g., for girls)	7	2%	198	54%	159	44%
Health conditions / mental health issues	7	2%	198	54%	159	44%
Other (No youth)	1	0%	204	56%	159	44%

Across all settlements, the most frequently cited challenge was the **lack of capital, startup kits, and equipment following training**. Youth consistently reported that completing training without access to these inputs does not translate into employment or income.

"We are trained, but after training there is no capital or tools, so we remain unemployed."
(Youth FGD, Kyangwali)

Additional barriers include lack of documentation, limited access to markets, and weak linkages with employers or apprenticeship opportunities. These constraints are particularly pronounced for refugee youth, who often face compounded legal, financial, and social barriers.

"Even when you have skills, without documents and capital, no one will employ you."
(RWC Leader, Nakivale – KII)

These post-training barriers undermine the effectiveness of skills programmes and contribute to widespread youth dissatisfaction.

3.5.4. Youth aspirations and employment preferences

Youth primarily aspire to engage in business operations, largely micro-enterprises, with strong interest in small retail businesses (45%) and tailoring or salon services (38%). Interest in farming, *boda boda* transport, and ICT digital work was also reported, indicating diverse but predominantly informal livelihood ambitions.

Table 19:Respondents Perceptions to Youths' Employment Aspirations

Barriers to Training / Employment	Yes		No		No Response	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Small retail business	162	45%	44	12%	158	43%
Phone charging / mobile money services	14	4%	192	53%	158	43%
Tailoring / Salon / Beauty	139	38%	67	18%	158	43%
Motorbike taxi (Boda boda)	67	18%	139	38%	158	43%
Farming / Agribusiness	63	17%	143	39%	158	43%
ICT/digital work	37	10%	169	46%	158	43%
Carpentry / metal work	38	10%	168	46%	158	43%
Hospitality services	12	3%	194	53%	158	43%
No clear aspirations	8	2%	198	54%	158	43%
Other	1	0%	205	56%	158	43%

Youth across the three settlements expressed **strong aspirations for self-employment and skilled work**, particularly in trades perceived as having market demand. Commonly cited preferences include mechanics, tailoring, salon work, ICT, poultry keeping, and small-scale businesses.

"We want skills that can help us earn money, like mechanics, tailoring, or running our own businesses."
(Youth FGD, Oruchinga)

Youth also emphasised the importance of training programmes being linked to **realistic employment pathways**, including apprenticeships, market access, and access to finance.

3.6. Gender Roles, Decision-Making & Safety
3.6.1. Gender roles and decision-making

Household decision-making patterns show mixed gender dynamics. Decisions on how household income is spent are most commonly made jointly by men and women (34.1 percent), though substantial proportions report decisions made mainly by male adults (24.7 percent) or female adults (23.4 percent), indicating varied household power structures. Decisions related to saving money are more centralised, with the household head acting as the primary decision-maker in 38.7 percent of households, although joint decision-making (31.3 percent) is also common. Control over land use and crop decisions is predominantly held by the household head (34.3 percent), while 26.9 percent of households reported no land access, limiting opportunities for women's engagement in agricultural decision-making. Joint decision-making on land use was reported by only 20.9 percent of households (**see table 1.11 in the annexes**).

Across all settlements, women were consistently described as carrying the **primary responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work**, including childcare, food preparation, water and firewood collection, and household management. Men were more commonly associated with income-generating activities, even when women also contributed economically.

"Women do most of the work at home - cooking, caring for children, fetching water while men focus on farming or businesses." **(Men FGD, Nakivale)**

This unequal division of labour limits women's time and flexibility to engage in livelihood activities, attend training, or participate in community initiatives.

"Even if there is training, women fail to attend because they cannot leave their household responsibilities." **(Peer Organisation, Oruchinga – KII)**

Women across all settlements reported **limited control over household resources and decision-making**, particularly regarding income, assets, and participation in external activities. Decisions related to spending, investment, and mobility are often made by men, even when women contribute significantly to household income.

"Women work, but decisions about money are mostly made by men." **(Women FGD, Kyangwali)**

This imbalance affects women's ability to invest in livelihoods, save income, or prioritise household needs such as food, education, and health.

3.6.2. Attitude towards Gender Equality

Attitudes toward gender equality are overwhelmingly positive across most domains. More than 90 percent of households agreed that women should have equal access to productive assets, education and training, leadership roles, income-generating activities, and joint household income decision-making. However, attitudes toward the sharing of unpaid household chores remain more conservative, with only 45.0 percent agreeing that men should share household chores, indicating a key normative barrier to women's full participation.

Table 20:Respondents Perceptions to Gender Roles and Equality within the Community

Statement	Agree / Strongly Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Equal access to productive assets	94	4	2
Equal opportunities in education / training	94	4	2
Women capable of leadership roles	91	6	2
Women participate in income-earning outside home	92	5.5	2.2
Joint household income decisions	93	6	1.1
Men should share household chores	45	16	39

3.6.3. Women in leadership positions

Only 11% of refugee and host women hold leadership positions within the community (9% among refugees and 17% among hosts), signalling systemic gender barriers in community decision-making. These barriers are common in Uganda's humanitarian settings, where patriarchal norms, mobility restrictions, and displacement exacerbate women's exclusion from leadership.

Table 21:Women in leadership positions

Category	Women in leadership positions		
	No	Yes	Grand Total
Hosts	73	15	88
Refugee	250	25	275
Grand Total	**323**	**40**	**363**

3.7. Social Cohesion & Peacebuilding
3.7.1. Community relations and coexistence

Overall perceptions of refugee host community relations are largely positive. More than three-quarters of households (77.5%) described relationships as good or very good, indicating a generally stable coexistence environment. However, 8.5% of households perceived relations as bad or very bad, suggesting the presence of localized tensions that may require targeted attention. A smaller proportion reported neutral perceptions or did not respond.

Perceived Relationship Quality	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Good / Very good	282	78
Neither good nor bad	48	13
Bad / Very bad	31	9

Across all three settlements, participants consistently reported that **refugees and host communities interact regularly and coexist largely peacefully**. Shared markets, schools, health facilities, and water points were commonly cited as spaces of interaction and cooperation.

"Refugees and hosts use the same markets and services, and in most cases, they live peacefully."
(Community FGD, Oruchinga)

In Kyangwali and Nakivale, long-term coexistence has contributed to social familiarity and informal cooperation, particularly in trade and casual labour.

"We have lived together for a long time, so people know each other and work together." **(RWC Leader, Nakivale – KII)**

3.7.2. Sources of tension and conflict
Despite generally positive relations, conflicts remain relatively common at the community level. The most frequently reported issues were theft or crime (45.7%) and domestic or family conflict (40.8%). Youth-related disputes (26.4%) and land disputes (23.7%) were also reported by a substantial share of households, highlighting pressure points related to livelihoods, land access, and youth engagement. Resource-based conflicts, including those related to water, firewood, and grazing, were reported by fewer households but indicate emerging competition over natural resources. At the same time, 16.3% of households reported no conflicts, while 16.5% were unsure, pointing to uneven exposure to conflict across different locations and groups.

Table 23:Types of Conflicts Reported in the Community in the Past 12 Months

Type of Conflict	Households Reporting (n)	Percent (%)
Theft or crime	166	45
Domestic or family conflict	148	40.8
Youth-related disputes	96	26.4
Land disputes	86	23.7
Ethnic / nationality tensions	49	13.5
Business / market competition	29	8
Water or natural resource conflict	23	6.3
Firewood or grazing disputes	20	5.5
No conflicts reported	59	16.3
Not sure if conflicts occurred	60	16.5

Furthermore, participants across settlements highlighted recurring sources of tension, primarily linked to **competition over land, water, firewood, and grazing areas**. These tensions are more pronounced during periods of drought or when livelihoods are under stress.

"Conflicts usually come because of land and water, especially when resources are scarce." **(Men FGD, Kyangwali)**

In Oruchinga, FGDs further noted disputes related to crop damage by livestock and accusations of theft, particularly where economic pressure is high.

"Sometimes animals destroy crops, and this leads to fights between hosts and refugees." **(Community FGD, Oruchinga)**

3.7.3. Conflict management and resolution mechanisms

Households identified a range of formal and informal structures involved in conflict resolution, reflecting a pluralistic conflict management system. RWC (65.3%), the police (59.5%), and local government or OPM (52.3%) were the most commonly recognised actors. NGOs, elders or religious leaders, and informal community groups were also frequently mentioned, indicating multiple entry points for conflict resolution and mediation.

Table 24:Reported Community Structures Supporting Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution Structure	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Refugee Welfare Councils (RWC I–III)	237	65
Police	216	59
Local government / OPM	190	52
NGOs / CBOs	100	27
Elders or religious leaders	94	26
Informal groups (neighbours, youth groups)	77	21
Community peace committees	58	16
None	5	1

Participants across KIIs described the presence of **local dispute resolution mechanisms**, including Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs), elders, community leaders, and government authorities. These structures were generally viewed as effective in resolving minor disputes and preventing escalation.

"When there is a problem, we first go to the RWC or the elders before it becomes serious." **(RWC Leader, Kyangwali – KII)**

However, respondents also noted that these mechanisms are under strain as disputes become more frequent and complex due to increasing population pressure and resource scarcity.

3.7.4. Peaceful Coexistence Activities

Awareness of community-led peaceful coexistence activities is limited. Only 29.4% of households reported being aware of such initiatives, while more than half (53%) were unsure whether these activities existed. This indicates limited visibility or communication of peacebuilding efforts within communities.

Table 25:Respondents Awareness of Community-Led Peaceful Coexistence Activities

Awareness Level	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Yes, aware	107	30
Not sure	193	53
No	62	17

However, the frequency of these activities is cited to be irregular, with 29% of the respondents reporting monthly occurrences or only in response to conflict (14%), while fewer households reported more frequent engagement. A notable proportion of respondents were unsure about the frequency of activities, suggesting that peacebuilding efforts are not consistently structured or widely institutionalised (**see table 1.12 in the annexes**)

3.8. Environment & Natural Resources

3.8.1. Environmental degradation and resource pressure

Households in Uganda's southwestern refugee settlements of Kyangwali, Oruchinga, and Nakivale report widespread environmental stress over the past two years, compounding WASH challenges amid populations exceeding 340,000 (Relief Web). Increased drought episodes emerged as the most common

change (50.4 percent of households), followed by reduced tree cover (40.2 percent) and reduced water availability for household use (29.8 percent), aligning with averages of 18-23 liters per person per day that meet SPHERE minimums (15 l/p/d) but fall short of self-reliance amid long fetch distances and trucking rations ([Nsamizi](#)). Water scarcity for farming, alongside soil degradation or reduced fertility, frequently appeared, signalling compounded pressures on agricultural livelihoods; natural resource strains further manifested in reduced firewood availability (22.6 percent) and increased soil erosion (17.9 percent), exacerbating overcrowding, disease risks, and inequities like menstrual hygiene gaps. While 27.5 percent of households noted no major changes, the multi-dimensional pattern underscores pervasive stress, with responses like the Isingiro Water Project and UNHCR coordination targeting integration despite these declines (**table 1.13 in the annexe**s).

Across all three settlements, **deforestation and land degradation** were identified as major environmental challenges. The collection of firewood, charcoal burning, sand mining, and expansion of cultivation into fragile areas were reported as widespread practices driven by livelihood necessity rather than choice.

> *"People cut trees because they need firewood and charcoal to survive, but this is destroying the environment."* **(Government Official, Oruchinga – KII)**

In Nakivale and Oruchinga, participants linked environmental degradation directly to population pressure and limited livelihood alternatives, noting that households resort to unsustainable practices as a coping strategy.

> *"As the population increases and land becomes smaller, people are forced to use the environment in ways that are not sustainable."* **(Peer Organisation, Nakivale – KII)**

These practices were widely recognised as undermining long-term livelihood prospects, particularly for agriculture and livestock.

3.8.2. Sustainability practices and mitigation efforts

Community engagement in environmental and natural resource management activities remains limited. More than half of households (52.9 percent) reported no involvement in any environmental activity. Among participating households, tree planting (27.3 percent) and basic soil conservation practices (16.3 percent) were the most common actions. Participation in energy-saving technologies, water harvesting, and waste management was comparatively low, while involvement in wetland protection was reported by only a small proportion of households. This gap between high exposure to environmental risks and relatively low engagement in mitigation activities highlights the need for interventions that strengthen community participation and promote practical, accessible climate-resilient practices.

Table 26:Households Involved in Environmental or Natural Resource Management Activities

Environmental Activity	Households Involved (n)	Percent (%)
Tree planting	99	27.3
Soil conservation (mulching, terraces)	59	16.3
Energy-saving stove use	42	11.6
Water harvesting	39	10.7
Waste management / recycling	28	7.7
Wetland protection / restoration	23	6.3
Not involved in any activity	192	52.9

Despite these challenges, participants across KIIs identified **ongoing efforts to promote environmental sustainability**, including tree planting, environmental awareness campaigns, and conservation initiatives led by community groups, partners, and local authorities.

> *"Tree planting has helped in some areas, but it needs to be expanded and supported."*
> **(District Official, Kyangwali – KII)**

However, respondents emphasised that such initiatives remain **limited in scale** and often insufficient to counteract the broader drivers of environmental degradation, particularly without parallel livelihood alternatives.

3.9. Project Feasibility & Preferences
3.9.1. Preferred intervention areas
Community priorities are clearly livelihood-centred, with youth employment and training (80.9%), food and basic needs (78.5%), and livelihoods and income opportunities (77.3%) emerging as the most frequently identified needs. Substantial proportions of households also prioritised women and girls' empowerment, market access, peacebuilding, and environmental management, supporting the relevance of a multi-sectoral approach.

Table 27:Respondents Proposed Community Priorities and Perceived Project Feasibility

Dimension	Indicator	Households (n)	Percent (%)
Community Priorities	Youth employment and training	293	80.9
	Food and basic needs	284	78.5
	Livelihoods and income opportunities	280	77.3
	Women and girls' empowerment	161	44.5
	Market access and business support	123	34.0
	Peacebuilding and conflict resolution	97	26.8
	Environment and natural resources	85	23.5
Feasibility of Integrated Project	Yes, can work well	286	78.6
	Maybe	70	19
	No	5	1.4

Across KIIs and FGDs, participants consistently prioritised **livelihood strengthening interventions** as the most feasible and impactful pathway towards improved household wellbeing. Key areas of preference included **income-generating activities, youth skills development, and savings-based approaches such as VSLAs**.

> *"What people need most is support to earn income, skills, capital, and savings groups."*
> **(Peer Organisation, Oruchinga – KII)**

Agriculture-related interventions were viewed as feasible where they are **adapted to land and climate constraints**, including small-scale, climate-smart farming, livestock and poultry rearing, and kitchen gardening.

> *"Agriculture can still work, but it must be small-scale and adapted to the current land situation."*
> **(Agriculture Officer, Nakivale – KII)**

3.9.2. Importance of integrated and group-based approaches
Perceived feasibility of an integrated project is very high. Nearly four out of five households (78.6%) believe that such a project can work well in their community, while only a very small proportion expressed doubts. This strong confidence suggests high community readiness for integrated programming, provided that interventions are designed to respond to locally identified priorities and

Even within qualitative data, while integrated approaches are widely recognised as desirable, the participants hint at doubts with past experiences with fragmented delivery, limited follow-up, and premature withdrawal of assistance have generated scepticism among some participants. This emphasises the importance of realistic sequencing, transparent targeting, and sustained support when

designing integrated interventions. Participants across settlements expressed that **stand-alone interventions are unlikely to succeed**. Instead, there was strong support for **integrated models** that combine skills training with startup capital, tools, and access to markets.

> *"Training alone does not help. Without capital or equipment, people cannot use the skills."*
> **(Youth FGD, Kyangwali)**

Group-based approaches such as VSLAs, producer groups, and women's groups were widely viewed as more feasible and sustainable than individual support, particularly for vulnerable households.

> *"When people work in groups, it becomes easier to save, borrow, and support each other."*
> **(Women VSLA FGD, Oruchinga)**

These approaches were seen as reducing risk, strengthening social cohesion, and improving accountability.

3.9.3. Farmer Field Schools (FFS) Interest and Participation Barriers

Interest in FFS is very high, with 81.3% of households reporting that they are likely or very likely to participate, indicating strong demand for agricultural learning and extension support. Only a small proportion expressed uncertainty or lack of interest. Despite this high level of interest, households identified multiple barriers to participation. The most frequently reported constraints include distance to meeting locations (56.2%), limited land access (49.3 percent), and time constraints (43.3%). Health-related challenges, childcare responsibilities, and language barriers were also commonly cited, suggesting that participation barriers may disproportionately affect women and more vulnerable households. These results underline the importance of accessible and inclusive programme design. (**see table 1.14 in the annexes**)

CHAPTER 4:FEASIBILITY ANALYSIS

This chapter examines the feasibility of the proposed project, assessing its relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. It evaluates how well the intervention addresses the priority needs and structural challenges of refugees and host communities, aligns with human rights principles and sector standards, and complements other initiatives. The analysis also considers the plausibility of the ToC, potential risks, and opportunities for refinement to ensure effective, sustainable, and context-sensitive implementation.

4.1. Relevance

This section assesses the relevance and appropriateness of the proposed project by examining how well its design and objectives respond to the priority needs, vulnerabilities, and structural constraints identified among refugees and host communities in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali.

> **Relevance - To what extent is the planned project doing the right thing:**
> - Does the planned project approach address a developmental problem or a crucial developmental bottleneck of the partner country or region?
> - Are the focus, prioritisation, and objectives (approach) of the planned project aligned with the target groups and clearly defined?
> - To what extent do the intervention objectives and design adequately consider the specific needs of the target groups and structural obstacles in the project region, partner/institution, policy programmes?
> - Are norms and standards of the approach compatible with those of the target groups?
> - Is the project designed in a conflict-sensitive way (Do-No-Harm principle)?

4.1.1 Addressing a developmental problem or bottleneck

The planned project responds to clearly identified developmental bottlenecks affecting refugee-hosting areas in Southwest Uganda. Feasibility findings indicate widespread livelihood fragility and food insecurity in a context of protracted displacement and declining humanitarian assistance. Survey data show that 41% of households are currently not receiving any external assistance, while 68.4% report monthly household incomes below 100,000 UGX, highlighting extremely limited purchasing power. Income instability is further compounded by seasonality, with 72.8% of households reporting significant seasonal fluctuations in income.

Agriculture remains a primary livelihood activity, yet productivity is constrained by land scarcity and climate-related shocks. Among households with access to land, 53% cultivate plots smaller than 0.25 acres, limiting food production and surplus generation. Climate stress is pronounced, with **43%** of households reporting crop failure in the previous 12 months, while 49% reported experiencing serious illness or death within the household, further undermining labour availability and income generation. These challenges are exacerbated by the protracted nature of displacement, with 42% of households having lived in the settlements for more than six years, underscoring the inadequacy of short-term humanitarian responses.

By combining climate-smart agriculture, livelihood diversification, youth skills development, gender transformation, and peacebuilding, the project directly addresses these interconnected constraints. The proposed adoption of an integrated, resilience-oriented approach is therefore highly relevant to the structural challenges identified in the target areas.

4.1.2 Alignment of focus, prioritisation, and objectives with target groups

The project's focus and prioritisation align closely with the vulnerability profile identified in the feasibility study. Findings show high concentrations of vulnerability among women, youth, female-headed households, households with elderly members, persons with disabilities, and those affected by chronic illness or violence. Quantitative data indicate that 22% of households include breastfeeding women, 18% include members with chronic illness, 18% include survivors of violence, and 21% include at least one

elderly person, reflecting overlapping health, care, and protection burdens. These vulnerabilities are closely linked to food insecurity and livelihood instability. Female-headed households and households with high dependency ratios were found to have fewer income sources, more limited access to productive assets, and greater exposure to negative coping strategies. The project's prioritisation of women, youth, and highly vulnerable households, as well as its geographic focus on Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali settlements, is therefore evidence-based and consistent with the identified needs and risks.

4.1.3   Consideration of specific needs and structural obstacles

The intervention design reflects key structural obstacles identified across the project areas. Land scarcity is a major constraint, with 35% of households reporting no access to land at all, and those with access cultivating very small plots. Limited access to markets, skills training, and start-up capital restricts livelihood diversification, particularly for youth, many of whom rely on casual labour or low-return petty trade.

Gender-specific barriers further constrain outcomes. Women face disproportionate unpaid care responsibilities, limited control over productive assets, and heightened exposure to gender-based violence, particularly in contexts of food insecurity and economic stress. The feasibility findings also link livelihood stress to harmful coping mechanisms, including child labour, early marriage, and transactional sex.

The project responds to these realities through CSA and FFS aimed at improving productivity on limited land, diversified livelihood pathways and youth skilling to reduce reliance on casual labour, and gender-transformative approaches that address unequal power relations, care burdens, and protection risks.

4.1.4   Compatibility of norms and standards with target groups

The project's norms and standards are well aligned with the practices and expectations of the target communities. Participatory, group-based approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, VSLAs, and community committees build on existing collective structures commonly used within the settlements. Feasibility findings indicate strong community preference for interventions that promote self-reliance and skills development rather than continued dependence on humanitarian assistance.

Gender equality and inclusion principles are applied in a context-sensitive manner that recognises existing social norms while promoting gradual and locally acceptable change. This approach reflects both persistent gender inequalities and the demonstrated willingness of women and youth to engage in collective livelihood and leadership activities when supported through appropriate facilitation.

4.1.5   Conflict sensitivity and Do-No-Harm

The feasibility study identifies increasing tensions over land, natural resources, and access to services between refugees and host communities, driven by population pressure, reduced assistance, and environmental degradation. Survey data show that 24% of households experienced conflict or violence in the past 12 months, with disputes commonly linked to land boundaries, water access, and firewood collection.

The project's deliberate inclusion of both refugees and host communities directly responds to these dynamics. Joint livelihood activities, shared natural resource management, and integrated peacebuilding components are designed to reduce competition and perceptions of exclusion. Gender- and protection-sensitive targeting, safeguarding measures, and coordination with OPM and district authorities further reduce the risk of exacerbating tensions. Overall, the project demonstrates strong relevance through its clear grounding in empirical evidence and its alignment with the social and conflict realities of the target areas.

4.2.   Coherence

This section examines the extent to which the proposed intervention aligns with human rights principles, relevant conventions, and sector standards, and how well it complements other ongoing or planned interventions in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali.

> **Coherence – How well does the intervention fit:**
> - How coherent are the planned activities with human rights principles (inclusion, participation), conventions and relevant standards/guidelines?
> - To what extent are there synergies and linkages between the planned project and other interventions by the same actor (organisation) and other actors?
> - What are the similarities or intersections between the target groups and the projects of other actors in the same context? To what extent does the intervention add value and avoid duplication?

4.2.1   Coherence of planned activities with human rights principles, conventions, and relevant standards

The planned intervention demonstrates strong coherence with human rights principles of inclusion, participation, and non-discrimination, as reflected in both its targeting strategy and implementation modalities. Feasibility findings indicate that vulnerability within the settlements is multidimensional, with women, youth, female-headed households, persons with disabilities, elderly persons, and households affected by chronic illness or violence facing disproportionate barriers to livelihoods and services. The project's explicit prioritisation of these groups is therefore consistent with rights-based programming standards and protection principles.

Participation is embedded throughout the project design and builds on existing community-based structures identified during the feasibility study. These include RWCs, community leadership committees, farmer groups, savings and loan associations, women's groups, and youth groups, which already play an important role in mobilisation, information sharing, and dispute resolution within the settlements. Group-based approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, collective livelihood activities, and joint refugee– host initiatives align well with these structures and ensure that rights-holders actively participate in decisions affecting their livelihoods and social relations.

The intervention is further aligned with relevant international and national frameworks, including gender equality and safeguarding standards, climate-resilient livelihoods guidelines, and Uganda's refugee policy framework under the Refugees Act (2006), which promotes freedom of movement, access to services, and the inclusion of refugees in national and local development processes.

4.2.2   Synergies and linkages between the planned project and other interventions

The feasibility study confirms the presence of multiple humanitarian and development actors operating in Nakivale, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali, particularly in food assistance, agriculture, livelihoods, health, and protection. Key actors include the OPM, which leads overall refugee coordination; UNHCR, which coordinates protection and settlement-level planning; and UN agencies such as WFP and FAO, which support food assistance, agricultural inputs, and livelihood recovery. Several international and national NGOs are also active in the settlements, including organisations implementing programmes in livelihoods, resilience, social cohesion, and protection.

Findings indicate that while basic assistance and sectoral interventions are ongoing, levels of humanitarian support have declined, and existing livelihood initiatives often remain small-scale, sector-specific, or input-focused. The proposed project is designed to complement these interventions by strengthening skills, productivity, and resilience rather than duplicating service delivery. For example, climate-smart agriculture and Farmer Field Schools build on existing agricultural support promoted by FAO and NGO partners, while adding a stronger focus on adaptation to climate stress, learning-by-doing, and sustained practice change.

The project is designed to coordinate through established settlement and district-level platforms led by OPM, UNHCR, and district local governments, including sector working groups and coordination meetings. This ensures alignment with settlement response plans, district development priorities, and ongoing humanitarian–development–peace nexus efforts.

4.2.3   Value addition and avoidance of duplication

The feasibility findings show significant overlap in target populations across different actors' interventions, particularly among refugees and host community households, women, and youth. However, the analysis also highlights clear gaps that limit the sustainability and impact of existing support. These include low uptake of climate-resilient agricultural practices, limited livelihood diversification beyond subsistence farming and casual labour, insufficient integration of gender-transformative approaches, and weak linkage between livelihoods programming and peacebuilding or social cohesion efforts.

The project adds value by addressing these gaps through an integrated design that links climate-smart livelihoods, youth skills development, gender equality, and refugee-host social cohesion. By working through existing community-based structures such as RWCs, farmer groups, women's and youth groups the intervention strengthens local ownership and avoids creating parallel systems. The deliberate inclusion of both refugees and host communities further enhances coherence by aligning with government and UNHCR approaches that emphasise shared services and peaceful coexistence.

Overall, the intervention demonstrates strong coherence by aligning with rights-based standards, reinforcing existing coordination mechanisms led by OPM and UNHCR, complementing the work of UN agencies and NGO partners, and adding value through an integrated approach that addresses documented gaps while minimising duplication.

4.3.   Efficiency

This section examines the efficiency of the proposed project by assessing the institutional and operational capacity of the implementing partners, namely ACORD Uganda, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini for Refugee Women, and their readiness to deliver planned activities within the proposed timeframe, budget, and compliance requirements.

> **Efficiency – Does the use of funds planned by the project appear economical in terms of achieving the objectives:**
> - To what extent can the planned measures be implemented with the budgeted funds and personnel in the planned duration?
> - To what extent are the planned expenditures used economically and are the investments, operating expenses, and personnel in proportion to the intended objectives?

4.3.1   Institutional and operational readiness of implementing partners

The feasibility assessment indicates that all four implementing partners possess adequate institutional capacity and contextual experience to deliver the planned interventions efficiently. Each partner has a demonstrated track record of implementing donor-funded programmes in refugee-hosting and fragile contexts, including projects funded by BMZ, ECHO, UN agencies, and other institutional donors. This experience reduces start-up costs and learning curves, supporting timely and cost-effective implementation.

Partners have established operational presence in the target districts of Isingiro and Kikuube, including existing field offices, trained staff, and community-level networks. This limits the need for new infrastructure investments and enables the project to leverage existing systems for administration, supervision, monitoring, and reporting. The partners' familiarity with Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) coordination structures, settlement governance mechanisms, and district-level planning processes further enhances operational efficiency by reducing delays linked to approvals, access, and coordination.

In terms of compliance, partners demonstrate familiarity with safeguarding, financial management, procurement, and reporting standards required by institutional donors. Where capacity gaps exist, particularly for smaller or refugee-led organisations, the project design includes targeted capacity strengthening and mentoring, which is a cost-efficient alternative to outsourcing functions or establishing parallel management structures.

4.3.2   Feasibility of implementation within planned duration and resources

The planned measures are considered feasible within the proposed duration and staffing structure. Activities build on existing livelihood practices, group structures, and service delivery mechanisms identified during the feasibility study, rather than introducing complex or capital-intensive interventions. This reduces implementation risk and supports efficient sequencing of activities.

Human resource allocations are proportionate to the scope of activities, with a mix of technical staff, community facilitators, and partner personnel enabling decentralised delivery at community level. The use of trained community-based facilitators and peer-learning models such as FFS, VSLAs, and youth groups allows the project to reach a large number of beneficiaries without disproportionately increasing personnel costs.

The phased and integrated design of the project further supports efficiency. Livelihood, gender, peacebuilding, and environmental activities are implemented through shared platforms and structures, reducing duplication of effort and maximising synergies across components. For example, agricultural extension, gender-transformative dialogues, and peacebuilding activities are embedded within the same community groups, lowering transaction and coordination costs.

4.3.3   Cost-effectiveness and proportionality of expenditures

The planned use of funds appears economical and proportionate to the intended objectives. Budget allocations prioritise direct programme delivery and capacity strengthening rather than high overhead or infrastructure costs. Investments in training, skills development, climate-smart agriculture, and group-based economic activities are aligned with the feasibility findings, which highlight the need for low-cost, scalable, and locally adaptable solutions in resource-constrained settings.

Operating expenses, including logistics and field supervision, are justified by the geographic spread of settlements and host communities, while remaining proportionate through the use of shared transport, joint field missions, and decentralised partner implementation. The reliance on local procurement and local service providers further enhances cost-efficiency and supports local economies.

Personnel costs are balanced against programme scale and complexity, with clear role differentiation among partners based on their comparative advantages. This division of labour, rather than duplication of similar functions across partners, contributes to efficient resource use and strengthens overall implementation quality.

4.3.4   Overall efficiency assessment

Overall, the project demonstrates strong efficiency prospects. The combination of experienced implementing partners, existing operational presence, proportional staffing, and an integrated delivery model supports economical use of funds within the planned timeframe. The design appropriately balances ambition with feasibility, ensuring that planned investments, operating costs, and personnel inputs are aligned with realistic delivery capacities and the intended objectives. While contextual risks such as access constraints or climate shocks may affect implementation timelines, the project's flexible, community-based delivery model enhances its ability to adapt without significant cost escalation.

4.4.   Effectiveness

This section assesses the effectiveness of the proposed project by examining whether the selected strategies and implementation modalities are likely to contribute to the achievement of the intended

outcomes. The analysis considers the plausibility of the causal pathways and assumptions articulated in the ToC, the suitability of the chosen approaches to the operating context, the extent to which complementary measures could strengthen results across different levels, and the adequacy of the proposed monitoring framework for tracking progress, outcomes, and learning.

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Effectiveness – Which project approach can best achieve the objectives:
- Are the causal relationships (including assumptions) plausible? What negative effects could occur?
- Is the chosen methodological approach appropriate to the context and sufficient to achieve the project objective? Are alternatives necessary?
- At which level (multi-level approach) are additional measures to increase effectiveness to be envisaged?
- How are changes measured? Which indicators (fields) are more suitable for this?

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4.4.1 Likelihood of contributing to intended outcomes

The project's integrated and multi-component design is technically feasible and well aligned with the conditions identified in the feasibility study. The Results logic linking strengthened climate-smart agricultural practices, diversified and improved livelihood strategies, enhanced youth skills and employability, increased gender equality, improved social cohesion, and strengthened environmental sustainability is coherent and plausible. Feasibility findings demonstrate that low agricultural productivity, seasonal and unstable incomes, limited youth employment opportunities, persistent gender inequalities, and tensions between refugees and host communities are interlinked constraints. Addressing these constraints through a combination of mutually reinforcing interventions increases the likelihood of achieving the intended outcomes.

Strengthened climate-smart agricultural practices are expected to contribute to improved productivity, food availability, and resilience to climate-related shocks. Diversified livelihood pathways and youth skills development are expected to contribute to increased engagement in income-generating activities and improved income stability. Gender-transformative interventions are expected to contribute to increased participation of women and youth in decision-making and improved control over productive resources. Peacebuilding and social cohesion activities are expected to contribute to reduced conflict risks and improved cooperation between refugees and host communities. These causal assumptions are consistent with observed needs, capacities, and behavioural patterns identified in the feasibility assessment.

Risks that could undermine effectiveness have been identified, including potential elite capture, exclusion of highly vulnerable households due to participation requirements, increased workloads for women, and perceptions of unequal benefit distribution. The project design includes mitigation measures such as vulnerability-based targeting, protection- and gender-sensitive activity design, joint refugee -host implementation modalities, safeguarding mechanisms, and ongoing conflict analysis, which collectively reduce the likelihood of negative or unintended effects.

4.4.2 Appropriateness of strategies and implementation modalities

The selected strategies and implementation modalities are appropriate to the socio-economic and institutional context of the target settlements. Community-based and participatory approaches such as Farmer Field Schools, group-based livelihood activities, youth skills development pathways, and joint refugee–host initiatives are well suited to contexts of protracted displacement, limited formal employment opportunities, and variable literacy levels. These modalities support practical skills acquisition, peer learning, and sustained adoption of improved practices.

The emphasis on capacity strengthening, behaviour change, and collective action directly responds to feasibility findings indicating low uptake of climate-resilient practices and limited access to structured skills development. Alignment with existing coordination and service delivery systems led by OPM, district authorities, and sector partners strengthens implementation feasibility and contributes to

sustainability. Compared to stand-alone or short-term support modalities, the selected blended approach is more likely to generate durable outcomes consistent with the project objectives.

4.4.3   Complementary measures to strengthen results across levels
The project design allows for complementary measures that can strengthen results at multiple levels. At the household and community level, follow-up support, mentoring, and coaching can reinforce adoption of improved practices and sustain behaviour change, particularly among women and youth. Peer monitoring and group reflection mechanisms can further strengthen accountability and learning.

At the institutional level, strengthened linkages with district agricultural extension services, vocational training institutions, and private-sector actors can enhance technical quality, relevance, and market access, particularly for youth skilling and livelihood outcomes. At the systems level, engagement with district and national coordination platforms supports alignment with refugee response, agricultural development, and climate resilience strategies, helping to address structural constraints beyond the project's direct sphere of influence.

4.4.4   Measurement of results and learning
Effectiveness will be assessed through a results-based monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework aligned with the ToC and results framework. A combination of output-, outcome-, and process-level indicators will be used to track progress and inform adaptive management.

For food and nutrition security and livelihoods, indicators will capture adoption of climate-smart practices, changes in agricultural productivity, diversification of income sources, income stability, and changes in household food consumption and dietary diversity. Youth-related indicators will measure completion of skills development activities, application of skills, and engagement in income-generating activities. Gender-related indicators will track changes in participation, decision-making, control over productive assets, workload distribution, and exposure to protection risks. Social cohesion indicators will capture participation in joint refugee–host activities, perceptions of trust and cooperation, and reported resource-related disputes.

Cross-cutting indicators on environmental sustainability, inclusion, and conflict sensitivity will support learning and adaptive management throughout implementation. The combined use of quantitative indicators and qualitative learning tools ensures that progress toward intended outcomes is systematically tracked and that implementation remains responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Overall, the analysis indicates that the proposed project design, strategies, and implementation modalities are coherent, contextually appropriate, and likely to contribute to the achievement of the intended results, provided that risks are actively managed and learning mechanisms are applied throughout the project lifecycle.

4.5.   Impact
This section assesses the anticipated impact of the project by examining how the expected outcomes are likely to contribute to broader developmental change beyond immediate project results. The analysis focuses on the project's contribution to longer-term self-reliance, resilience, and social cohesion, its structure-building and exemplary effects, and the levels at which norms and systems are expected to shift.

> **Impact (Significance) – To what extent does the planned project contribute to the achievement of overarching developmental impacts:**
> - What specific contribution does the project objective (outcome) make to the overall objective (impact)?

4.5.1 Contribution of project outcomes to overarching developmental impact

The planned project is expected to contribute meaningfully to broader developmental impacts by reducing structural vulnerability and strengthening resilience among refugees and host communities in Southwest Uganda. Feasibility findings indicate that a large majority of households rely on small-scale, low-productivity agriculture, with limited livelihood diversification, declining humanitarian assistance, and widespread exposure to climate and socio-economic shocks. By improving agricultural practices on small plots, supporting diversified income activities, and strengthening youth skills and employability, the project outcomes directly respond to the livelihood constraints reported by most households and contribute to increased income stability, improved food availability, and reduced reliance on external assistance.

For example, the adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices and improved soil and water management responds to the high proportion of households reporting crop losses or declining yields in the previous agricultural season. Diversified livelihood activities reduce households' reliance on a single income source, addressing the finding that over half of households experience pronounced income seasonality and limited buffering capacity during lean periods. Youth skilling and employment pathways respond directly to the widespread youth underemployment identified across the settlements, contributing to longer-term economic inclusion and reducing reliance on negative coping strategies.

At the same time, the integration of gender equality and peacebuilding components strengthens the social conditions necessary for sustained development. Addressing unequal access to resources, disproportionate unpaid care burdens reported by women, and resource-related tensions experienced by a significant share of communities contributes to more stable households and communities, supporting impact pathways that extend beyond individual beneficiaries.

4.5.2 Structure-building and exemplary effects

Beyond direct livelihood and skills outcomes, the project is designed to generate structure-building effects at multiple levels. At the household level, improved agricultural productivity, diversified income sources, and enhanced skills strengthen economic security for the many households reporting limited savings and high vulnerability to shocks, such as climate variability or further reductions in assistance.

At the community level, the project strengthens collective structures that the feasibility study identified as central to local organisation and service delivery for a large share of households. These include farmer groups, savings and loan associations, women's and youth groups, and joint refugee–host committees. By embedding livelihood, gender, and peacebuilding activities within these existing structures, the project strengthens their functionality and sustainability, rather than creating parallel systems. Joint refugee–host livelihood and natural resource management activities directly respond to the competition over land, water, and firewood reported by many communities, contributing to reduced tensions and more cooperative resource use.

At the institutional level, collaboration with district local governments, agricultural extension services, and settlement-level coordination structures contributes to improved alignment between community-level initiatives and district development priorities. Strengthening linkages between community groups and extension services helps institutionalise improved agricultural and environmental practices for the substantial proportion of households that currently have limited access to formal extension support. The integrated design provides a practical example of how livelihood support, climate resilience, gender equality, and social cohesion can be delivered together in refugee-hosting areas, offering a model that can be adapted or scaled by other actors.

4.5.3   Norm and structural change across levels

The project is expected to contribute to gradual but meaningful norm and structural change across several levels. At the household and community level, gender-transformative activities are expected to influence norms related to women's participation in livelihood activities, decision-making over income and productive assets, and the distribution of unpaid care work. These shifts directly respond to feasibility findings showing that women in a large proportion of households carry disproportionate care responsibilities while having limited control over productive resources.

Youth-focused interventions contribute to changing norms around youth participation and leadership by increasing young people's access to skills, income opportunities, and collective action spaces, addressing the marginalisation reported by many young people within households and community structures.

At the community and institutional levels, strengthened coordination through existing settlement and district structures supports more inclusive planning and more equitable access to resources and services for both refugees and host communities. Joint refugee–host activities contribute to normalising shared use of resources and services, responding to the perceptions of exclusion reported by a significant share of community members and reducing drivers of tension identified in the feasibility study.

At the systems level, the project contributes incrementally to broader shifts in how protracted displacement is addressed in practice. By demonstrating the feasibility of integrated, development-oriented interventions in refugee-hosting areas, the project supports ongoing efforts to move beyond short-term humanitarian assistance toward more sustainable, locally embedded development solutions aligned with Uganda's refugee and agricultural strategies.

4.6.   Sustainability

This section assesses the sustainability prospects of the proposed project, examining the extent to which benefits are likely to be sustained beyond the project period. The analysis considers community ownership and participation, integration with government and settlement systems, environmental sustainability, and the durability of institutional, social, and livelihood outcomes in a context of protracted displacement and declining humanitarian assistance.

4.6.1.   Community ownership and local capacity

The project demonstrates strong sustainability prospects through its emphasis on community ownership and locally embedded delivery mechanisms. The feasibility study indicates that community-based structures, such as farmer groups, VSLAs, women's and youth groups, and RWC-linked committees, are already central to livelihood organisation, social support, and collective action across the three settlements. Rather than establishing parallel systems, the project is designed to strengthen and expand the functionality of these existing structures.

Livelihood, climate-smart agriculture, gender-transformative, and peacebuilding activities are embedded within these community groups, reinforcing local leadership, peer learning, and accountability. This approach builds on the demonstrated willingness of households to adopt improved agricultural and livelihood practices when supported through group-based and participatory models, such as Farmer Field Schools and savings groups. By prioritising skills transfer, collective problem-solving, and group governance, the project enhances communities' capacity to sustain activities independently after external support ends.

The active involvement of women, youth, and persons with disabilities in group structures further strengthens sustainability by broadening ownership and reducing reliance on a narrow set of leaders. Gender-transformative activities and youth leadership components contribute to shifting social norms that currently limit participation, increasing the likelihood that benefits will be maintained across different household and community segments.

4.6.2. Integration with government and settlement systems

Sustainability is further reinforced through strong integration with existing government, settlement, and coordination systems. The project aligns with Uganda's progressive refugee policy framework, which promotes refugee self-reliance, access to land, and inclusion in national service systems. Collaboration with the OPM, district local governments in Isingiro and Kikuube, and settlement-level coordination structures ensures that project activities are consistent with national and district development priorities.

The feasibility study highlights that limited access to extension services, technical support, and institutional linkages constrains livelihood sustainability for many households. In response, the project strengthens connections between community groups and district agricultural extension services, enabling the continuation of improved agricultural and environmental practices beyond the project lifecycle. Engagement with settlement and district authorities also supports institutional learning and the potential uptake of successful approaches within routine government programming.

By working through recognised coordination platforms and existing governance structures, the project reduces dependency on external actors and increases the likelihood that practices, relationships, and service linkages will be sustained after project completion.

4.6.3. Environmental sustainability and climate resilience

Environmental sustainability is a core pillar of the project's long-term viability. The feasibility study documents widespread land scarcity, declining soil fertility, climate variability, and environmental degradation driven by pressure on natural resources. The project directly addresses these risks through the promotion of climate-smart and environmentally sustainable practices, including soil and water conservation, crop diversification, agroecological approaches, and improved post-harvest management.

The emphasis on climate-resilient agriculture supports households' capacity to adapt to recurrent shocks such as drought and erratic rainfall, reducing future vulnerability and dependence on external assistance. Environmental sustainability is further strengthened through joint refugee–host natural resource management activities, which address environmental degradation while also contributing to social cohesion and conflict reduction.

By integrating environmental considerations into livelihood and peacebuilding interventions, the project supports sustainable resource use in a context where environmental pressures are expected to intensify over time.

4.6.4. Durability of benefits beyond the project period

The durability of project benefits is supported by the integrated design and focus on long-term capacity rather than short-term inputs. Livelihood diversification, youth skills development, and strengthened savings mechanisms contribute to more stable income sources, addressing the pronounced income seasonality and economic fragility identified in the feasibility study. Skills-based and market-oriented interventions enhance participants' employability and adaptability in changing economic conditions.

Social sustainability is reinforced through peacebuilding and gender-transformative components that address underlying drivers of conflict and inequality. By strengthening cooperation between refugee and host communities and promoting more equitable household decision-making, the project contributes to social norms and relationships that are likely to persist beyond the project period.

At a systems level, the project offers a replicable model for integrated resilience programming in refugee-hosting contexts. Its alignment with national strategies and use of existing community and institutional structures increase the likelihood that lessons learned will inform future programming by government and development partners.

4.6.5. Overall sustainability assessment

Overall, the sustainability prospects of the project are strong. The combination of community ownership, institutional integration, environmental stewardship, and capacity-focused interventions positions the project to deliver durable benefits in a context of protracted displacement and declining humanitarian assistance. While ongoing risks, such as climate shocks and resource constraints, remain, the project's design directly addresses these factors, increasing the likelihood that outcomes will be sustained and adapted beyond the project period.

4.7. Analysis of Project Logic and Complementarity

The ToC underpinning the proposed project is coherent and logically structured, demonstrating a clear alignment between the identified problems, proposed activities, expected outputs, outcomes, and long-term impact. The ToC is firmly grounded in the contextual realities identified in the assessment, including protracted displacement, declining humanitarian assistance, fragile and seasonal livelihoods, low agricultural productivity, climate-related risks, gender inequalities, and strained refugee–host community relations.

At the **problem level**, the ToC correctly identifies that chronic poverty, food insecurity, and dependency are driven not only by immediate livelihood constraints, but also by structural and systemic barriers such as limited access to productive assets, weak skills and market linkages, low adoption of climate-resilient practices, restrictive gender norms, and limited social cohesion. These root causes are consistently reflected in the choice of intervention pathways, indicating strong internal coherence.

At the **activity and output level**, the project logic demonstrates a clear and credible progression. Activities related to climate-smart agriculture, skills development, livelihood diversification, and group-based economic initiatives are logically linked to outputs such as increased knowledge, improved practices, strengthened productive capacities, and enhanced collaboration between refugees and host communities. Cross-cutting components on gender transformation, protection, and peacebuilding are well integrated rather than treated as stand-alone elements, strengthening the plausibility of the causal pathways. The participatory and community-based implementation modalities further reinforce the likelihood that outputs will be achieved, given the context of low literacy levels and limited access to formal services.

The **assumptions** underlying the ToC are generally realistic and well aligned with contextual evidence. These include assumptions that participants are willing and able to adopt improved practices, that social cohesion activities can mitigate tensions, and that local institutions are able to engage and support implementation. While these assumptions are reasonable, they are not without risk. External shocks such as climate extremes, market volatility, land access constraints, or policy changes could affect outcome achievement. However, the ToC implicitly addresses these risks through diversification strategies, resilience-building measures, adaptive management, and strong coordination with OPM, district authorities, and other actors.

At the **outcome level**, the ToC plausibly links improved skills, diversified livelihoods, and strengthened social relations to increased household resilience, reduced dependency on aid, and improved well-being. The focus on both economic and social outcomes strengthens the likelihood of sustainable change, particularly in a protracted displacement context where purely economic gains may be undermined by social or protection-related risks. The inclusion of both refugee and host communities within the same change pathways is a key strength, reducing the risk of exclusion and conflict while reinforcing shared benefits.

In terms of **complementarity**, the ToC demonstrates strong alignment with ongoing humanitarian and development interventions in the settlements. The project is designed to complement, rather than duplicate, existing assistance by focusing on capacity building, systems strengthening, and longer-term resilience outcomes. Linkages with existing WFP assistance, government agricultural extension services,

district development plans, and coordination mechanisms ensure coherence with broader programming frameworks. The project also fills a critical gap by bridging humanitarian support and development-oriented self-reliance, particularly as assistance levels decline.

Overall, the Theory of Change is internally consistent, contextually grounded, and plausible. Its strength lies in the integration of livelihood, climate resilience, gender equality, and peacebuilding pathways, and in its multi-level orientation that links household-level change with community and institutional processes. With continued attention to key assumptions and external risks through adaptive management and monitoring, the ToC provides a solid foundation for achieving the project's intended outcomes and longer-term developmental impact.

While the ToC is generally strong and coherent, the following **areas for improvement** could further enhance its clarity, robustness, and evaluability:

- **Clarify and prioritise assumptions -** The ToC would benefit from a more explicit articulation of critical assumptions at each level of change (outputs, outcomes, and impact). While assumptions are implied, clearly stating which are *essential* (e.g. continued access to land, minimum security conditions, functional markets, community acceptance of gender-transformative approaches) would strengthen risk awareness and adaptive management. Linking key assumptions to mitigation measures would further improve credibility.
- **Strengthen pathways for market integration -** Although livelihood diversification and skills development are central, the ToC could more clearly articulate how beneficiaries transition from subsistence or informal activities to sustainable market engagement. Explicit pathways linking production and skills to market access, value addition, and income stability particularly for youth and women would strengthen the economic logic of the change process.
- **Make gender-transformative change pathways more explicit -** Gender is well integrated, but the ToC could more clearly distinguish between gender-sensitive activities and truly gender-transformative outcomes. Explicitly mapping how activities lead to shifts in intra-household decision-making, control over resources, and reduction of unpaid care burdens would strengthen the causal logic and improve measurability of gender outcomes.
- **Deepen conflict-sensitivity within the causal logic -** While Do-No-Harm principles are embedded, the ToC could more explicitly show how conflict analysis informs activity design and adaptation over time. Including feedback loops that allow programming to adjust in response to emerging tensions, resource competition, or political dynamics would enhance responsiveness and resilience.
- **Strengthen institutional and systems-level change pathways -** The ToC focuses strongly on community and household change, but institutional and policy-level pathways could be made more explicit. Clarifying how engagement with local government, extension services, and coordination platforms leads to sustained structural change beyond the project lifespan would strengthen the long-term impact narrative.

It is envisaged that these refinements would not require a fundamental redesign of the project but would sharpen the logic, reduce implementation risk, and strengthen evidence of impact.

4.8.   Risk Analysis and Mitigation

The following risk and mitigation matrix outlines key operational, financial, political, social, and environmental risks that may affect implementation of the project. Each risk is assessed in terms of likelihood and impact, with corresponding mitigation strategies designed to reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience, and ensure continuity of outcomes.

Category	Key Risks	Risk Likelihood	Impact	Proposed Mitigation Strategies
Operational	Limited implementation capacity of local partners or community groups	Medium	Medium–High	Conduct capacity assessments; provide targeted training and ongoing technical support; phase implementation to allow learning and adaptation.
	Delays due to access constraints, weather, or logistics	Medium	Medium	Build flexibility into workplans and timelines; use contingency planning; leverage local facilitators.
	Weak coordination with settlement and district-level actors	Low	Medium	Maintain regular coordination with OPM, district authorities, and sector working groups; align with settlement response frameworks.
Financial	Budget overruns due to inflation or rising costs	Medium	Medium–High	Include budget contingencies; regularly review costs; prioritise cost-effective and locally sourced inputs.
	Misuse or inefficient use of project resources	Low	High	Apply strong financial controls, audits, partner oversight, and community accountability mechanisms.
Political	Policy changes affecting refugee livelihoods or land access	Low	High	Align with Uganda's refugee policy framework; engage OPM and local authorities; design adaptable livelihood models.
	Political Unrest During and After Elections	Medium	Medium	• Schedule key community events outside sensitive political periods. • Maintain strict neutrality—ensure meetings are non-partisan and inclusive. • Work closely with district technical officers and security structures to ensure safe operations.
	Regional Instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)	Low	High	• Coordinate closely with OPM, UNHCR, and settlement commandants to adapt activities as needed. • Engage both refugee and host communities in project interventions to reduce tensions.
	Local political interference in targeting	Low	Medium	Apply transparent, criteria-based targeting; safeguard neutrality and inclusion principles.
Social	Increased tensions between refugees and host communities	Medium	High	Implement joint refugee–host activities; integrate peacebuilding and social cohesion; apply conflict-sensitive targeting.
	Exclusion of the most vulnerable groups	Medium	High	Use inclusive targeting criteria; apply gender-transformative and protection-sensitive approaches; monitor disaggregated participation.
	Increased workload for women	Medium	Medium	Promote shared household responsibilities; integrate labour-saving practices; include men in gender dialogue sessions.
Environmental	Climate shocks affecting agricultural outcomes	High	High	Promote climate-smart agriculture; diversify livelihoods; support resilient production practices.
	Environmental degradation from intensified land use	Medium	Medium	Encourage sustainable land management, agroecological practices, and soil conservation; work with extension services.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS ON FEASIBILITY

5.1 Summary assessment of overall feasibility

The feasibility assessment concludes that the proposed intervention is **overall feasible** and well aligned with the needs, capacities, and operating environment of refugee and host communities in Southwest Uganda. The project responds directly to structural livelihood vulnerabilities, declining humanitarian assistance, environmental pressures, and social tensions identified during the feasibility study. Its integrated approach, combining livelihoods, climate resilience, gender equality, youth inclusion, and peacebuilding, is appropriate for the protracted displacement context and consistent with Uganda's national refugee and development frameworks.

From an operational perspective, the project design is realistic and implementable within the proposed timeframe and budget. The implementing partners (ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini) demonstrate adequate institutional capacity, contextual knowledge, and operational presence to deliver the planned activities in compliance with donor and government requirements. The use of existing community structures, settlement coordination mechanisms, and district-level systems reduces implementation risk and supports cost-effective delivery.

The assessment also finds that the project demonstrates strong prospects for sustainability and longer-term impact. By prioritising capacity development, institutional linkages, and environmentally sustainable practices, the intervention is positioned to deliver benefits that extend beyond the project period. While contextual risks remain, particularly related to climate variability, resource constraints, and market access, these risks are recognised and addressed through adaptive and locally grounded design features.

5.2 Conditions under which the intervention would be feasible

While the project is assessed as feasible, its successful implementation depends on several key conditions:

- **Effective coordination with government and settlement authorities:** Continued collaboration with the Office of the Prime Minister, district local governments, and settlement-level coordination structures is essential to ensure access, alignment with development priorities, and smooth implementation. Clear communication and role definition will be required to avoid delays and duplication.
- **Adequate partner coordination and role clarity:** Given the multi-partner implementation model, efficiency and quality will depend on strong coordination mechanisms, clear division of responsibilities, and harmonised monitoring and reporting systems across partners.
- **Adaptive implementation in response to contextual risks:** Climate shocks, market fluctuations, and changes in humanitarian assistance levels may affect implementation conditions. The project's flexibility, particularly in livelihood and agricultural components, will be critical to maintaining relevance and efficiency.
- **Sustained community engagement and inclusion:** Active participation of refugees and host communities, including women, youth, and persons with disabilities, is necessary to ensure ownership, conflict sensitivity, and sustainability. Attention must be given to mitigating participation barriers linked to care burdens, mobility, or social norms.
- **Continued attention to safeguarding, accountability, and compliance:** Maintaining strong safeguarding, financial management, and accountability systems across all partners is essential to protect participants and ensure donor confidence, particularly where smaller or refugee-led organisations are involved.

5.3 Go / No-Go / Go with Modifications conclusion

CONCLUSION: GO, WITH MINOR MODIFICATIONS: Based on the findings of the feasibility assessment, the conclusion is **GO, with minor modifications**. The overall project concept, objectives, and implementation approach are sound and responsive to the identified needs and context. The proposed modifications are intended to strengthen implementation quality, manage identified risks, and enhance efficiency and sustainability, without requiring fundamental changes to the project design or scope.

Partner coordination and governance arrangements: These should be further clarified and formalised during the inception phase. While the comparative advantages of ACORD, KRC, JESE, and Tumaini are evident, effective multi-partner implementation will depend on clear role delineation, decision-making authority, and communication channels. Establishing a joint coordination framework, covering planning, reporting, financial flows, and issue escalation, will reduce the risk of duplication, delays, or inconsistent application of standards across locations.

Adaptive management in a volatile operating environment: The project would benefit from **strengthened adaptive management mechanisms**, particularly for climate-sensitive livelihood and agricultural interventions. Given the high exposure to climate variability and market fluctuations identified in the feasibility study, implementation plans should allow for adjustments in crop selection, timing of activities, and market engagement strategies. This may include scenario-based planning, regular context reviews, and predefined thresholds for adjusting interventions, ensuring that resources remain well targeted under changing conditions.

Capacity strengthening for smaller and refugee-led partners: This should be explicitly planned and resourced. While these partners bring strong contextual knowledge, community trust, and access, additional support may be required to ensure consistent compliance with financial management, procurement, safeguarding, and reporting standards. Structured mentoring, shared tools, and phased responsibility for complex functions can enhance efficiency while preserving the benefits of locally rooted implementation.

Strengthening market and systems linkages for sustainability: Market and systems linkages should be progressively strengthened to reinforce sustainability. This includes early engagement with agricultural extension services, private sector actors, and district-level planners to support uptake of practices and skills beyond the project period. Phasing in these linkages over the life of the project will help ensure that livelihood gains are not dependent on continued project support.

Overall decision rationale: In conclusion, the feasibility assessment confirms that the project should proceed. The recommended minor modifications are pragmatic refinements that enhance risk management, coordination, and sustainability, rather than prerequisites for feasibility. With these adjustments incorporated during inception and early implementation, the project is well positioned to achieve its objectives and deliver durable benefits in a complex and evolving operating environment.

CHAPTER 6: STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Design and implementation recommendations

- **Strengthen adaptive learning mechanisms**: Establish quarterly reflection workshops with refugees, host communities, and partners to capture lessons and adjust activities. Use real-time monitoring dashboards to track food security, youth employment, and gender indicators. Assign a dedicated Learning & Adaptation Officer to ensure evidence is systematically fed back into programme design.
- **Align indicators with causal pathways**: Develop a results framework that explicitly links indicators to each Theory of Change pathway. Train MEAL staff in outcome mapping to capture intermediate changes such as adoption of CSA practices or shifts in gender norms. Use participatory monitoring with community committees to validate whether indicators reflect lived realities.
- **Enhance gender and conflict sensitivity:** Roll out mandatory gender and conflict sensitivity training for staff and partners. Establish gender-balanced community committees to oversee targeting and implementation. Apply "Do No Harm" tools before launching livelihood or peacebuilding activities and ensure gender-disaggregated data is collected and analysed regularly.
- Adopt and institutionalise the proposed Street Business School model as the core approach for youth economic empowerment, enabling young people, through structured guidance, to conduct their own localised labour market assessments, analyse their skills against market demand, and identify viable niche livelihood and entrepreneurship opportunities. This approach reduces reliance on generic labour market studies and supports more context-specific, youth-driven, and market-responsive programming.

6.2. Policy and partnership recommendations

- **Strengthen government and UN coordination**: Formalise quarterly coordination meetings with OPM, UNHCR, and district authorities. Share programme updates through joint reporting templates aligned with settlement response frameworks. Advocate for inclusion of project outputs in district development plans by presenting evidence at council sessions.
- **Leverage multi-stakeholder partnerships**: Sign MoUs with technical agencies (FAO for CSA, ILO for youth employment, UNDP for governance) to provide specialised inputs. Establish referral pathways with organisations such as Humanity & Inclusion to ensure PwDs are included. Pilot joint initiatives with market actors to strengthen value chains and employment opportunities.
- **Safeguarding and compliance**: Roll out safeguarding training for staff, partners, and community facilitators. Establish confidential reporting mechanisms for PSEAH concerns. Conduct quarterly compliance reviews to monitor adherence to humanitarian principles and national legislation. Develop risk communication plans to address reputational risks linked to sensitive laws.

6.3. Further research or piloting needs

- **Climate resilience and CSA innovations**: Pilot demonstration plots for drought-tolerant crops and agroecological practices in each settlement. Partner with extension services to train farmers on water harvesting and soil conservation. Document lessons and scale successful practices across settlements.
- Embed structured community dialogue on natural resource use into proposed and peacebuilding, livelihoods, and environmental management activities by strengthening and operationalising joint refugee–host platforms (e.g. neighbourhood associations, water user groups, and environmental committees). These platforms should be capacitated to jointly identify resource-related tensions, agree on fair access and management arrangements, and mediate disputes, thereby reducing refugee–host tensions while reinforcing social cohesion and sustainable natural resource governance.
- **Sustainability and exit strategies:** Develop community ownership models such as cooperatives or producer groups. Train local leaders and facilitators to sustain interventions beyond donor funding. Embed project activities into district service delivery systems (e.g., agricultural extension,

vocational training centres). Conduct sustainability audits before project closure to assess readiness for handover.

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Annexes

Annexes are attached in a separate document.