End Of Project Evaluation Report

For

Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale Project, Isingiro District

NOVEMBER 2024

Evaluated by;

RineCynth Advisory Ltd
Simplify Your World

Plot 62, Kenneth Dale
P.O Box 904 Kampala-Uganda.
Tel: +256709749354/+256770660634
Email: rinecynthadvisory@gmail.com /projects@rinecynth.com
Website: rinecynth.com

PQLM

12/3/2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to all individuals and organizations whose contributions were pivotal in completing this evaluation for the Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale Project.

Our sincerest thanks to CARE International for trusting RineCynth Advisory to undertake this vital task. The guidance and support from your project management team throughout the evaluation process were invaluable.

We are immensely grateful to the beneficiaries, community leaders, local government officials, Andre Foods International, Tumaini for Refugee Women, representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister, UNHCR, and other stakeholders who generously shared their time, insights, and experiences. Your input was essential in shaping the findings and recommendations of this report.

Special appreciation goes to the RineCynth Advisory team for their unwavering dedication, professionalism, and expertise. The consultants, data collectors, and supporting staff displayed outstanding commitment to delivering high-quality work under tight timelines.

Lastly, we acknowledge the broader humanitarian actors operating in Nakivale Refugee Settlement for their collaborative spirit and shared commitment to improving the lives of refugees and host communities.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the collective effort and shared vision of all stakeholders involved. Thank you for your contributions toward this significant endeavor.

EFAN End of Project Evaluation Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EFAN End of Project Evaluation Report

Initial

Initial

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFI	Andre Foods International
CARE	Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EFAN	Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GDT	Global Distribution Tool
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LDS	Latter-Day Saints
MEB	Minimum Expenditure Basket
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PDM	Post-Distribution Monitoring
PSEAH	Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment
REHOPE	Refugee and Host Population Empowerment
UGX	Ugandan Shilling
UNCST	Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Initial

LIST OF TABLES

Initial

LIST OF FIGURES

Initial

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

The Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale (EFAN) project was designed to address the urgent food security needs of refugees in Nakivale settlement, Uganda, amidst increasing vulnerabilities caused by reduced food rations and rising refugee numbers. Implemented over a one-year period from 15th November 2023 to 31st October 2024, the project aimed to provide immediate relief to vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under two years, and child-headed households through a transparent and culturally appropriate food voucher system. The primary objective of this end of project assessment was to assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project interventions.

Methodology

The evaluation of the EFAN project employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data were gathered through household surveys using semi-structured questionnaires from a sample of 280 households. Qualitative data were collected through 13 KIIs with stakeholders, including local authorities, project staff, implementing partners, local vendors, and Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs), as well as 4 FGDs with women and youth groups. Stratified random sampling was used to ensure representation across the settlement's zones, while purposive sampling targeted specific stakeholders for in-depth qualitative insights. Data were collected using digital tools (Kobo collect tool) to enhance accuracy and efficiency with robust monitoring systems ensuring data quality. Data analysis involved descriptive analysis for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Ethical standards, including informed consent and safeguarding protocols were adhered to throughout the evaluation process.

Results

Relevance: The EFAN project effectively addressed critical food security needs in Nakivale settlement by prioritizing vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under two years, and child-headed households. The project aligned with Uganda's Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy focusing on self-reliance and integrated service delivery. The use of food vouchers tailored to family size ensured accessibility and dietary adequacy while partnerships with local vendors and RWCs fostered economic inclusion and community ownership. Beneficiaries praised the culturally appropriate design which respected local dynamics and minimized social tensions. However, limitations such as the exclusion of older caseloads and challenges in addressing the needs of larger households highlighted areas for improvement emphasizing the need for broader inclusivity and flexibility in future interventions.

Coherence: The EFAN project demonstrated internal and external coherence by aligning its activities with stated objectives, national policies, and international standards. Internally, it effectively coordinated with RWCs and vendors while robust monitoring mechanisms enabled real-time adjustments. Externally, the project adhered to Uganda's ReHoPE strategy and collaborated with key stakeholders like OPM, UNHCR and WFP to enhance transparency and minimize duplication. However, the exclusion of UNHCR's Global Distribution Tool (GDT) and the project's short duration limited alignment with long-term goals highlighting areas for improvement.

Effectiveness: The EFAN project effectively addressed immediate food security needs in Nakivale settlement with 97.1% of beneficiaries reporting significant improvements in their

Initial

ability to have regular meals and an increase in meal frequency from one to two or three meals daily. The food voucher system was praised for its adaptability and transparency, with 100% of respondents finding it suited to changing household needs. Additionally, 98.6% of beneficiaries reported gaining skills or knowledge that improved their food security, while 90% experienced a reduced need to borrow food or money. Partnerships with RWCs and local vendors ensured smooth implementation and community involvement. However, challenges such as insufficient rations for larger households especially above 7 people, exclusion of older caseloads limited the project's impact. While the intervention achieved its short-term objectives, a longer duration and enhanced inclusivity would be needed for sustainable effectiveness.

Efficiency: The EFAN project demonstrated efficiency in resource utilization with 100% of allocated financial resources effectively used to meet project objectives. The food voucher system minimized administrative costs and reduced the risk of misuse while partnerships with local vendors and RWCs streamlined implementation. Beneficiaries reported timely receipt of assistance with 97% expressing satisfaction with the inclusiveness and accessibility of services. However, logistical delays, such as late vendor arrivals and mismatches of the group numbers in beneficiary lists, occasionally disrupted distribution processes. Rising commodity prices also strained fixed voucher values, reducing purchasing power for beneficiaries. Despite these challenges, the project's adaptive measures such as supplementary distributions and robust monitoring mechanisms ensured that most operational goals were achieved within the limited project timeline.

Early Impact: The EFAN project had a significant positive impact on food security, nutrition, and economic well-being among beneficiaries in Nakivale settlement. Over 98% of households reported improvements in meal frequency, with many transitioning from one meal a day to two or three. The provision of high-quality food items, such as rice and beans, enhanced dietary diversity addressing critical nutritional needs for vulnerable groups like children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. Economically, the project reduced reliance on borrowing food or money for meals, with 90% of beneficiaries reporting a significant decrease. Additionally, partnerships with local vendors stimulated the local economy providing income opportunities for both refugee and host communities. However, the project's short duration and exclusion of older caseloads limited its long-term impact. Beneficiaries also highlighted unmet needs, such as non-food items and greater support for larger households emphasizing the importance of extending interventions to ensure sustainable outcomes.

Sustainability: The EFAN project incorporated elements of sustainability by equipping beneficiaries with strategies to manage food and finances effectively, with 100% reporting they developed skills for better long-term planning. Nearly 98.6% of respondents gained knowledge that improved their food security fostering a sense of self-reliance. The use of community-led structures, such as RWCs, and partnerships with local organizations and vendors supported local economic growth and enhanced community ownership of the project. Additionally, over 65 households were linked to different partners for continued support for food supplies like Food for Hungry. However, the short project duration limited the development of deeper resilience among beneficiaries. Some respondents (2.5%) highlighted the need for complementary interventions, such as vocational training, agricultural inputs, and skill-building programs to achieve sustainable self-reliance. Future initiatives could build on these foundations by integrating livelihood and resilience-building components to ensure longer-term impacts.

Initial

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

The EFAN project demonstrated the value of adaptable food vouchers, community collaboration through RWCs, and partnerships with local vendors in fostering transparency, trust, and economic growth. However, challenges such as insufficient support for larger households, exclusion of older caseloads, fixed voucher values amidst rising prices, and a short project duration limited its impact. Future programs should address these gaps by expanding targeting criteria, tailoring support for larger households, and extending project timelines to build resilience. Introducing dynamic voucher systems, integrating non-food assistance, and offering livelihood programs will enhance self-reliance. Strengthened communication and logistics will ensure smoother implementation maximizing the long-term benefits for refugees and host communities.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Background

Nakivale Refugee Settlement, one of Uganda's oldest and largest refugee settlements was established in 1958 and is situated in Isingiro District in southwestern Uganda. It covers approximately 185 square kilometres and is home to over 180,000 refugees from countries including Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and Somalia. As a long-standing refugee settlement, Nakivale faces unique challenges in ensuring food security for its diverse population, whose needs are further exacerbated by growing numbers of arrivals due to conflicts in neighbouring countries [1].

Refugees in the settlement are highly dependent on humanitarian assistance primarily provided by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). However, despite these efforts, food insecurity remains a persistent challenge. A significant portion of the refugee population relies on food rations distributed by the WFP. Since 2019, food rations have been gradually reduced due to funding shortfalls. In 2020, refugees received only 70% of the recommended daily food basket, which was further reduced to 60% in subsequent years. This reduction has worsened food insecurity forcing households to adopt negative coping mechanisms such as reducing meal sizes, skipping meals, or selling food rations to meet other basic needs. According to a WFP report, nearly 80% of refugee households in Nakivale reported moderate to severe food insecurity in 2022 [2]

To reduce dependence on food aid and enhance self-reliance, refugees are allocated small plots of land to engage in subsistence farming. However, this approach faces several limitations such as the size of the land allocated to each household is often too small to support meaningful agricultural production. Additionally, refugees lack access to quality agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and tools, further limiting their ability to achieve food self-sufficiency [3]. The agricultural sector in Nakivale is also significantly impacted by climate change. Erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and soil erosion have negatively affected crop yields, increasing the vulnerability of refugees to food shortages. Furthermore, land scarcity has led to conflicts between refugees and host communities over resources, complicating food production efforts [4].

Despite ongoing humanitarian interventions, food security in Nakivale is also threatened by limited livelihood opportunities. Refugees face restrictions in accessing formal employment leaving many to rely on informal work which is often low-paying and irregular. This economic marginalization limits the purchasing power of households, restricting their ability to access a diverse and nutritious diet. In addition to food aid, cash-based transfers have been introduced to allow refugees greater choice in their food purchases. However, inflation and high food prices in the region have diminished the effectiveness of these transfers, with many refugees unable to afford basic food items [5].

In addition to continued humanitarian support, there is a need to enhance agricultural productivity through improved access to inputs, training in climate-smart agricultural practices, and more sustainable land management. Moreover, the expansion of livelihood opportunities for refugees, including skills development and access to markets, is crucial for building their resilience to food insecurity. Addressing the structural challenges that limit access to food in Nakivale will ensure a more sustainable solution for refugees in the settlement [6].

Different organizations and bodies such as WFP, the UNHCR, and Action against Hunger in collaboration with the OPM office have played an important role in addressing food insecurity in Nakivale Refugee Settlement by providing food rations and cash-based transfers. However, funding cuts have reduced food aid forcing refugees to adopt negative coping strategies so CARE International came in with an Emergency Food Assistance Project to support the new arrivals as well as the vulnerable groups of people among the refugees. Therefore, this end-line evaluation report presents the key findings including project achievements, lessons learned, challenges and recommendations for future programming.

About the Project

CARE International is a humanitarian non-governmental organization committed to work with poor women, men, boys, girls, communities, and institutions to have a significant impact on the underlying causes of poverty. CARE seeks to contribute to Economic and Social Transformation, unleashing the power of the most vulnerable women and girls. CARE International in Uganda secured a One-year funding from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to improve the immediate food security of the vulnerable new arrivals in Nakivale settlement, Southwestern region Uganda.

With the aim of contributing to the overall food security outcome of improved access to adequate nutritious food for refugees and asylum seekers, Andre Foods International (AFI) in partnership with CARE and TUMAINI in collaboration with Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and Isingiro district are implementing the Emergency Food Assistance project in Nakivale (EFAN). EFAN is a Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints funded one year project in Nakivale refuge settlement which aims at providing at least 5,000 most vulnerable persons from 928 households with emergency food assistance. This was after a project modification was approved to adjust project targets from the originally planned 850 households and 4,250 individuals.

The project started on 15th November 2023 and ended on 31st October 2024. The project provided food assistance using food vouchers. The provision of the Food Voucher system was defined by a minimum expenditure basket required for at least a period of 3 months per household comprised of 5 people. Since 2019 to date this MEB has been calculated at approximately 308,000 Uganda shillings ($83) per household per month. However, after distributing food assistance to half of the originally planned numbers, a project modification was sought to include households of sizes 4, 3 and 2 members. After the modification, households of size 5 and above received food vouchers worthy UGX 316,100, size 4 received food vouchers worthy UGX 252,880, size 3 received food vouchers worthy UGX 189,660 and size 2 received food vouchers worthy UGX 126,440. Food vouchers were redeemed in real time using the pre-qualified vendors who provide them with food items including Rice, Posho, Beans, Salt and Cooking Oil equivalent to the voucher value.

Goal and Objective of the End-line Evaluation

The primary objective of the end of project assessment was to use the OECD DAC criteria and assess the overall relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project interventions.

Specifically, the assessment aims to:
- To assess the extent to which EFAN project has contributed towards improved food security for the direct food assistance beneficiaries. This is also coupled with assessing the impact on livelihoods for the local food suppliers, both refugees and nationals.

Initial

- To identify and document intended outcomes, unintended outcomes, best practices, lessons learned as well as challenges experienced during project implementation.
- The end of project evaluation will assess efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, sustainability and appropriateness of models, strategies and project approaches applied towards attainment of the project goal. The evaluation process must to a larger extent possible assess how gender and resilience makers were considered throughout the project life.

Initial

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY OF THE END-LINE EVALUATION

2.1 Evaluation Design

The end-line evaluation employed a descriptive cross-sectional study design using a participatory, inclusive, and gender-sensitive mixed methods/data collection approach. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection were used to gather primary and secondary data through structured interviews, focused group discussions, key informant interviews, and Desk reviews.

2.2 Study area

The evaluation was carried out in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, situated in Isingiro District in Southwestern Uganda. The study specifically concentrated on Rubondo and Juru zones, the two primary areas where the EFAN project was implemented.

2.3 Targeted Respondents

The primary target respondents for the household survey were direct beneficiaries of the EFAN project, including displacement-affected populations such as refugees, returnees, internally displaced persons (IDPs). Focus was given to households with vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women, children under 23 months, elderly individuals, persons with disabilities, people with chronic illnesses, and child-headed households. Indirect beneficiaries that were interviewed included local vendors.

Additionally, project staff directly involved in the implementation of the EFAN project, such as the project coordinator and M&E Advisor from CARE International were key respondents. Implementing partners, including Andre Foods International (AFI), TUMAINI for Refugee Women, and UNHCR, participated in key informant interviews, while local authorities, such as the Isingiro District Refugee Liaison Officer, representative from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), and local chairpersons (RWC I, II, and III) also provided valuable insights. Focus group discussions (FGDs) engaged youth and women's groups.

2.4 Sampling Method and achieved sample size.

The study employed a combination of random and non-random sampling methods to select participants. Purposive sampling, a non-random approach was used to identify key informants and participants for the FGDs ensuring the inclusion of individuals with specific knowledge or experiences relevant to the project. Conversely, random sampling was employed to select respondents for household interviews. A list of beneficiaries complete with contact and locator information was provided by the implementing partners and served as the basis for randomly selecting participants for the household survey. The quantitative sample was further stratified by zone (Rubondo and Juru) to ensure balanced representation, as detailed in the table below.

2.4.1 Quantitative Sample

The quantitative sample was estimated using the formula by Yamane's formula to calculate the overall sample size for the quantitative arm of the study.

Initial

$$= d \times \frac{N}{1+N(e)2}$$

- N was the number of households: 928
- e was the level of precision (5%)

The Sample size was 280 Households

Table 1: Quantitative Sample

Location	Targeted Sample	Achieved
Rubondo	140	140
Juru	140	140
Total	**280**	**280**

2.4.2 Sampling for Qualitative Data Collection

Table 2: Qualitative sample size

Method	Category	Number
KII	OPM Representative	1
	UNHCR Representative	1
	Community leaders/RWC	3
	Food vendors	3
	Andre Foods International (AFI) – Project Assistant	1
	TUMAINI staff-Executive Director	1
	CARE International in Uganda (Project Manager, M&E Advisor).	2
	District Refugee Liaison Officer	1
Subtotal		**13**
FGD	Women groups	2
	Youth groups	2
Subtotal		**4**

2.5   Data Collection

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools to gather comprehensive insights into the EFAN project's early impact.

2.5.1 Data collection tools

For quantitative data, a semi-structured household survey questionnaire was administered to collect information on household food security, nutritional well-being, and the effects of food assistance. The questionnaire included closed and open-ended questions to capture demographics, food voucher redemption, dietary sufficiency, and beneficiary satisfaction. Data was collected using mobile devices programmed with Kobo Toolbox.

Qualitative data collection employed tools tailored to capture in-depth insights from stakeholders. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted using a guide designed to gather perspectives from government officials, project managers, community leaders, and partner organizations. These interviews explored roles in food distribution, vendor coordination, and community support while also examining the project's relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability. Focus Group Discussions were guided by a structured tool to elicit shared experiences from and groups such as youth and women's groups. Discussions focused on food security, voucher redemption, and satisfaction with the project.

A desk review guide complemented primary data collection by analyzing project documents, policies, and guidelines to provide additional context and alignment with best practices.

2.5.3 Data collection procedures

Data collection procedures adhered to systematic and ethical standards. Enumerators and field staff were recruited based on qualifications and language proficiency, underwent one-day training covering the evaluation's objectives, data collection methodologies, and ethical considerations. Training included role-playing exercises and instructions on using KoBoCollect for digital data entry. Data collection tools were pilot tested in a small, non-sample community to refine clarity and functionality before deployment.

Fieldwork preparation involved equipping teams with mobile devices, power banks, and audio recorders for qualitative interviews. Supervisors monitored field teams to ensure adherence to protocols. Household surveys were conducted face-to-face using stratified random sampling. Where necessary, paper-based forms were used and digitized later. Key informant interviews were scheduled with flexibility to accommodate respondents' routines, while FGDs were facilitated in community centers and other convenient spaces with audio recordings capturing the discussions.

2.6   Data Management and quality assurance

Data was collected using Kobo Collect and synced to a central server enabling real-time monitoring. Supervisors reviewed data daily to ensure completeness and consistency, promptly addressing any discrepancies to minimize data loss. Real-time monitoring allowed supervisors and the data manager to track progress and identify errors for immediate correction. Data was regularly backed up to maintain security and integrity.

After fieldwork, a debriefing session was held with field teams to discuss their experiences, challenges, and any data quality issues encountered. Insights from this session informed the data cleaning and analysis processes.

The data cleaning process involved identifying and resolving inconsistencies, duplicate entries, and missing data. The cleaned dataset was thoroughly verified by the data manager before being shared with the analysis team for interpretation.

2.7 Data analysis

2.7.1 Quantitative data Analysis

Statistical analysis was conducted using STATA 15 and Microsoft Office Excel 2019 with results presented in tables and charts to facilitate interpretation. Data was cleaned to address inconsistencies, missing values, and duplicate entries. Recoding of continuous variables was done to facilitate analysis and interpretation.

Frequencies and percentages were calculated to summarize categorical variables, such as gender, age group, household size, and food voucher usage. Means and standard deviations were used to describe continuous variables such as the number of meals per day and travel distances to vendor locations.

Cross-tabulations were conducted to examine relationships between key variables, such as household demographics and food security indicators, including voucher redemption rates and dietary sufficiency. These comparisons were stratified by location (Rubondo and Juru zones) and household characteristics (size, vulnerability groups). The Log frame was updated with end-line findings from the quantitative analysis.

2.7.2 Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and FGDs underwent a rigorous analysis to extract meaningful insights. Audio recordings were transcribed verbatim and translated into English where necessary. Transcripts were reviewed for accuracy and consistency ensuring ambiguities were clarified with the original recordings. A standardized format was applied to facilitate uniformity during analysis.

Thematic analysis was the primary approach combining deductive and inductive coding. A coding framework based on predefined themes, such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact, guided the deductive process. Simultaneously, inductive coding allowed for the emergence of new themes directly from the data. Using NVivo software, transcripts were systematically coded, and relevant segments were grouped into categories. Relationships between codes were mapped to identify patterns and discrepancies.

The data was then organized into major themes and sub-themes. Inter-coder reliability was maintained by having multiple analysts review and code transcripts, resolving discrepancies through consensus. Triangulation was applied by cross-referencing qualitative findings with quantitative data to enhance credibility and ensure findings reflected multiple perspectives.

Emergent themes were identified alongside predefined ones capturing unexpected insights revealed through participant responses. Finally, the themes were contextualized within the project's objectives, synthesizing findings into a cohesive narrative that considered social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

2.8 Ethical Considerations.

Throughout the evaluation process, professional ethics were rigorously upheld, ensuring respect and dignity for participants and stakeholders. CARE International's child protection policies were strictly followed, and all evaluation activities adhered to ethical standards.

Informed consent was obtained from all participants, with no personal identifiers recorded on consent forms or questionnaires. Unique identifiers were assigned to maintain confidentiality. For children, assent and guardian consent were obtained, and interviews were conducted in the presence of a supervisor. Training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) was provided to the evaluation team to ensure compliance with safeguarding principles.

Administrative clearance was obtained from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) before commencing the evaluation. While Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was not required for this assessment, the methodology adhered to ethical standards prescribed by the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and international guidelines, including the Declaration of Helsinki.

Photography consent was specifically obtained from participants before capturing any images. Participants were informed of the intended use of the photos, and only individuals who gave explicit consent were photographed. Measures were taken to ensure images were stored securely and used solely for agreed-upon purposes.

Consent was also sought for interview recordings, and all completed debrief templates, audio recordings, and transcriptions were securely submitted to CARE International. Recordings were deleted after transcription to ensure data security. The evaluation process emphasized gender equality, inclusion, and non-discrimination ensuring the meaningful participation of vulnerable groups throughout data collection.

2.9 Limitations.

The evaluation encountered several challenges that affected the data collection process and overall findings. Adverse weather conditions, particularly heavy rain, disrupted fieldwork activities and hindered access to certain areas within the settlement resulting in delays in reaching some respondents. Additionally, securing interviews with key informants proved difficult due to scheduling conflicts and short notice caused by the constrained activity timeline.

During data collection, additional questions were incorporated into the tool following feedback from CARE International. These adjustments made after the fieldwork had already begun which led to a higher-than-anticipated non-response rate for the newly added questions, as some respondents had already completed the survey. To mitigate this, efforts were made to increase the sample size in Rubondo Zone to compensate for the non-responses. However, this adjustment was limited by time and logistical constraints.

Furthermore, the absence of a baseline survey, combined with the ad hoc nature of the project and its short duration posed significant challenges in accurately measuring the project's effectiveness and impact. Consequently, the evaluation placed greater emphasis on identifying lessons learned from the implementation process rather than conducting a comprehensive assessment of the project's overall impact.

CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

EVALUATION FINDINGS

3.1 Respondent's demographics

3.1.1 Place of residence (Zones and Villages)

The figure below shows the distribution of respondents across villages and zones. Of 280 respondents, 140 were from Juru and 140 were from Rubondo. In Rubondo, most respondents (32) came from Rwoma A, followed by Nyakagando A (28) and Mirambira B (24). Other villages like Kisura B (15) and Kyeibare C (13) also had quite several respondents. Some villages like Karitima A (2), Kisura C (2), and Ruhoka C (1) had very few respondents. In Juru, most respondents (66) came from Kankingi C, followed by Kankingi B (34) and Kankingi A (24). Some villages like Saaza (7), Juru A (2), and Juru C (2) had very few respondents.
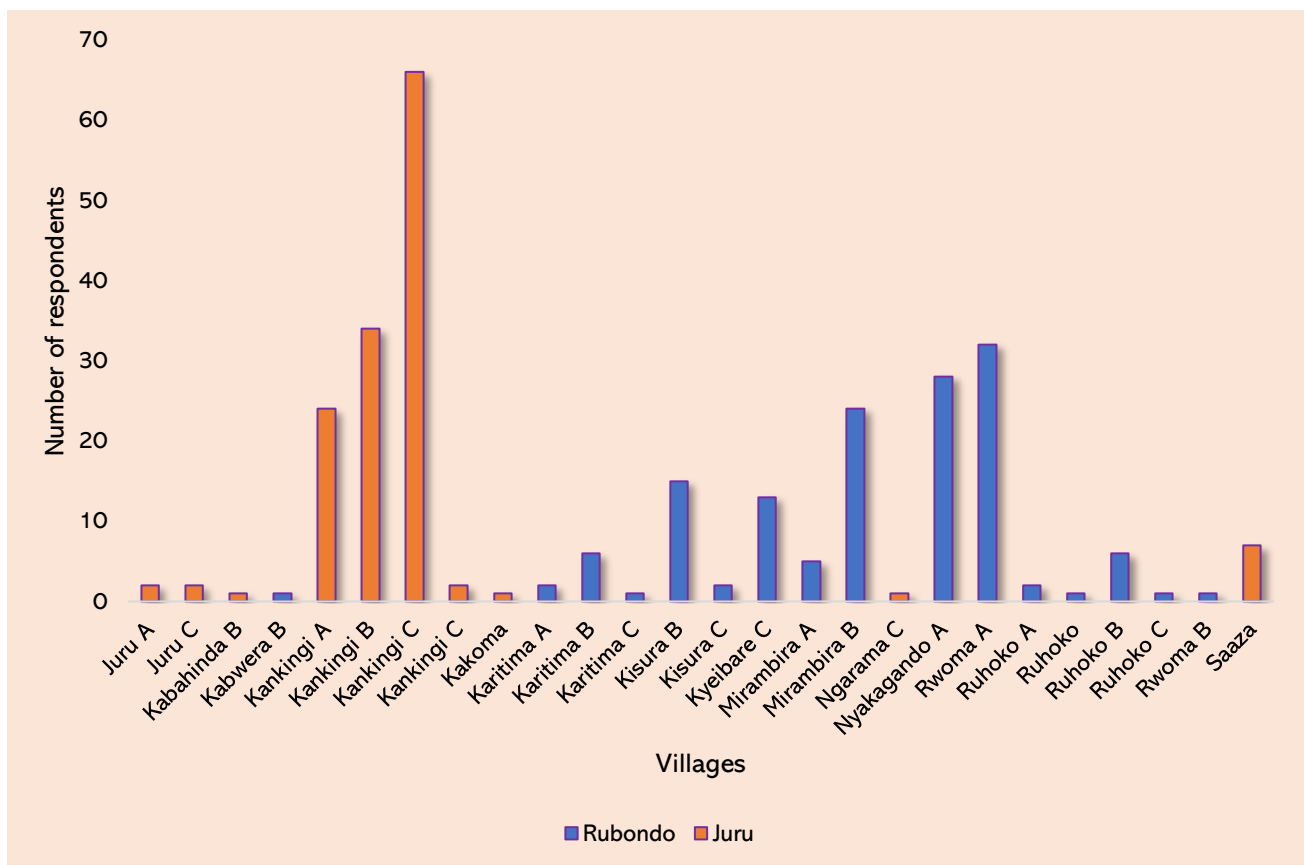
Figure 1: Distribution of respondents across villages in Rubondo and Juru zones

3.1.2 Household characteristics

The household survey was conducted among 280 individuals who were found in their homes. The majority of household heads were female (64.6%), aged 31-50 years (58.9%), had large households with five or more members (81.4%), and had one or two dependents under five years (56.4%). Most households were nuclear families (53%). Swahili was the primary language spoken in most households (60%). The majority of respondents (89.5%) reported having no disabilities, while those who reported having a disability included visual impairment (25%), physical disability (18.8%), and being lame (37.5%).

Table 3: Household characteristics

Characteristics	N (%)
Gender of the Household Head	
Male	99(35.4)
Female	181(64.6)
Age of the Household Head	
≤30	59(21.1)
31-50	165(58.9)
>50	56(20)
Household Size	
Two	4(1.4)
Three	18(6.5)
Four	30(10.8)
Household Type	
Single-parent household	82(29.4)
Extended family household	48(17.2)
Nuclear family	148(53)
Child-headed family household	1(0.4)
Five and above	227(81.4)
Number of dependents under 5 years	
0 dependents	51(18.2)
1-2 dependents	158(56.4)
3-4 dependents	52(18.6)
5 or more dependents	19(6.8)
Primary Language Spoken in Household	
Swahili	168(60)
Kinyarwanda	87(31.1)
Kirundi	19(6.8)
Other	6(2.1)
Do you have any disabilities?	
No	238(89.5)
Yes	28(10.5)
Disabilities specified, if yes	
Disabled arm	1(6.3)
Difficulty with kneeling	1(6.3)
Lame	6(37.5)
Lung disease	1(6.3)
Physical disability	3(18.8)
Visual impairment	4(25)

3.1.3 Vulnerable groups

Pregnant or lactating women were present in 38.1% of households, while 36.3% had family members with disabilities, and 28.9% had members with long-term illnesses. Additionally, 5% of households had elderly individuals aged 65 or older, and 7.7% were child-headed

households. 38% of households faced other challenges, including single motherhood, gender-based violence, and mental illness.
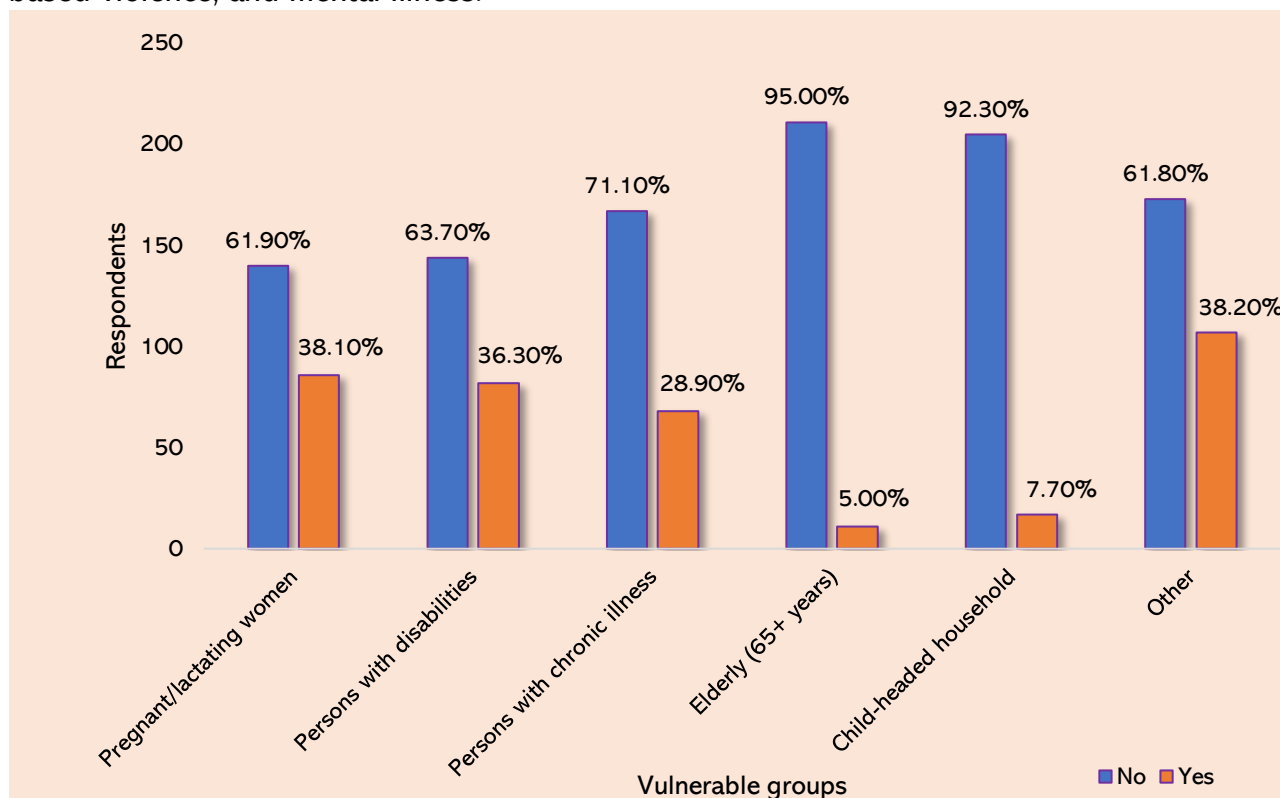
Figure 2: Vulnerable group categories

3.1.4 Socioeconomic characteristics

Most respondents had no primary source of income (65%), were married (41.6%), had no formal education (78.4%), and had limited access to land for farming or gardening, with only 36.8% having sufficient access.

Table 4: Socioeconomic characteristics among the households

Characteristics	N(%)
Primary Source of Income	
None	182(65)
Casual labor	29(10.4)
Farming	67(23.9)
Business	2(0.7)
Marital Status	
Married	116(41.6)
Single	40(14.3)
Widowed	58(20.8)
Divorced/Separated	65(23.3)
Highest Level of Education	
None	218(78.4)
Primary	42(15.1)
Secondary	16(5.8)
Tertiary/University	2(0.7)
Do you or any household member have access to land for farming or gardening?	

Yes, sufficient	103(36.8)
Yes, but insufficient	74(26.4)
No access to land	103(36.8)

3.2   Relevance of the project

3.2.1 Relevance to Beneficiary Needs

The EFAN project addressed critical food security needs in Nakivale settlement, targeting vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under two, and child-headed households amidst reduced food rations and rising refugee numbers. By providing food vouchers tailored to meet nutritional needs, the project filled gaps in food accessibility and adequacy. Collaboration with local partners such as Andre Foods International, TUMAINI, and the Office of the Prime Minister, ensured culturally appropriate distribution, while engaging local vendors fostered economic benefits and community ownership. The use of community structures for targeting and mobilization further prioritized the most vulnerable, demonstrating a strong alignment with the settlement's needs [7].

Beneficiaries noted that the assistance came at a time when existing food rations had been reduced, providing much-needed supplementary support. The focus on vulnerable groups such as women, children, and persons with disabilities further demonstrated a clear understanding of the settlement's urgent needs. The AFI project assistant stated, *"The project came at the right time when families were struggling with hunger."*

The food voucher system effectively met the diverse nutritional needs of different beneficiaries. By offering quality food items such as rice, beans, and posho, the system ensured that households could prepare meals that improved their nutrition and health outcomes. Beneficiaries highlighted the high quality of food provided and expressed satisfaction with the transparency and reliability of the voucher system. A youth participant in Juru Zone explained, *"The vouchers were easy to use and ensured we received the exact quantities we were entitled to."* The system also allowed households to manage portions better based on family size, although some larger families noted challenges with food sufficiency.

3.2.2 Relevance of project design

The project design thoughtfully considered the local context. Community leaders were actively involved during the planning and implementation phases, fostering inclusive decision-making and ownership. Vendors were selected from within the settlement, promoting economic benefits for both refugees and host communities. Additionally, the use of culturally sensitive approaches, such as allowing either male or female household heads to collect food, minimized social tensions and respected local dynamics. A community leader in Rubondo Zone remarked, *"Engaging local vendors and leaders ensured the project was well-received and effective for our community."* This community-focused design enhanced the project's relevance and acceptance among stakeholders.

While the EFAN project was largely relevant to addressing immediate food security needs in Nakivale settlement, several limitations emerged that highlighted areas for improvement. One significant concern was the project's limited coverage as it primarily focused on new arrivals, excluding older caseloads who were also struggling with food insecurity. A UNHCR representative observed that *"the project targeted only new arrivals, which left out older cases who are equally vulnerable and in need of support."* This exclusion created gaps in meeting the broader food security needs of the community. To mitigate this issue, a project modification was implemented to include a certain percentage of older caseloads especially the vulnerable groups of people identified by the OPM.

Additionally, while the food voucher system was effective for most families, it posed challenges for larger households. Some beneficiaries reported that the food quantities provided were insufficient to last the entire month. A youth participant in Rubondo explained, *"The food was good, but for families with more than seven members, it didn't last the whole month."* This limitation highlighted the need for greater flexibility in the allocation of rations based on household size. Although a modification to the EFAN project introduced customized food vouchers for smaller households (2, 3, and 4 members) allowing the project to serve an additional 78 households, increasing the total target to 928 households and reaching over 5,000 individuals, it did not address the challenges faced by larger households [8].

Another concern raised by respondents was the absence of non-food items such as sugar, sanitary materials for women, and soap, which are essential for daily living. A vendor in Juru suggested, *"If they could include items like sugar and soap, it would make the assistance more complete for families."* This feedback pointed to the importance of considering holistic household needs beyond just food security.

Furthermore, the short duration of the project was noted as a critical limitation. With a timeline of only one year, the project was unable to address long-term food security challenges or foster sustainable solutions. A TUMAINI representative commented, *"The duration was not enough to have a significant impact on reducing dependency or achieving sustainable food security."* This highlighted the need for extended interventions to ensure deeper and more lasting impacts.

3.2.3 Consideration of gender-specific needs

Most respondents (91%) felt that the project adequately considered the unique needs of different genders, particularly women and girls, in its food assistance approach.
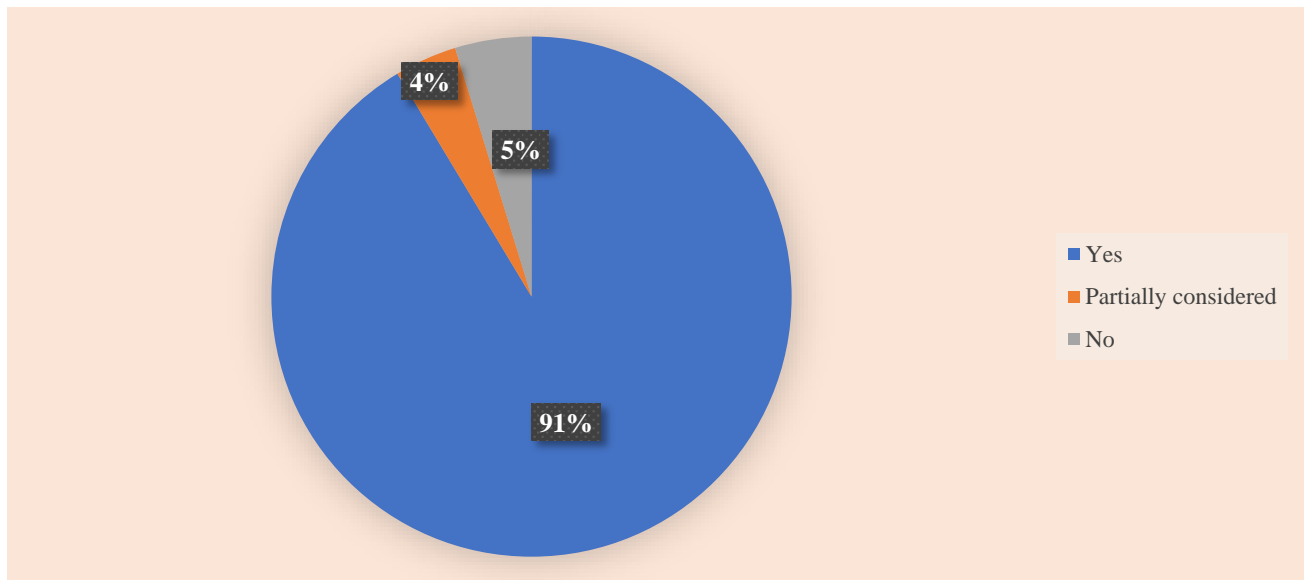
Figure 3: Gender Consideration In Food Assistance

3.2.4 Cultural appropriateness

All respondents felt that the project was culturally appropriate in both its design and delivery.
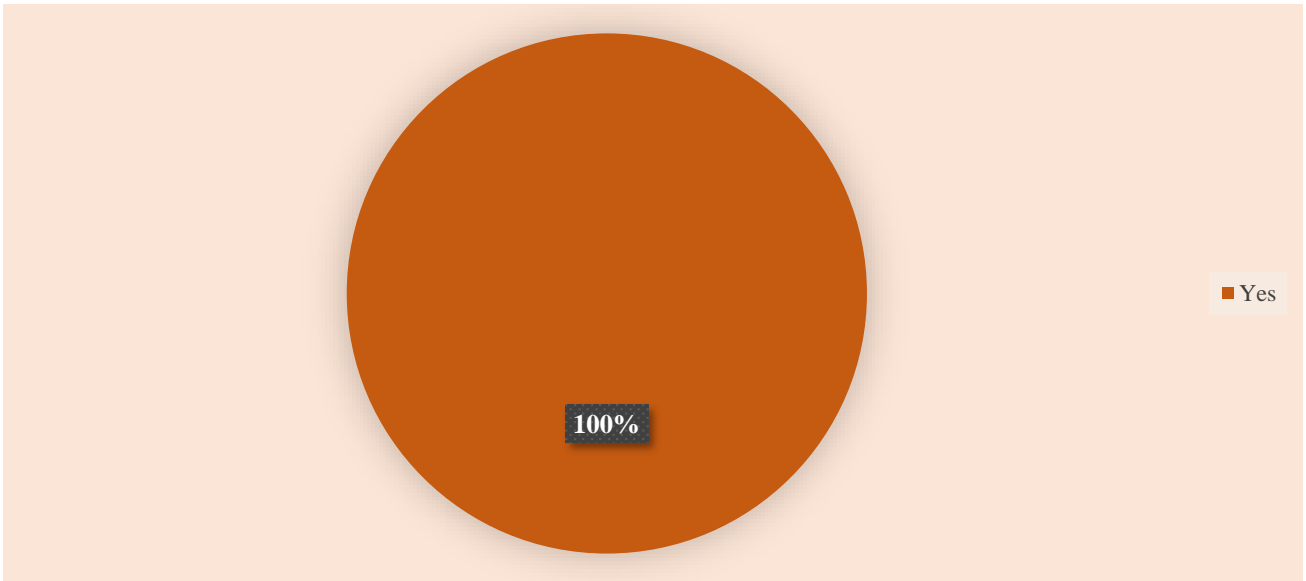
Figure 4: Cultural appropriateness in design and delivery

3.2.5 Self-reliance empowerment

Most of the respondents (97.5%) felt that the assistance provided helped empower their households to become more self-reliant. However, 7 respondents (2.5%) disagreed, reporting various needs to achieve self-reliance, including the provision of tangible skills (4 respondents), teaching skills to youths (2 respondents), and providing seeds during the wet season (1 respondent).

Table 5: Food Assistance Impact on Household Self-Sufficiency

	N (%)
Did the assistance empower your household to become more self-reliant?	
Yes	273(97.5)
No	7(2.5)
If no, what is needed to achieve self-reliance?	
More tangible skills should be engaged	4(57.1)
Skills should be taught especially to youths	1(14.3)
Skills should be taught to youth both men and women	1(14.3)
Provision of seeds especially during the wet season	1(14.3)

3.2.6 Feedback and responsiveness for recipients

Most respondents (88.9%) reported having regular opportunities to provide feedback during the project, while 28 respondents (10%) said they had occasional opportunities to do so.

Table 6: Frequency of Feedback and responsiveness for Recipients

	N (%)
Did you have opportunities to provide feedback during the project?	
Yes, regularly	248(88.9)
Occasionally	28(10)
No	3(1.1)

3.2.6 Additional services or support needed

The most requested additional support was financial assistance (81.7%), followed by health services (47.7%) and education support (33.7%). Vocational training was also highlighted by 27.6% of respondents, while 12.2% suggested primarily livelihood assistance (51.6%), income-generating activities (9.7%), and other forms of support. Other specified included continuing food support, non-food items like soap, and small-scale agricultural activities such as poultry and piggery.
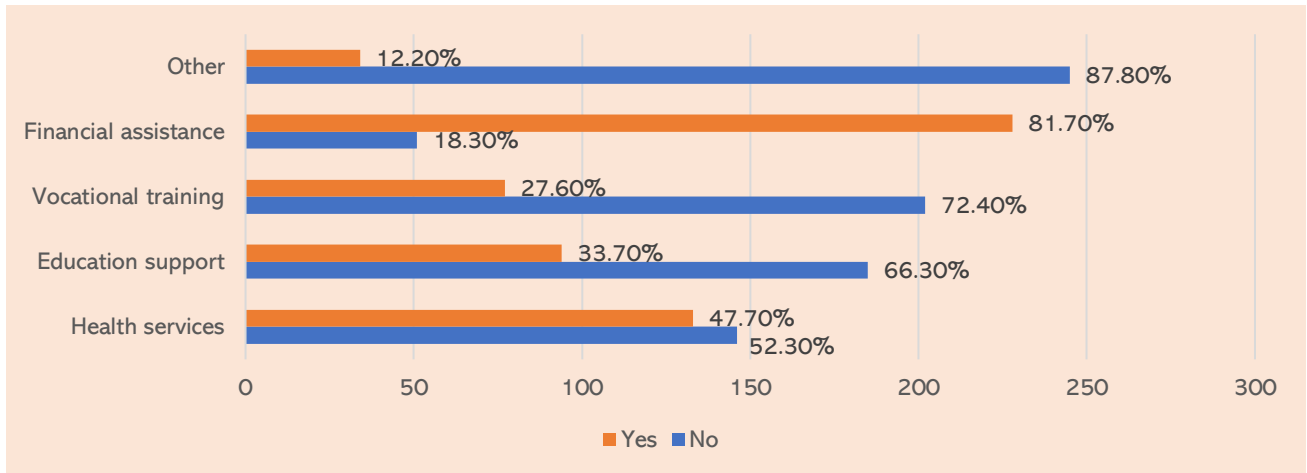
Figure 5: Additional services or support needed

3.2.7 Gender-Sensitive Support

Most respondents (77%) reported that the assistance they received included gender-sensitive support.
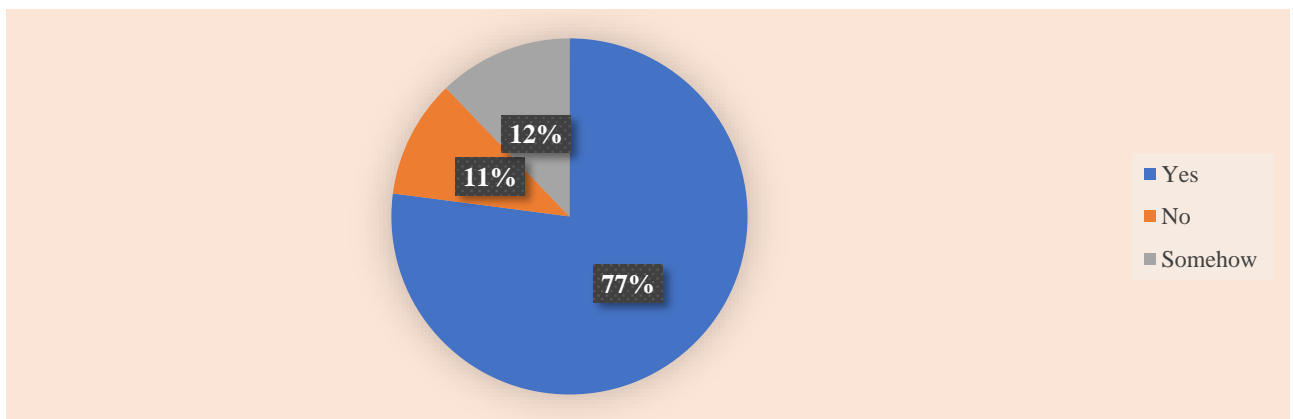
Figure 6: Gender-Sensitive support during the food assistance

3.2.8 Inclusiveness and Accessibility

Respondents highly expressed satisfaction with the inclusiveness and accessibility of the food assistance services provided by CARE and partners, with 97% reporting being "very satisfied".
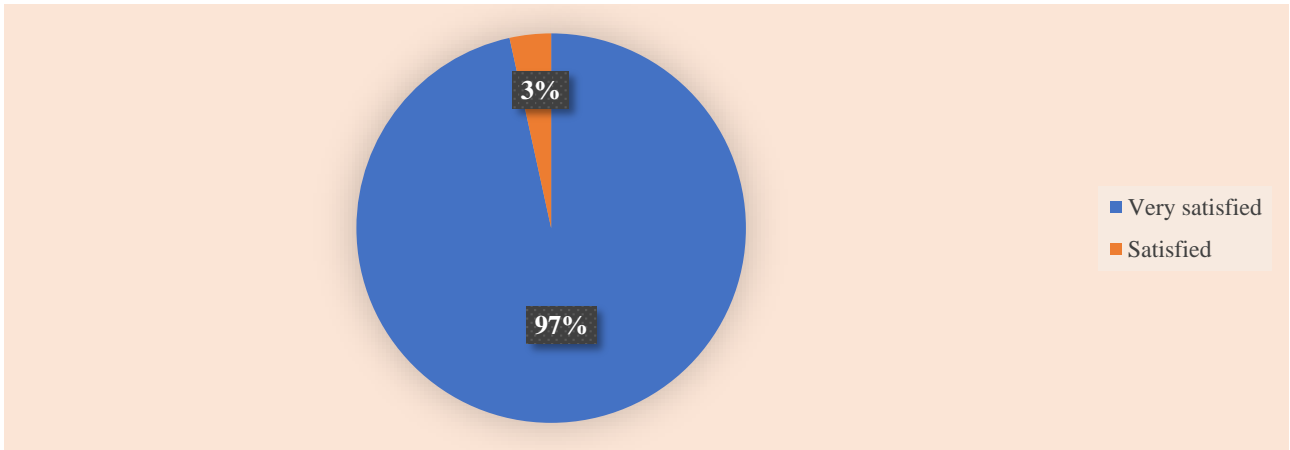
Figure 7: Perceived inclusivity and accessibility of food assistance

3.2.9 Perceived Respect and Safety in Assistance

Almost all respondents (99.6%) felt that the assistance provided addressed their household's specific needs in a respectful and safe manner.
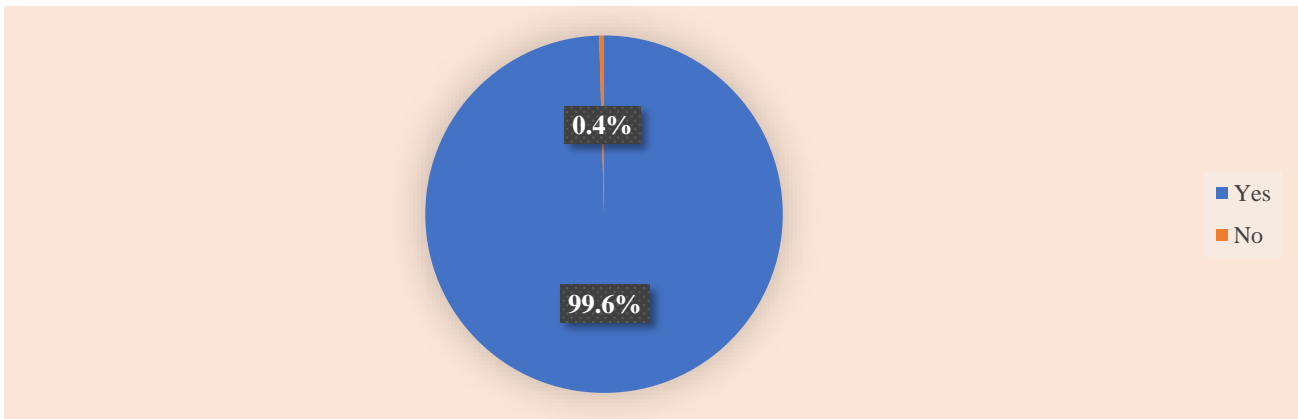
Figure 8:Perceived respect and safety during food assistance

3.2.10 Feedback and comments

Most respondents (56.3%) expressed gratitude for the support provided by TUMAINI-CARE and requested continued assistance due to ongoing food insecurity. Others appreciated the organization's efforts to support vulnerable individuals (8.9%) and suggested additional support in various areas, including non-food items like soap and hygiene kits (8.9%), education (3.7%), resilience assistance (4.4%), housing support (5.9%), and aid for elderly, disabled, and vulnerable women (5.2%). Some also highlighted the need for more vendors for efficient distribution (3.7%) and acknowledged chronic illnesses and disabilities as significant barriers to self-sustenance (3%).

Table 7: Feedback and comments

Any additional information	N (%)
Appreciated the support given by TUMAINI-CARE and requested continued assistance due to food insecurity	76(56.3)
Expressed gratitude for TUMAINI-CARE's efforts to support vulnerable individuals in the community.	12(8.9)

Requested addition of non-food items such as soap, sanitary pads, and hygiene kits to aid packages.	12(8.9)
Requested support in the education sector, including school fees for children.	5(3.7)
Asked for resilience assistance to help families become self-reliant	6(4.4)
Poor living conditions, especially during rains, and requested housing support.	8(5.9)
Suggested adding more vendors for efficient distribution.	5(3.7)
More support for elderly individuals, the disabled, and vulnerable women	7(5.2)
Chronic illnesses and disabilities are highlighted as significant barriers to self-sustenance.	4(3)

3.3 Coherence

3.3.1 Internal Coherence

The EFAN project demonstrated strong internal coherence by ensuring that its design, implementation, and management processes aligned effectively with its stated objectives and target outcomes. The project's goal of improving immediate food security for vulnerable refugee households was consistently reflected in its activities, including the provision of food vouchers tailored to meet the nutritional needs of targeted groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under 23 months, and other vulnerable individuals [9, 10].

Internally, the project leveraged its partnerships with Andre Foods International and Tumaini, a refugee-led organization to enhance community involvement and operational efficiency. Beneficiary targeting and mapping processes were conducted in collaboration with Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) ensuring that the selection of participants aligned with the project's objectives. The inclusion of customized food vouchers for smaller households following project modifications further demonstrated a responsive and adaptive approach to beneficiary needs [8, 11].

Additionally, robust monitoring and feedback mechanisms ensured continuous alignment with project goals. Regular Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and joint stakeholder monitoring visits provided insights into beneficiary satisfaction and areas for improvement. These processes allowed for timely adjustments, such as the inclusion of rice in the food basket based on beneficiary preferences and recommendations from earlier monitoring cycles [12, 13].

The project's operational structure, including vendor training and strict adherence to food quality standards further reinforced internal coherence by ensuring that all partners and stakeholders worked toward the shared goal of providing dignified and efficient food assistance. Through these coordinated efforts, the EFAN project maintained a high level of internal alignment, ensuring that all components worked synergistically to achieve its intended outcomes [14].

The EFAN project demonstrated several internal coherence challenges. Despite modifications to include smaller households, the project did not adequately address the needs of larger families. Additionally, the project faced logistical challenges, such as delays in vendor payments and mismatches in beneficiary lists. A UNHCR representative remarked, *"The project didn't fully utilize tools like the GDT system, which could have improved accuracy and accountability in distribution."* Perceptions of unequal resource allocation between zones further strained internal alignment, with some community members questioning why certain areas received more attention than others.

3.3.2 External Coherence

 The EFAN project demonstrated strong external coherence by aligning with Uganda's national policies on refugee assistance and food security, effectively coordinating with humanitarian and government agencies, and adhering to international standards in food assistance programming. The project was closely aligned with Uganda's progressive refugee assistance framework, particularly the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) strategy, which emphasizes self-reliance and integrated service delivery for both refugees and host communities [15]. By targeting vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under two years, and persons with specific needs (PSNs), the project prioritized those most at risk. Furthermore, the involvement of local vendors to facilitate food distribution fostered local economic engagement, reinforcing Uganda's priorities for inclusive and sustainable refugee support [9, 10].

Effective coordination with key stakeholders, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, and WFP, was a cornerstone of the project's success. Regular coordination meetings and joint monitoring visits with these partners ensured seamless implementation and minimized duplication of efforts. This collaborative approach strengthened adherence to established protocols for beneficiary targeting, food distribution, and community engagement. Additionally, Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) played a vital role in mobilization and grievance resolution, which enhanced community-level trust and transparency [12, 13].

The project also adhered to international standards in food assistance programming, aligning with Sphere Standards and WFP guidelines by ensuring equitable access to quality food and prioritizing the most vulnerable populations. The use of food vouchers not only provided a dignified and transparent mechanism for food distribution but also allowed beneficiaries flexibility in managing household needs. The project incorporated robust safeguarding measures, including child protection and gender-sensitive practices, ensuring that interventions upheld the principles of "Do No Harm" while addressing specific needs within the refugee population. These efforts highlighted the EFAN project's commitment to global best practices while maintaining sensitivity to the unique challenges faced by refugees in Nakivale [9, 14].

Externally, the EFAN project faced limitations in aligning with long-term national and international standards. While it adhered to many guidelines, it failed to adopt UNHCR's Global Distribution Tool (GDT), which a UNHCR representative described as a missed opportunity for enhancing transparency and accountability: *"Using the GDT would have made the process more transparent and reduced duplication."* The project's six-month duration also limited its ability to align with sustainable goals outlined in Uganda's ReHoPE strategy, with a Tumaini representative stating, *"One year is too short to make a meaningful impact; long-term support is needed to reduce dependency."* Furthermore, the focus on new arrivals excluded older caseloads, which a UNHCR representative criticized as inconsistent with Uganda's refugee policies: *"The project targeted only new arrivals, leaving out older cases who are equally vulnerable."* Logistical challenges in partner coordination, including scheduling conflicts, occasionally disrupted collaboration and hindered external alignment.

3.4   Effectiveness

3.4.1 Food Voucher Receipt and Sufficiency

All 280 respondents (100%) received a food voucher from CARE International in the last 12 months, with 88.1% receiving vouchers more than twice. In addition, 95.7% of respondents reported that the voucher's food items (maize flour, beans, oil, salt) were sufficient to meet their household needs, while 4.3% found them partially sufficient.

Table 8: Recipient Experience with Care International Food Vouchers

	N (%)
Did you receive a food voucher from Care International in the last 12 months?	
Yes	280(100)
How many times have you received vouchers in the last 12 months?	
Once	13(4.7)
Twice	20(7.2)
More than 2 times	245(88.1)
Were the voucher's food items (maize flour, beans, oil, salt) sufficient to meet your household needs?	
Yes	268(95.7)
Partially sufficient	12(4.3)

3.4.2 Food voucher value

The majority of respondents (67%) rated the of value CARE;s food voucher at UGX 316,100, while smaller proportions rated it as UGX 252,880 (15%), UGX 189,660 (13%), and UGX 126,440 (5%).
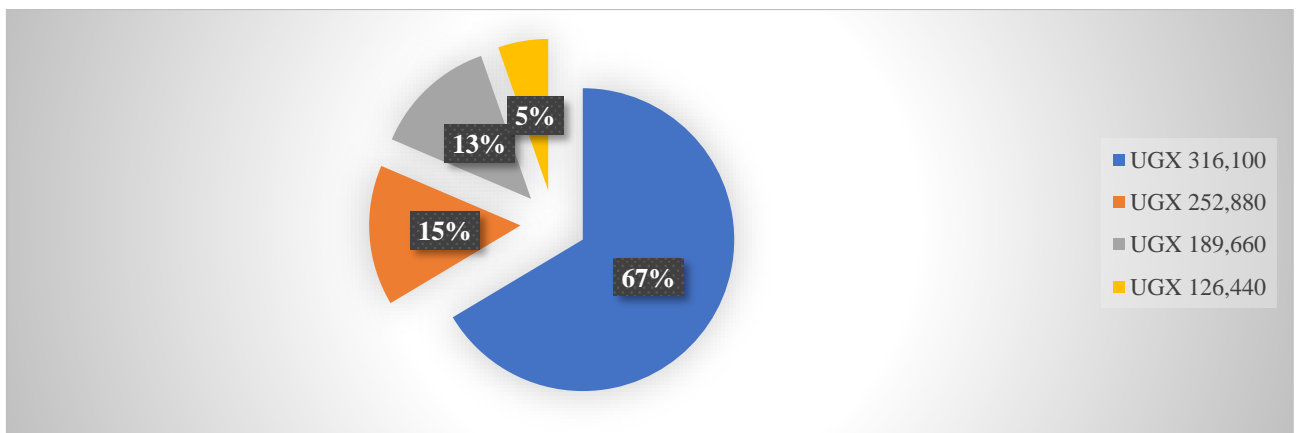
Figure 9: Value of The Food Voucher

3.4.3 Desired food commodities

Respondents suggested adding several food commodities, with the most popular being sugar (23.6%), followed by soya (8.6%), vegetables (11.1%), and maize flour (9.6%). Smaller proportions also suggested adding milk (3.2%), fish (2.1%), soap (2.1%), peas (1.8%), millet flour (1.8%), and meat (1.8%).

Table 9: Desired Food Commodities to Be Added

Which other food commodities would you like to be added?	N (%)
Fish	
No	274(97.9)
Yes	6(2.1)
Milk	
No	271(96.8)
Yes	9(3.2)
Ground nuts	
No	278(99.3)
Yes	2(0.7)
Millet flour	
No	275(98.2)
Yes	5(1.8)
None	
No	204(72.9)
Yes	76(27.1)
Peas	
No	275(98.2)
Yes	5(1.8)
Soap	
No	274(97.9)
Yes	6(2.1)
Soya	
No	256(91.4)
Yes	24(8.6)
Spaghetti	
No	280(100)
Vegetables	
No	249(88.9)
Yes	31(11.1)
Sugar	
No	214(76.4)
Yes	66(23.6)
Rice	
No	277(98.9)
Yes	3(1.1)
Maize flour	
No	253(90.4)
Yes	27(9.6)
Meat	
No	275(98.2)
Yes	5(1.8)

3.4.4 Food Voucher Program Satisfaction and Effectiveness

Respondents overwhelmingly reported positive experiences with the food voucher program. Nearly 90% found the quality of food items provided by vendors to be "very satisfactory", while

99.3% reported that the voucher enabled them to access a variety of foods needed for their household's dietary needs. Additionally, 93.2% received food on the same day as receiving their voucher, and 97.5% were able to redeem the full value of their voucher every 3 months.

Table 10: Food Assistance Program: Voucher Quality, Accessibility, And Utilization

	N (%)
Was the quality of the food items provided by vendors satisfactory?	
Very satisfactory	249(88.9)
Satisfactory	30(10.7)
Unsatisfactory (please specify)	1(0.4)
Did the food voucher enable you to access a variety of foods needed for your household's dietary needs?	
Yes	278(99.3)
Partially	2(0.7)
How long did it take to start getting food after receiving your food voucher?	
Same day	261(93.2)
Within a week	19(6.8)
Were you able to get the full value of your voucher every 3 months?	
Partially redeemed	7(2.5)
Yes, fully received	273(97.5)

3.4.5 Reasons for Partial Redemption of Food Vouchers

Respondents who partially received their food vouchers reported various reasons. High prices for items affected 3.5% of respondents, while insufficient stock from vendors was a reason for 2.1%. Vendor unavailability was not reported as a reason.
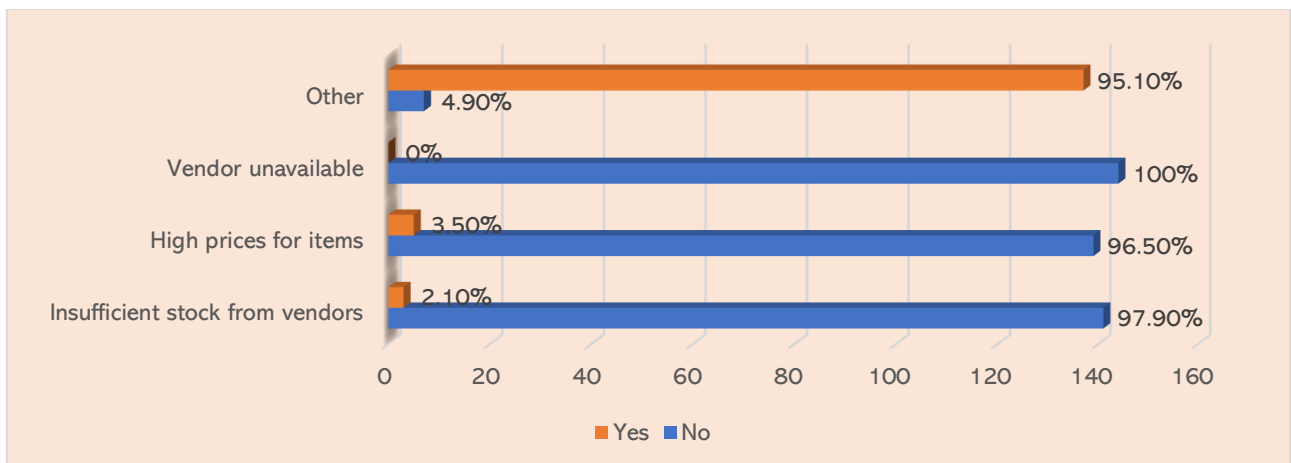
Figure 10:Reasons for Partial Redemption of Food Vouchers

3.4.6 Vendor Location and Accessibility

Most respondents had to travel between 1-3 km to receive their food voucher. Regarding time spent at the vendor location, 36.4% of respondents reported spending between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The majority of respondents reported no vendor-related issues, with 99.6% experiencing no refusals, 99.3% reporting no discrimination, and 98.2% finding market locations safe and accessible.

Table 11: Food Voucher Distribution: Accessibility and Experience

	N (%)
How far did you have to travel to receive your food voucher?	
Less than 1 km	68(24.4)
Between 1-3 km	181(64.9)
More than 3 km	30(10.8)
Time spent at the vendor location to receive food	
Less than 30 minutes	83(29.6)
30 minutes - 1 hour	102(36.4)
More than 1 hour	95(33.9)
Were there any vendors who refused to accept your voucher?	
Yes	1(0.4)
No	279(99.6)
Did you experience any discrimination or unfair treatment from vendors?	
Yes	2(0.7)
No	276(99.3)
Were the market locations safe and accessible for all household members?	
Yes, fully accessible	273(98.2)
Not accessible	5(1.8)

3.4.7 Access by Vulnerable Household Members

Overall, vulnerable family members had relatively easy access to food items, with 85.7% receiving them easily, 14% needing assistance, and 0.4% being unable to receive them.

Table 12: Food Distribution Accessibility for Vulnerable Family Members

	N (%)
Did vulnerable family members (if present) receive food items themselves?	
Yes, easily	239(85.7)
Yes, but needed help	39(14)
No	1(0.4)

3.4.8 Vendor behaviour

Vendors demonstrated excellent behaviour when receiving food items, with all 280 respondents describing it as "good". Additionally, nearly all respondents (98.9%) reported that vendors consistently had the required food types available, indicating a high level of reliability and effectiveness in the vendor service.

Table 13: Recipient Feedback on Vendor Behaviour And Food Availability

	N (%)
How would you describe the behavior of vendors when receiving food items?	
Good	280(100)
Did the vendors always have the food types needed	
Yes	276(98.9)
No	3(1.1)

3.4.9 Food types available

The majority of respondents received the following food types: Rice (81.4%), Beans (81.1%), Oil (76.8%), and Salt (75%). Additionally, 43.6% received Posho, and 13.6% received Maize flour. Only 6.8% of respondents received all the food types listed on the voucher.
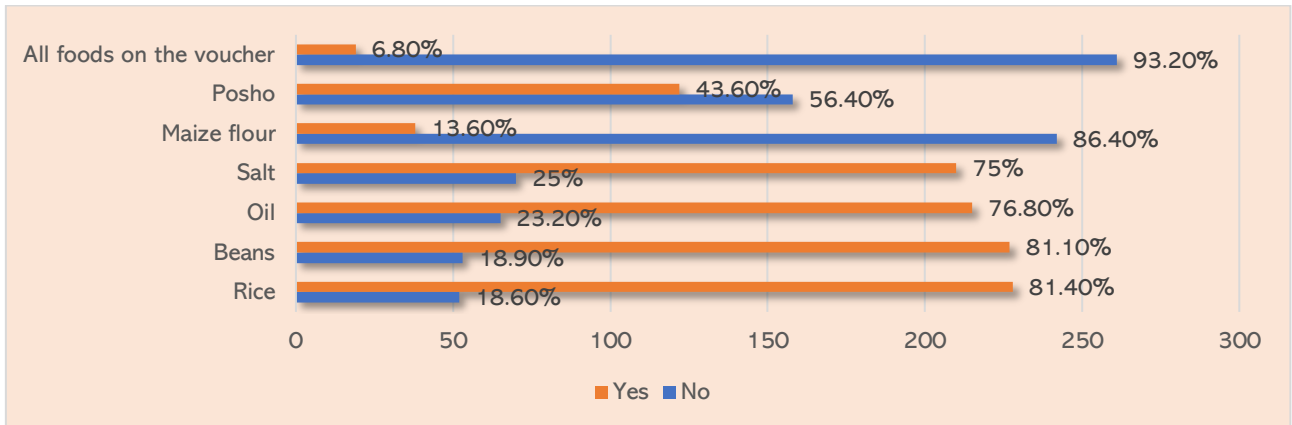
Figure 11: Food Types Available

3.4.8 Satisfaction and Effectiveness

The majority of respondents expressed satisfaction with the safety and adequacy of the food assistance provided by CARE and partners, with 229 (82%) being "very satisfied" and 49 (17%) being "satisfied". Only 2 (1%) respondents reported being "neutral", indicating a high level of overall satisfaction with the food assistance program.
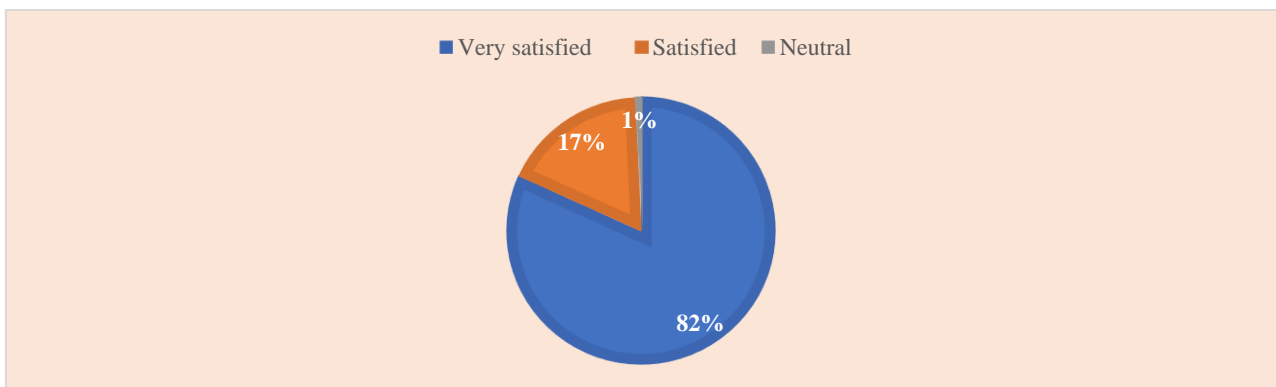
Figure 12: Client Satisfaction with Food Assistance Services

The food assistance program was highly effective in meeting households' dietary needs, with 86.3% of respondents reporting that their needs were "fully met" safely and inclusively.
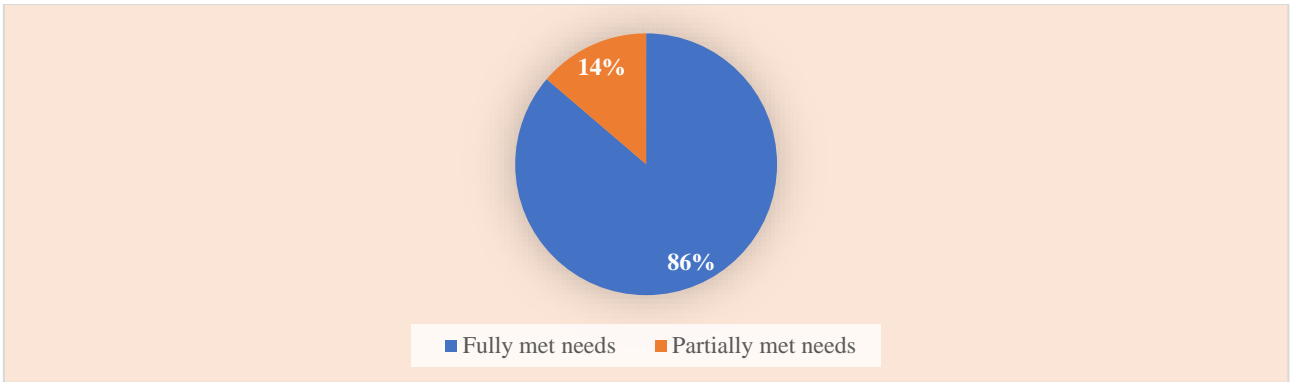
Figure 13: Effectiveness of Food Assistance In Meeting Dietary Needs

3.4.9 Effectiveness of Distribution Processes

The food voucher distribution process was highly effective and efficient, with 100% of respondents reporting that the process was clearly communicated in advance. Nearly all respondents (99.6%) received their vouchers on time, and 94.6% described the distribution process as "very organized". Issues with vouchers or distribution were promptly addressed, with 88.9% of respondents reporting that problems were resolved immediately, and 10% within a few days.

Table 14:Food Voucher Distribution Process: Efficiency and Effectiveness

	N (%)
Was the process for receiving vouchers clearly communicated to you in advance?	
Yes	280(100)
Did you receive your food vouchers on time for each distribution cycle?	
Yes	279(99.6)
No	1(0.4)
How organized was the process of distributing the food vouchers?	
Very organized	265(94.6)
Organized	15(5.4)
How quickly were the service providers able to address issues with the vouchers or distribution?	
Immediately	248(88.9)
Within a few days	28(10)
Took more than a week	1(0.4)
Could not resolve issues	2(0.7)

3.4.10 Satisfaction with food assistance through the food voucher system

A majority of respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the food voucher system, with 92% indicating they were "very satisfied." Among those who acknowledged benefits, 71 respondents (1.4%) specifically praised the abundance and high quality of food items, including oil, rice, beans, and posho.
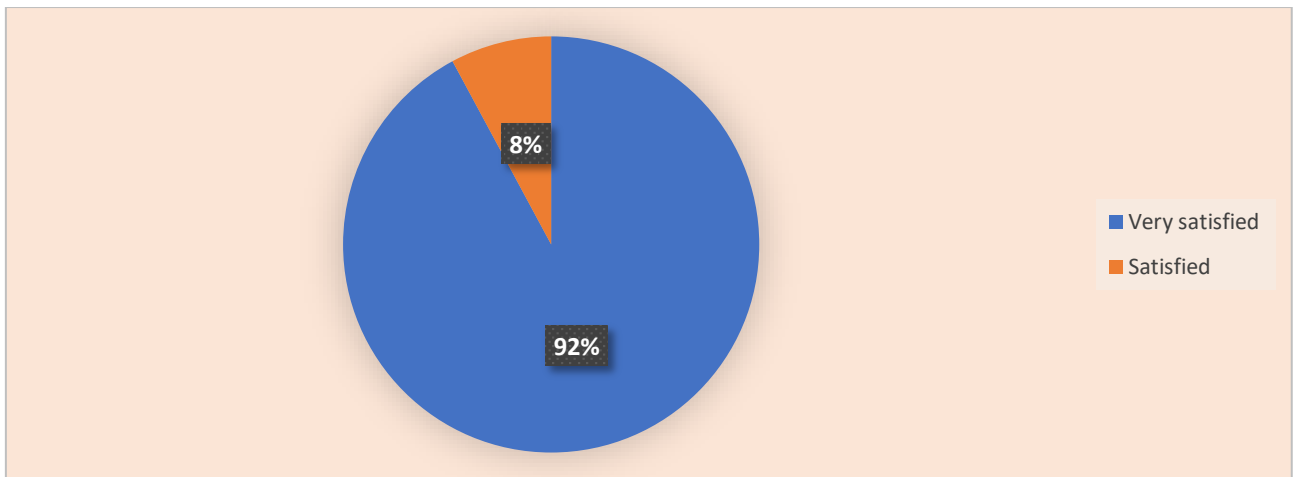
Figure 14: Satisfaction with food assistance through the food voucher system

3.5   Efficiency

The EFAN project demonstrated notable efficiency in resource utilization, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and management practices. However, some challenges were encountered, most of which are detailed in the challenges section.

3.5.1 Resource Utilization

The EFAN project effectively utilized its financial, human, and material resources to achieve its objectives within the allocated budget. By leveraging partnerships with local vendors, the project ensured that food items were procured and distributed cost-effectively. A notable modification introduced tailored food vouchers for smaller households and incorporating some old caseloads in the project enabling equitable resource distribution without wastage. This adjustment improved the efficiency of the intervention, aligning resource allocation with the diverse needs of beneficiaries [8, 9].

The food voucher system played a critical role in ensuring precise distribution, minimizing the risk of misuse or theft. A vendor in Rubondo remarked, *"The system was very good because it ensured there was no theft or loss of food. Everything was tracked and easy to manage."* Training sessions for vendors and project staff further enhanced efficiency by maintaining high standards of food quality and distribution. However, some logistical challenges persisted, including high transport costs for vendors and absentee beneficiaries, which occasionally disrupted resource management. These issues highlight the importance of adaptive measures to address operational inefficiencies while maintaining overall effectiveness.

3.5.2 Timeliness

The EFAN project largely adhered to its planned timeline, with most activities completed as scheduled. However, logistical delays occasionally impacted efficiency. For instance, late arrivals by vendors at distribution points resulted in extended waiting times for beneficiaries. Additionally, QR code mismatches caused minor disruptions during the voucher redemption process. A representative from TUMAINI noted, *"Occasional QR code mismatches caused minor delays, but we resolved them with on-site support."*

Despite these setbacks, the project demonstrated adaptability by introducing supplementary distributions for underserved groups and absentees, ensuring all beneficiaries received their entitlements. Regular stakeholder meetings and feedback mechanisms were instrumental in identifying inefficiencies and implementing timely solutions. These adjustments not only minimized disruptions but also improved the overall effectiveness of subsequent distribution cycles [10, 12].

3.5.2 Cost-Benefit

The EFAN project demonstrated a competitive cost-benefit ratio compared to similar initiatives in the region. The use of a food voucher system minimized administrative costs and reduced the risk of fraud typically associated with direct cash distributions. By leveraging partnerships with local vendors and incorporating community-led structures, such as Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs), the project enhanced cost efficiency and strengthened local economies [7, 16].

A Refugee Welfare Council member highlighted this impact, stating, *"The project boosted local economies by engaging vendors and transporters, creating additional income opportunities."* However, rising commodity prices during the implementation period posed challenges to maintaining cost efficiency. Beneficiaries noted that the fixed voucher values did not adjust to account for market fluctuations, reducing purchasing power for essential food items. This limitation underscored the need for more flexible pricing mechanisms to adapt to economic changes while maintaining the project's favorable cost-benefit balance.

3.5.3 Efficient Management Practices.

Effective project management and coordination were pivotal to the EFAN project's success, significantly contributing to efficient resource utilization. Coordination among key stakeholders, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, and local organizations like Tumaini, ensured that project activities aligned with both government standards and beneficiary needs. A CARE representative stated, *"We aligned with OPM to ensure the project design adhered to government standards and met beneficiary needs."*

Joint monitoring visits and regular stakeholder meetings provided real-time feedback, enabling timely adjustments to project implementation. For example, modifications to food rations were made to address gaps in coverage, ensuring equitable distribution among beneficiaries. Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, such as Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), played a critical role in identifying inefficiencies and informing improvements for subsequent distribution cycles. These practices reinforced accountability and ensured the project remained responsive to emerging challenges while maintaining overall efficiency [8, 13].

3.5.4 Stakeholder Participation

Stakeholder contributions were integral to the EFAN project, with active participation from Refugee Welfare Committees, vendors, and local leaders. RWCs played a critical role in community mobilization and grievance resolution, while vendors ensured smooth and timely food distribution. These collaborative efforts significantly enhanced the project's efficiency. A RWC in Juru noted, *"Poor network connectivity and lack of airtime sometimes made it hard to disseminate information effectively,"* highlighting occasional communication challenges.

Delayed updates to stakeholders on changes in distribution plans occasionally disrupted smooth operations. However, continuous engagement and feedback mechanisms fostered

collaborative problem-solving, mitigating these challenges. The project's ability to adapt to communication inefficiencies demonstrated the value of stakeholder collaboration in achieving its objectives effectively [10, 11].

3.5.5 Support and Transparency from CARE International and its Partners

All respondents (100%) reported receiving adequate support from CARE International, TUMAINI, and Andre Foods International when needed. Furthermore, the majority (95.3%) of respondents found the food assistance provided by CARE and its partners to be fully accountable and transparent.

Table 15:Recipient feedback on support and accountability of care and partners

	N (%)
Did you receive adequate support from CARE International, TUMAINI and Andre Foods International if any needs arose?	
Yes	280(100)
Was the food assistance provided by CARE and partners accountable and transparent to your household?	
Yes, fully accountable	222(95.3)
Somehow accountable	11(4.7)

3.6   Impact

3.6.1 Impact of food assistance

The food assistance program had a positive impact on respondents, with 100% reporting that it helped them develop strategies for managing food and finances. Additionally, 99.3% of respondents reported improved planning for meals over the long term, and 100% felt that the food voucher system was adaptable to changing needs. The program also enhanced food security, with 98.6% of respondents gaining skills or knowledge that made them feel more secure. Furthermore, most respondents (96.4%) relied on food assistance during specific months of the year.

Table 16: Food Assistance Outcomes: Sustainability, Adaptability, And Skills Development

	N (%)
Did the food assistance help you develop any strategies for managing food or finances that you could use in the future?	
Yes	280(100)
How did the assistance impact your household's ability to plan meals over the long term?	
Improved planning	278(99.3)
No impact at all	2(0.7)
Did you feel the food voucher system was adaptable to changing needs or family circumstances?	
Yes	278(100)
Any skills or knowledge gained from participating in this program that helped you feel more secure in terms of food?	
Yes	276(98.6)
No	4(1.4)
Were there specific times of the year when food assistance was more critical for your household?	
Yes, during specific months	268(96.4)

Throughout the year	10(3.6)

3.6.2 Impact on Meals

The food assistance has had a positive impact on households' ability to have regular meals, with 97.1% of respondents reporting that it has "greatly improved" their situation. As a result, the average number of meals per day has increased, with 59.6% of households now having two meals per day, 36.8% having three meals, and only 2.9% having just one meal.

Table 17: Effectiveness Of Food Assistance In Improving Meal Frequency

	N (%)
How has the food assistance impacted your household's ability to have regular meals?	
Greatly improved	272(97.1)
Partially improved	8(2.9)
Average number of meals per day after receiving the food voucher in the household	
One	8(2.9)
Two	167(59.6)
Three	103(36.8)

3.6.3 Health and well being

The food assistance has had a universally positive impact on the health and well-being of household members, with 100% of respondents reporting improvements. Additionally, 99.6% of households with children reported improvements in their children's health or school attendance since receiving assistance, with only 0.4% reporting no improvements.

Table 18: Impact Of Food Assistance On Household Health And Well-Being

	N (%)
Any changes in the health or well-being of household members due to improved food access	
Yes	280(100)
Have any children in the household shown improvements in health, or school attendance since receiving assistance?	
Yes	279(99.6)
No	1(0.4)

3.6.4 Food insecurity

A total of 67.9% of respondents experienced days without eating at all in the last 12 months, while 32.1% did not. Among those who went without eating, 74% reported that this occurred in some months

Table 19: Food Insecurity Experience in The Last 12 Months

	N (%)
Did you ever not eat for the whole day in the last 12 months?	
Yes	190(67.9)
No	90(32.1)
If yes, how often did it happen?	
Almost every month	25(12.3)
Some months	151(74)
Only one or two months	28(13.7)

3.6.5 Additional benefits

The food assistance program had a major impact on reducing households' reliance on borrowing food or money for meals, with 90% of respondents reporting a significant reduction. Additionally, the assistance greatly improved households' ability to have a balanced diet, with 87.8% of respondents reporting significant improvement.

Table 20: Impact of Food Assistance on Household Food Security

	N (%)
Did the food assistance reduce your need to borrow food or money for meals?	
Yes, significantly	251(90)
Somehow reduced	28(10)
Has the assistance helped improve the ability to have a balanced diet?	
Yes, significantly	245(87.8)
Some improvement	34(12.2)

3.6.6 Unexpected Benefits of Food Assistance

About 30% of respondents reported experiencing unexpected benefits from the food assistance. Among those who reported unexpected benefits, 71 respondents (1.4%) specifically noted that the food commodities provided including cooking oil, rice, beans, and posho, were abundant and of high quality.

Table 21: Unexpected benefits of food assistance

	N (%)
Were there any unexpected benefits of the food assistance for your household?	
Yes	83(29.7)
No	196(70.3)
If yes, specify the benefits,	
The food commodities provided were abundant and of high quality, particularly oil, rice, beans, and posho	71(1.4)

The EFAN project had significant positive impacts on the food security, nutrition, and economic well-being of beneficiaries in Nakivale settlement. Households reported notable improvements in their ability to meet daily nutritional needs, with many moving from one meal a day to two or three meals, significantly improving their overall health. A beneficiary shared, *"We are now able to eat three meals a day, and the quantity of food on the plates increased."* The inclusion of quality food items such as rice and beans in the food basket enhanced dietary diversity and addressed critical nutritional gaps for vulnerable groups like children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers.

Economically, the project provided substantial savings for beneficiary households, enabling them to redirect funds previously spent on food toward other essential needs, including education and small-scale investments. A vendor noted, *"Families saved money on food and used it to buy school items and even invest in livestock like goats."* The project also contributed to local economic growth by partnering with refugee and host community vendors, boosting their incomes and customer bases.

Socially, the project fostered community trust and participation by actively involving Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) and local leaders in the mobilization and distribution processes.

These efforts strengthened social cohesion and ensured the transparent delivery of assistance. A local leader in Juru zone highlighted, *" I was able to share my ideas and thoughts on what could be helpful for the community, and they listened carefully. Some of my suggestions were even accepted, which showed they valued our input".*

However, the project's impact was constrained by its limited scope and duration. The exclusion of older caseloads and challenges in meeting the needs of larger households especially those above 7 people in a household were significant concerns. A youth participant highlighted, *"For families with more than seven members, the food didn't last the whole month."* Additionally, the absence of non-food items such as soap and hygiene kits left critical household needs unmet diminishing the holistic impact of the intervention.

3.7   Sustainability

The EFAN project demonstrated elements of sustainability by empowering beneficiaries with strategies and knowledge to manage food and finances effectively. According to the evaluation, 100% of respondents reported developing strategies for managing food and finances that they could use in the future, and 98.6% gained skills or knowledge that made them feel more food secure. These outcomes indicate that the project provided tools for beneficiaries to better navigate food insecurity beyond the intervention period. One respondent noted, *"The food assistance helped us plan meals and save money for other needs like paying for our children's school fees."*

The use of food vouchers which were adaptable to changing family circumstances was another sustainable feature of the project. This approach not only addressed immediate food security needs but also allowed households to develop better planning habits. Additionally, the program's reliance on local vendors and community structures, such as Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs), strengthened local economic systems and fostered community ownership, key components of sustainability. A vendor shared, *"The project supported our business and increased our customer base."*

Furthermore, the EFAN project implemented efforts to connect beneficiaries with external organizations to enhance long-term resilience. Notably, 65 households, comprising over 300 individuals were successfully linked to livelihood interventions with partner *organizations,* hence ensuring sustainability. The Project Manager of CARE International noted, *" We created linkages with livelihood partners to take on some of our beneficiaries. At least 65 households, comprising over 300 individuals, were adopted into livelihood interventions to continuously build their resilience".* This approach, although not part of the initial project design was developed to sustain the impact of the intervention beyond its timeline

However, certain gaps limited the long-term sustainability of the intervention. The short project duration of one year was insufficient to foster lasting resilience. Furthermore, while 97.5% of respondents felt the assistance empowered their households toward self-reliance, some indicated the need for complementary support, such as vocational training, provision of farming inputs, and skills development. A beneficiary remarked, *"We need skills training to truly become self-reliant and reduce dependence, especially for the youth."*

3.8 Lessons Learned

3.8.1 Challenges reported by beneficiaries

Despite the overall effectiveness of the voucher distribution process, a small proportion of respondents (11.4%) encountered challenges, while the majority (88.6%) reported no issues.
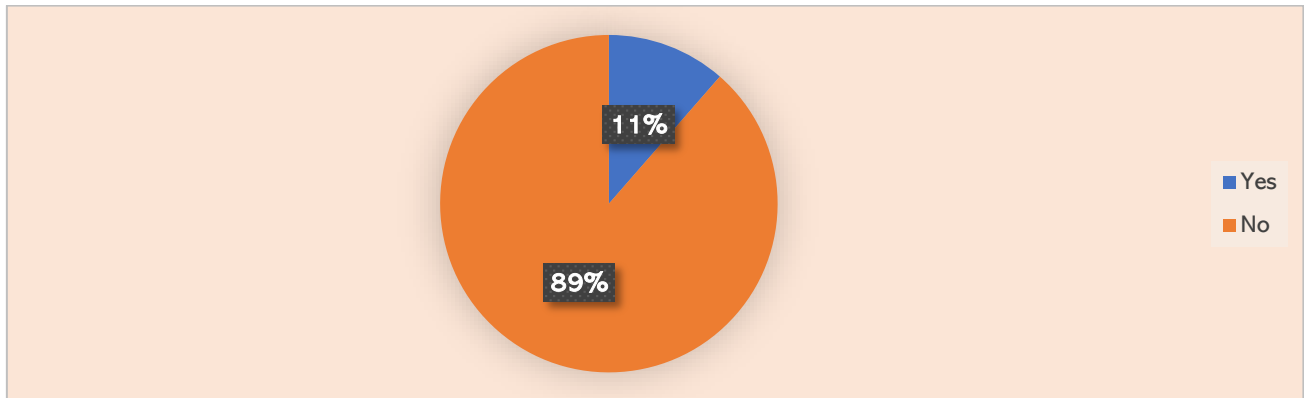

Figure 15: Challenges During Food Voucher Distribution

Respondents reported relatively few challenges with the voucher distribution process, with only 6.3% experiencing long wait times and 1.4% encountering inconvenient distribution locations. The majority of challenges (93%) fell under the "other" category, which included issues such as insufficient food quantities and limited vendor availability.
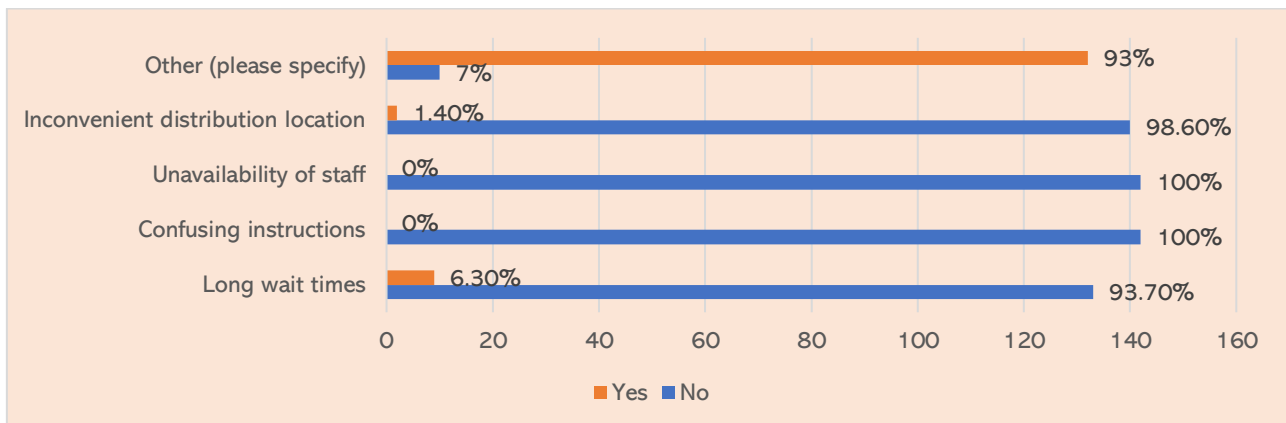
Figure 16: Challenges encountered during voucher distribution

3.8.2 Challenges that affected project effectiveness

Limited Coverage of Older Caseloads: The project prioritized new arrivals while excluding older caseloads, leading to dissatisfaction among those who were also food insecure. A UNHCR representative observed, *"The project targeted only new arrivals, leaving out older cases who are equally vulnerable and in need of support too."* This exclusion created gaps in achieving equitable food security.

Inadequate Food Quantities for Larger Households: Food vouchers did not sufficiently address the needs of larger families, leading to unmet nutritional requirements. A youth in Rubondo remarked, *"The food was good, but for families with more than seven members, it didn't last the whole month."* This issue reduced the overall impact of the project for households with many dependents.

Short Duration of the Project: The one-year project timeline was insufficient for achieving long-term improvements in food security. A representative from Tumaini shared, *"One year is too short to make a meaningful impact; long-term support is needed to reduce dependency."* The short duration limited the effectiveness of the intervention in addressing systemic challenges.

Delays in Food Distribution: Logistical challenges, such as delayed vendor arrivals, disrupted distribution schedules and caused frustration among beneficiaries. Vendors also faced issues like absentee beneficiaries. A vendor stated, *"Transporting food to the distribution points was costly, and I had to store food when people didn't show up on distribution days."* These delays affected the timely delivery of assistance.

Inflexibility in Food Voucher System: Fixed voucher values did not account for rising market prices, diminishing beneficiaries' purchasing power. A participant in Juru explained, *"The price of beans increased during the project, but the voucher value didn't adjust, which caused concerns."* This impacted the effectiveness of the system in ensuring adequate food supplies.

Vendor Compliance: Some vendors provided food that did not meet weight standards, requiring interventions from project staff. A Refugee Welfare Council member reported, *"Some vendors provided sacks labeled as 40kg but containing less, which we resolved after reviewing processes with them."* This reduced trust in the distribution process.

Lack of Long-Term Resilience Building: The project focused solely on emergency food assistance without integrating long-term resilience measures. A local leader in Rubondo suggested, *"If they could include seeds and farming tools, families could grow their own food and depend less on vouchers."*

3.8.3 Challenges that affected project efficiency

Delays in Vendor Arrival: Vendors occasionally arrived late at distribution points, leading to extended waiting times for beneficiaries and disruptions in the distribution schedule.

Transport Challenges: Vendors faced high transportation costs and logistical difficulties in delivering food to remote distribution points, which strained operational efficiency. One vendor mentioned, *"Transporting food to the distribution points was costly, and I had to cover those expenses myself."*

Technical Errors: QR code mismatches and mismatched beneficiary lists caused minor delays in the food voucher system. These errors required additional resources and time to resolve on-site

Missed Distributions: Some beneficiaries failed to show up on designated distribution days, creating logistical inefficiencies as vendors had to store food or organize additional distribution days.

Inflexibility of Voucher Value: Rising commodity prices during the project duration led to complaints about the insufficiency of voucher values. Beneficiaries and vendors noted that the fixed voucher amount did not reflect the market fluctuations for food items such as beans and rice.

Insufficient Food for Larger Households: While the project introduced tailored vouchers for smaller households, it did not adequately address the needs of larger families, resulting in

complaints about food insufficiency. A youth in Rubondo shared, *"The food was good, but for families with more than seven members, it didn't last the whole month."*

Communication Gaps: Inefficient communication channels, such as poor network connectivity, hampered timely updates to beneficiaries and stakeholders. A local leader in Juru stated, *"Sometimes it was hard to disseminate information because of poor network connectivity."*

Vendor Payments Delays: Delays in vendor payments, particularly during the final distribution cycle, created dissatisfaction and reduced operational smoothness.

3.8.4 Best Practices

Clear roles and Responsibilities: The roles and responsibilities within the EFAN project were clearly delineated to ensure efficiency and accountability. Project assistant supported local vendors in managing distribution logistics, with one noting, *"Our role was to assist the vendors on the ground, the local vendors, and we had about 23 vendors."* Community leaders played critical roles in mobilizing beneficiaries, ensuring they received food, and addressing complaints during the process. As one leader shared, *"My responsibilities included mobilizing beneficiaries, ensuring they received their food, and resolving any complaints that arose during the process."*

Training and Capacity Building: Training sessions for vendors on food safety, quality standards, and voucher redemption processes built local capacity and ensured adherence to project standards. Partner organizations also received training to enhance their implementation and monitoring capabilities [10, 16]. The iterative nature of training, including refresher sessions after every cycle, ensured sustained compliance and enhanced vendor performance. *"At the end of every cycle, we would do refresher sessions and monitor the vendors throughout,"* noted an AFI project assistant. This continuous support enabled vendors to meet project standards effectively.

Food Basket Composition: In designing the food basket composition, the project prioritized nutritional value and beneficiary preferences. A balanced selection of carbohydrates, proteins, and vitamins ensured dietary adequacy, with staple foods like maize flour forming the largest proportion. As one participant explained, *"We looked at carbohydrates, protein, and vitamins, but we picked what was most suggested by households."* Decisions about quantities were tailored to the voucher value, ensuring alignment with community needs. *"The quantity was determined by the voucher value; staple foods like carbohydrates were allocated the largest portions,"* they added.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance: Monitoring and quality assurance mechanisms ensured that distributed food met predefined standards. Practices such as random checks and weighing of commodities before distribution bolstered transparency and accountability. This proactive approach addressed potential quality issues, as highlighted by a staff member, *"We just open some bags randomly and check the quantity and quality because it must meet the standards we outlined."*

Community Engagement and Mobilization: The project effectively harnessed **community engagement and mobilization** to foster inclusivity and participation. Local leaders and organizations used diverse communication methods, such as phone calls, on-ground meetings, and household visits, to disseminate information about distribution days and project objectives[10, 16]. Leaders also provided logistical support to vulnerable families, ensuring

equitable access to resources. Beneficiaries praised the efforts, sharing, *"Leaders mobilized us, informed us about the project, and even helped vulnerable families collect food."*

Inclusivity: Inclusivity was a defining feature of the project, with a deliberate focus on vulnerable groups such as widows, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly. *"Widows, children, the sickly, PWDs, and the elderly were the priority categories,"* noted the M&E Advisor, CARE International. The design also incorporated cultural sensitivity by allowing either the man or woman listed on the attestation form to collect food, accommodating diverse household dynamics. *"Either the man or woman listed in the attestation form could collect food, which made it culturally sensitive to different household dynamics,"* shared a participant.

Collaborative Partnerships: EFAN leveraged a multi-stakeholder approach, involving CARE International, Andre Foods International (AFI), Tumaini for Refugee Women, and government entities such as the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). These collaborations ensured effective resource mobilization, localized implementation, and strengthened relationships with beneficiaries and host communities[9, 11]. Engaging local vendors and cooperatives fostered economic integration and supported host community businesses, thereby boosting local economies [12, 16].

Feedback Mechanisms: Feedback mechanisms, including pre-distribution consultations and post-distribution monitoring, allowed beneficiaries to influence project adjustments, such as the inclusion of rice in the food basket [12, 13]. Additionally Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) identified strengths and areas for improvement, such as reducing waiting times and improving the quality of beans. Feedback channels like complaint desks ensured that beneficiaries could voice concerns, further enhancing accountability.

Tailored Assistance: The introduction of customized food vouchers based on household sizes (2-5+ members) ensured equitable distribution and minimized waste. This flexibility was critical in addressing the specific needs of smaller households and enhancing efficiency [8].

Efficient Logistics and Distribution: Leveraging established World Food Program (WFP) distribution points improved accessibility and efficiency. Comprehensive beneficiary mapping and door-to-door verification ensured accuracy and reduced errors during distributions[9, 10]. Pre-packaged food items facilitated easier transportation for beneficiaries, while QR-coded vouchers ensured transparency and accountability in food redemptions[12, 13].

Focus on Vulnerable Groups: Priority was given to pregnant and lactating women, children aged 0-23 months, people with disabilities, and elderly individuals. This targeted approach enhanced the impact on the most at-risk populations [7, 16]

3.9 Conclusions and Recommendations

The EFAN project effectively addressed immediate food security needs in Nakivale settlement, particularly among vulnerable groups such as pregnant and lactating women, children under two, and child-headed households. By leveraging partnerships with local vendors and community-led structures, the project ensured equitable access to quality food and fostered economic benefits. While beneficiaries appreciated the culturally appropriate and inclusive design, challenges such as the exclusion of older caseloads, insufficient rations for larger households, and the short project duration limited its overall impact.

3.9.1 Recommendations for improving project relevance

To build on the successes of the EFAN project and address its limitations, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Expand Beneficiary Coverage**: Include older caseloads in future interventions to ensure equitable support for all vulnerable groups. Provide tailored rations for larger households to meet their unique food security needs.
2. **Extend Project Timeline**: Lengthen the project duration to allow for sustainable impact and the integration of resilience-building measures, such as vocational training and livelihood support.
3. **Incorporate Non-Food Assistance**: Add essential non-food items, such as soap, sanitary pads, and hygiene kits, to aid packages. Support small-scale agricultural initiatives by providing seeds and tools.
4. **Enhance Flexibility in Resource Allocation**: Introduce voucher systems that adjust to market price fluctuations, ensuring consistent purchasing power for beneficiaries.
5. **Strengthen Feedback and Communication Channels**: Improve communication to reduce logistical delays and ensure timely updates on distribution schedules. Maintain regular opportunities for beneficiaries to provide feedback, incorporating their suggestions into project improvements.
6. **Increase Vendor Capacity**: Engage additional vendors to enhance distribution efficiency and reduce delays at distribution points.
7. **Focus on Long-Term Resilience**: Empower youth and vulnerable groups through skill development programs, enabling them to transition toward self-reliance.

The EFAN project demonstrated internal and external coherence, effectively aligning its activities with stated objectives, national policies, and international standards. Internally, the project leveraged community structures, partnerships, and robust monitoring mechanisms to ensure efficient implementation. Externally, it aligned with Uganda's ReHoPE strategy and Sphere Standards, addressing immediate food security needs in Nakivale. However, challenges such as inadequate support for larger households, exclusion of older caseloads, logistical delays, and the absence of advanced tools like the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) limited its overall coherence and long-term impact.

3.9.2 Recommendations for improving project coherence

1. **Strengthen Internal Coherence**: Address the needs of larger households by tailoring rations proportionate to family size. Ensure equitable resource allocation across all zones to minimize perceptions of disparity. Adopt advanced tools, such as the GDT, to enhance accountability and distribution efficiency.
2. **Enhance External Coherence**: Expand coverage to include older caseloads alongside new arrivals to align with Uganda's inclusive refugee policies. Extend the project timeline to better integrate with long-term goals like self-reliance and sustainable food security.
3. **Improve Coordination and Communication**: Streamline communication channels among partners to reduce scheduling conflicts and logistical delays. Conduct regular training and capacity-building sessions for stakeholders to improve alignment with global best practices.

The EFAN project demonstrated effectiveness in addressing immediate food security needs through a well-executed food voucher system. Beneficiaries praised the quality and accessibility of food, and the program achieved high satisfaction rates, particularly in meeting dietary needs and improving meal frequency. Key challenges included insufficient rations for larger households, exclusion of older caseloads, and fixed voucher values that did not adapt to rising

market prices, which impacted its effectiveness for some groups. Logistical delays and gaps in vendor compliance further limited the project's impact.

3.9.3 Recommendations for improving project effectiveness

1. **Adjust Rations for Larger Households:** Introduce a flexible voucher system that accounts for household size and market price fluctuations to better meet nutritional needs.
2. **Enhance Vendor Training and Compliance:** Strengthen vendor training programs to address issues such as food quality and compliance with weight standards.
3. **Improve Logistical Coordination:** Invest in real-time tracking systems to address vendor delays and reduce logistical inefficiencies.
4. **Incorporate Resilience Measures:** Introduce resilience-building components, such as livelihood training and access to farming inputs, to foster long-term food security.
5. **Enhance Monitoring and Feedback Mechanisms:** Expand Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) and establish responsive feedback systems to ensure continuous improvements and accountability.

The EFAN project demonstrated efficiency in its use of financial and material resources, leveraging partnerships with local vendors and community-led structures to minimize costs and enhance operational effectiveness. The food voucher system was cost-efficient and reduced the risk of misuse. However, logistical delays, such as late vendor arrivals and absentee beneficiaries, limited distribution efficiency. Rising commodity prices further strained budgets, and fixed voucher values reduced purchasing power for beneficiaries. Communication challenges among stakeholders and logistical inefficiencies also impacted the project's overall efficiency.

3.9.4 Recommendations for improving project efficiency

1. **Strengthen Logistical Systems**: Develop real-time tracking tools to monitor vendor performance and address delays promptly. Establish backup plans to manage absentee beneficiaries and ensure timely redistribution.
2. **Adopt Flexible Pricing Mechanisms**: Introduce adaptive voucher values that respond to fluctuations in market prices, ensuring beneficiaries' purchasing power remains consistent.
3. **Enhance Communication Channels**: Improve network infrastructure and stakeholder communication to streamline coordination and provide timely updates on distribution plans.
4. **Expand Vendor Capacity**: Engage additional vendors to reduce distribution bottlenecks and enhance service delivery efficiency.
5. **Integrate Monitoring Tools**: Use advanced tools such as the Global Distribution Tool (GDT) to improve data accuracy and enhance resource tracking.

The EFAN project showed promising results in improving food security, nutrition, and economic well-being in Nakivale settlement, though its short duration limited the ability to measure long-term impact. Beneficiaries reported positive changes, including improved meal frequency and better financial management strategies, with many households transitioning from one to two or three meals daily. Quality food items such as rice and beans contributed to enhanced dietary diversity, while partnerships with local vendors provided economic benefits to the community. Socially, the involvement of Refugee Welfare Committees in the project fostered trust and cohesion. However, limitations such as the exclusion of older caseloads, insufficient rations for larger households, and the lack of non-food items highlighted areas for improvement. While the

project effectively addressed immediate food security needs, a longer duration would be required to assess its full impact on sustainability and resilience.

3.9.5 Recommendations for Enhancing Impact

1. **Expand Beneficiary Inclusion**: Broaden targeting criteria to include older caseloads and vulnerable groups previously excluded. Adjust food allocations to better accommodate larger households.

2. **Incorporate Non-Food Assistance**: Include essential non-food items, such as hygiene kits and soap, to address comprehensive household needs.

3. **Extend Project Duration**: Increase the timeline of future interventions to foster sustainable improvements in food security and self-reliance.

4. **Promote Livelihood Support**: Introduce vocational training and small-scale agricultural support to enable households to achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

5. **Enhance Nutritional Outcomes**: Expand the diversity of food items provided, such as including vegetables and fortified foods, to meet broader dietary needs.

The EFAN project effectively promoted sustainability by equipping beneficiaries with strategies and knowledge for food and financial management, enhancing food security, and fostering community ownership through adaptable food vouchers and local partnerships. However, the short project duration and lack of complementary livelihood support limited long-term resilience, highlighting areas for improvement in future interventions.

3.9.6 Recommendations to improve sustainability

1. **Extend Project Duration:** Increase the length of project implementation to allow sufficient time for beneficiaries to internalize strategies and fully integrate sustainable practices into their livelihoods.

2. **Incorporate Complementary Livelihood Support:** Introduce vocational training, farming inputs, and skills development programs to empower beneficiaries, particularly youth, to achieve greater economic independence and resilience.

3. **Strengthen Community Structures:** Build on the role of RWCs by training them to provide ongoing support and guidance to households after the intervention ends, ensuring continuity in community-based ownership.

4. **Enhance Youth Engagement:** Design targeted initiatives to engage youth in sustainable livelihoods, such as agricultural entrepreneurship or small business development, addressing their specific needs for self-reliance

REFERENCES

1. Aliga, A.B., *United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and Refugee Crisis Management in West Nile, Northern Uganda*. 2023, Kampala International University.
2. Citaristi, I., *World Food Programme—WFP*, in *The Europa Directory of International Organizations 2022*. 2022, Routledge. p. 302-306.
3. Bamuturaki, K. and G.M. Mbabazi, *Transforming Ugandan agrarian communities: the efficacy of theatre for development in fostering gender justice in Uganda's agricultural enterprises*. 2018.
4. Puglia, V., *Humanitarian Assistance in Protracted Emergencies: Rethinking the Role of Food Aid in Adjumani*. 2019.
5. Turyamureeba, R., *Building Peace through land access and food security in the Nakivale Refugee Settlement, Uganda*. 2017.
6. Canton, H., *Food and agriculture organization of the United Nations—FAO*, in *The Europa directory of international organizations 2021*. 2021, Routledge. p. 297-305.
7. CARE International, *Executive Summary - Emergency Food Assistance Proposal Uganda* 2023.
8. CARE International, *Project modification request to introduce food vouchers for household sizes 2, 3 and 4 in addition to the standard food vouchers designed for household size of 5 members*. 2024.
9. CARE International, *1st Interim Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale (EFAN) report for LDS 2024 06-04-2024*. 2024.
10. CARE International, *Draft Emergency Food Assistance in Nakivale (EFAN) Progress report for LDS_Updated as of October 25th*. 2024.
11. AFI and CARE International, *EFAN Close Out Meeting Minutes*. 2024.
12. CARE International, *Detailed EFAN Cycle 2 Stakeholders' Joint Monitoring Report*. 2024.
13. CARE International, *EFAN 1st PDM (Post Distribution Monitoring) report*. 2024.
14. CARE International, *Emergency Food assistence Kickoff Meeting-LDS*. 2023.
15. United Nations Country Team and World Bank, *REHOPE — Refugee And Host Population Empowerment*, in *Strategic Framework - Uganda*. 2017.
16. CARE International, *Approved EFAN Fact sheet for Closeout Meeting*. 2024.

APPENDICES