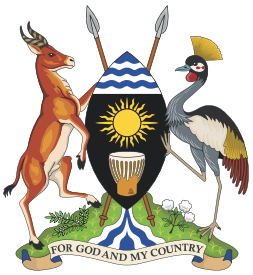

THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

MINISTRY OF GENDER LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

REPORT FOR THE END TERM EVALUATION OF THE JOBS AND LIVELIHOODS INTEGRATED RESPONSE PLAN FOR REFUGEES AND HOST COMMUNITIES

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMNS

Term	Description
AVSI	Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale.
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CRRF	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DCO	District Commercial Officer
DLG	District Local Government
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
ILO	International Labor Organization
JLIRP	Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan
KII	Key Informant Interview
LC	Local Council
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDA	Ministry, Department and Agency
MEMD	Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development,
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MTIC	Ministry of Trade, Industries, and Cooperatives
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NPA	National Planning Authority
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation Uganda
RWC	Refugee Welfare Council
RFP	Refugee Focal Person
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UVTAB	Uganda Vocational and Technical Assessment Board
WFP	World Food Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

The Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) was launched in 2020 to enhance the socio-economic inclusion, self-reliance, and resilience of refugees and host communities in Uganda. The plan, implemented through a multi-sectoral government-led approach under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), aligned with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and National Development Plan III. JLIRP interventions were organized under five pillars focusing on social cohesion, enterprise development, agricultural productivity, skills training, and social protection.

The evaluation, commissioned by the 5th JLIRP National Steering Committee, was undertaken to assess the plan's relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. It aimed to generate evidence and lessons to inform the design of the next JLIRP (2025/26–2030).

Evaluation Methodology

A theory-based mixed-methods approach was adopted, integrating quantitative and qualitative techniques guided by OECD-DAC criteria. The evaluation drew on the JLIRP Theory of Change to analyze both the outcomes and the processes that shaped them.

Data were collected from seven sampled refugee-hosting districts representing the 13 JLIRP focus areas, including Adjumani, Lamwo, Yumbe, Kikuube, Isingiro, Kyegegwa, and Kampala. Respondents included refugees, host communities, local governments, ministries, agencies, UN agencies, NGOs, and private sector actors. Quantitative surveys at the household level were complemented by **48** Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), **08** Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and an in-depth literature review to capture diverse perspectives and validate findings. Gender and social inclusion were analysed as cross-cutting dimensions in all pillars, ensuring women, youth, and persons with disabilities were adequately represented in the evidence base

Key Evaluation Findings

Demographics

Most respondents were refugees **(70.4%),** while **29.6%** were hosts. The majority were aged 31–59 years **(69.1%)** and engaged in productive activities, indicating potential for livelihood participation. About **14%** of household heads had disabilities, reflecting inclusivity to some extent in targeting by the evaluation. Refugees primarily originated from South Sudan (36.8%) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (31.6%), with the majority (61.4%) having resided in Uganda for over five years, demonstrating settlement stability and the reliability of the findings. Additionally, Women represented **47.3%** of household heads and played a central role in both agricultural and informal trade activities, though they remained underrepresented in formal employment. Female-headed households **(55.7%)** also reported a higher increase in agricultural yield

compared to males **(45.9%)**, illustrating women's resilience and adaptability when supported.

Relevance

The JLIRP remained highly relevant to Uganda's development and refugee-response priorities, addressing the critical needs of self-reliance, income generation, food security, and skilling in line with NDP III, Vision 2040, the CRRF, and other sector refugee response plans. Interventions such as agricultural input support (**with 32.7% receiving input support**) and training on sustainable farming methods (**24.5% trained**) directly responded to livelihood gaps and contributed to reducing aid dependency among refugees and host communities.

The plan's emphasis on gender equality, disability inclusion, and support to vulnerable households further reflected its alignment with the "leave no one behind" principle. However, as highlighted in the full report findings below, variation in consultations and contextualization across districts limited uniform relevance, emphasising the need for more consistent district-level engagement in future planning cycles.

Coherence

JLIRP interventions demonstrated strong coherence with national and global frameworks, complementing sector Refugee Response Plans and aligning with SDGs 1, 2, 4, 8, and 16. The plan strengthened partnerships with key actors like UNHCR, WFP, FAO, and ILO, contributing to policy harmonization and reducing duplication. Evidence from the evaluation also shows alignment with other government strategies and humanitarian plans, strengthening its multi-sectoral coherence. However, coherence of the JLIRP was weakened by gaps in joint monitoring, inadequate data-sharing systems, and inconsistencies in district-level coordination. Therefore, strengthening integrated reporting mechanisms and better aligning local government planning processes to JLIRP priorities could further enhance complementarity, accountability, and coordinated delivery across all stakeholders in the next phase.

Effectiveness

Pillar 1: Strengthening Refugee and Host Community Social Cohesion

The JLIRP contributed to improved harmony between refugees and host communities, with **95.1%** of respondents feeling safe, up from the low baseline recorded during the COVID-19 period. Satisfaction with basic services reached **69%**, and women's participation in community decision-making structures increased, though security concerns persisted as **7% of women** compared to **3% of men** still felt unsafe walking alone, and the elderly also reported heightened vulnerability. Conflict incidence remained low, with only **24.2%** reporting refugee–host disputes. Importantly, peace committees, local councils, and Refugee Welfare Committees within refugee host communities played a key role in mediation and dispute resolution. However, qualitative findings highlight ongoing challenges related to theft, tribal tensions, and gender-based risks, indicating the need for more gender-responsive and community-driven

mechanisms to tackle conflict, including strengthened dialogue, improved lighting in dark spots, fair enforcement, and continuous sensitization to sustain social cohesion

Pillar 2: Enabling entrepreneurial-led development and market growth system
Household enterprise participation was **40.3%**, with higher engagement among hosts **(45.8%)** than refugees **(38%)**. However, enterprise growth remained constrained by mainly limited start-up capital **(77.6%)**, weak market linkages, and inadequate business management skills. Poverty levels showed modest improvement, with **19.3%** of households now living above the international poverty line, an indication of progress toward self-reliance, though refugees remain more economically vulnerable. Notably, women continued to drive a large share of micro and small enterprises, particularly in retail trade, tailoring, and food processing, though their business expansion to potential was hindered by restricted access to credit, collateral, and stable markets. Income disparities also persisted, with men earning nearly twice as much monthly on average. While a commendable **40.3%** of households within refugee and host communities reported starting or expanding a business, most women-owned enterprises remained micro-scale, highlighting the need for gender-responsive financing, improved market access, and targeted business development support to strengthen inclusive economic growth in the next phase of the JLIRP.

Pillar 3: Increasing agricultural productivity, production, and marketable volumes
Agricultural interventions improved production and food security, with over half **(52.1%)** of farming households selling produce compared to **43.1%** previously. Female-headed households reported stronger yield increases due to active engagement in training and adoption of improved farming methods. Despite these gains, women's limited access to land and productive inputs constrained full participation. Nutrition outcomes remained gender biased, with female-headed refugee households more likely to experience lower dietary diversity, reflecting ongoing vulnerability. Notably, climate-smart farming and input access increased yields, though refugees still lagged in dietary diversity and food consumption scores. These results contributed to SDG 2 (Zero Hunger) and national agricultural transformation goals.

Pillar 4: Increasing Access to Market-Relevant Skills
Over half **(56.8%)** of trained participants secured employment or started small enterprises, demonstrating that skilling interventions by partners within the refugee hosting areas were effective in improving employability, particularly through self-employment. Gender gaps persisted, with **52%** of male and **48%** of female graduates employed, reflecting broader disparities in labour market absorption. A major constraint was the mismatch between training courses and actual market demand, as most programs remained focused on traditional trades such as tailoring, mechanics, and carpentry. Vocational centres were also reported to be more accessible in refugee settlements **(70.6%)** than in host communities **(29.4%),** emphasizing inequities in training opportunities. Additionally, limited exposure to ICT, digital skills, agribusiness, and other emerging fields reduced relevance for youth seeking more competitive opportunities in the ever-evolving job market. Therefore, these findings highlight the

need for more equitable skilling infrastructure and modernised, market-oriented curricula to enhance employment prospects for both refugees and host communities.

Pillar 5: Establishing an effective shock-responsive refugee and host community social protection system

Social protection interventions targeted approximately **361,000 vulnerable individuals**, including women, youth, the elderly, and persons with disabilities. While **34.2% of households** assessed had at least one vulnerable member, only **28.9%** reported their active participation in JLIRP programmes, highlighting gaps in inclusion. Participation was higher among refugees than host communities, largely through vocational training, savings groups, and livelihood support that enhanced economic and social inclusion. However, persistent barriers such as limited mobility, inadequate targeting, and insufficient support services restricted meaningful engagement for the most at-risk groups. Hence, the need for more deliberate and equitable approaches to vulnerability-based programming within the next phase of the JLIRP.

Table 1: Indicator Performance Summary

Intermediate Results	Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2020)	Year 5 Target	Edline (2025)	Change
Pillar 1: Strengthening Refugee and Host Community Social Cohesion					
IR1: Reduced number of all forms of conflicts, violence, and related deaths among refugees and host communities.	Percentage of refugees and host communities that feel safe walking alone.	0.04	95%	95.1%	91.1%
IR2: Increased number of refugees and host communities that are satisfied with local services	Percentage of refugees and host communities that are satisfied with local services.	3.5%	95%	69.1%	65.6%
Pillar 2: Enabling entrepreneurial led development and market growth system					
IR1: Reduced number of refugee and host community households living below the international poverty line of 1.9 USD per day	% Refugees and host communities with an average monthly income of 60 USD	2%	35%	19.3%	17.3%
Pillar 3: Increasing agricultural productivity, production, and marketable volumes					
IR1: Increased volume and quality of nutritious food produced by refugees and host communities' households	% Households with adequate and nutritious food throughout the year		65%	55.6%	55.6%
	% Yield increases in crop and livestock production	3.5%	30%	14.4%	10.9%
	% Farmers with increased income from the sale of agricultural products	20%	75%	54.0%	34.0%
IR2: Increased dietary intake among refugees and host communities	% Refugee and host community households with improved dietary intake	18%	65%	29.6%	11.6%
Pillar 4: Increasing Access to Market-Relevant Skills					

Intermediate Results	Outcome Indicators	Baseline (2020)	Year 5 Target	Edline (2025)	Change
IR1: Reduced number of unemployed refugees and host communities	% Refugees and host community members employed in own jobs	12%	40%	76.0%	64.0%
	% Refugees and host community members employed in formal employment	10%	65%	4.5%	-5.5%
	% Refugees paid same salaries with nationals	15%	100%	35.4%	20.4%
Pillar 5: Establishing effective shock responsive refugee and host community social protection system					
IR1: Increased number of vulnerable populations accessing social services	Percentage of vulnerable persons actively participating in development programmes including decision making process	3.9%	80%	28.9%	25.0%
IR2: Increased number of vulnerable populations engaged in productive activities	Percentage of vulnerable persons owning productive assets	0.3	35%	26.2%	25.9%

Efficiency

Despite underfunding (**less than 5% of the desired budget realized**), the JLIRP leveraged synergies with partner programs to deliver results cost-effectively. Integration with existing government systems reduced duplication and administrative costs. The use of digital tools by some partners for data collection (Kobo Toolbox) enhanced monitoring and quality assurance. However, fragmented resource tracking and delayed fund disbursements undermined timely delivery. Institutionalizing a unified results-based financing framework and digital M&E platform would improve efficiency and financial accountability of future similar plans.

Impact

The JLIRP generated notable socio-economic impacts, reflected in rising self-reliance, improved food security, and strengthened social cohesion. Refugee dependency on aid declined to **4.7%**, and community relations improved, supported by increased perceptions of safety and low levels of reported conflict across settlements. Vocational training and enterprise support boosted household incomes, particularly among women and youth, with a substantive share of graduates securing employment mostly in informal, self-employed activities. However, the plan's overall impact was weakened by limited coverage, gaps in market-relevant skilling, and uneven access to productive assets. Scaling up high-performing models such as VSLAs, farmer groups, apprenticeship pathways, and business cooperatives presents an opportunity to deepen resilience and expand transformative outcomes in the next phase of the JLIRP.

Sustainability

The JLIRP's institutional anchoring within MGLSD and alignment with district structures to some extent provided a strong sustainability foundation. Community-based models like VSLAs and cooperatives continue operating post-support by humanitarian actors, signalling local ownership of livelihood interventions. Further still, integration into local government planning processes will enhance continuity beyond donor cycles. However, continued reliance on external funding and weak data systems threatens the long-term sustainability of the JLIRP. Therefore, strengthening domestic resource mobilization, capacity building, and climate-resilient livelihood systems will be vital for sustaining outcomes in refugee-hosting areas.

Lessons Learnt

Effective multi-sectoral coordination, integration of JLIRP interventions into government systems, and strong community engagement emerged as key success factors. Joint district-level planning and review mechanisms enhanced local ownership, accountability, and adaptive management, while the inclusive participation of both refugees and host communities fostered trust, strengthened social cohesion, and contributed to the generally low incidence of refugee–host conflicts.

However, persistent funding shortfalls, fragmented data systems, and uneven coordination constrained overall programme efficiency and scale. Limited private sector engagement, together with inconsistent reporting across implementing partners, further affected scalability and weakened the attribution of results to the JLIRP. Going forward,

the harmonisation of data and reporting frameworks, strengthening of coordination structures at all levels, and deliberate incentives to stimulate private sector participation will be critical to enhancing the impact, sustainability, and accountability of the next response plan.

Conclusions

The JLIRP, through its collaborative nature, significantly enhanced household welfare, economic inclusion, and social cohesion in refugee-hosting districts, with visible improvements in self-reliance and resilience. Integration into district systems has also enhanced sustainability, and several community innovations, such as VSLAs and cooperatives, continue to thrive independently even after the livelihood partners are long gone.

Despite achievements, underfunding, data fragmentation, and limited market linkages constrained the plan's full potential. Sustaining JLIRP's impacts will require stronger institutional ownership, coherent planning with other response frameworks, and sustained investment in livelihood infrastructure in the next cycle of the plan.

Recommendations

The evaluation recommends a strengthened, coordinated, and inclusive approach for the next phase of the JLIRP, anchored in stronger coordination, equity, robust data systems, sustainable financing, and effective localisation.

Cross-cutting priorities include institutionalising joint planning, monitoring, and reporting among Government, humanitarian agencies, and local governments through harmonised digital data-sharing systems and regular coordination forums; promoting equity and inclusion through affirmative actions targeting refugees, host communities, women, youth, and persons with disabilities; strengthening monitoring and evaluation through full use of the OPM Partnership Coordination and Monitoring System and the Self-Reliance Index; developing a comprehensive multi-year financing strategy integrated into sector MTEFs and supported by pooled financing; and enhancing JLIRP visibility and localisation at district and community levels through structured communication and engagement strategies.

Under Pillar 1**,** priorities include institutionalising refugee participation in district governance and planning processes, strengthening refugee–host joint programme design, scaling up social cohesion and positive norms initiatives, strengthening awareness and application of laws and grievance mechanisms, and expanding shared community infrastructure.

For Pillar 2**,** the emphasis is on expanding access to inclusive financial products, establishing a government–partner guarantee fund to reduce lender risk, delivering comprehensive skills and enterprise development packages, strengthening value-chain integration, operationalising aggregation centres, scaling up VSLAs and digital financial inclusion, and promoting private sector engagement through targeted incentives.

Recommendations under Pillar 3 focus on strengthening and expanding agricultural extension services, improving regulation and access to quality inputs, promoting block farming and group production, applying complete value-chain approaches, scaling climate-resilient technologies, strengthening farmer financing through VSLAs and microfinance linkages, improving market access, and supporting cooperatives with post-harvest and value-addition technologies.

Within Pillar 4**,** the priorities include intensifying TVET sensitisation, strengthening linkages between training institutions, finance, and industry, conducting regular market-driven skills assessments, fast-tracking implementation of the National Qualifications Framework, and strengthening coordination of skills initiatives at all levels.

Finally, under Pillar 5, the evaluation recommends establishing a unified vulnerability profiling system for targeted support, strengthening inclusive participation in development and decision-making, expanding shock-responsive social protection systems, and improving the accessibility, quality, and sustainability of livelihood and skills programmes through aligned training, start-up support, mentorship, and market linkages.

1. INTRODUCTION

Background

Uganda hosts over 1.8 million refugees, making it the largest refugee-hosting country in Africa. The Government of Uganda, with support from the international community, has implemented various initiatives to integrate refugees into the country's socio-economic fabric. One of the key initiatives is the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP), whose main goal was to enhance social, economic, and financial inclusion of refugees and host communities in a sustainable manner.

The JLIRP provides an overarching framework for a sustainable response to refugee and host community livelihood constraints with a focus on increasing self-reliance and resilience. The plan targeted to create an enabling environment, enhance refugee rights to work, and increase access to relevant resources and services that would facilitate the socio, economic, and financial inclusion of refugees and host communities. It also sought to enhance employability, increase levels of economic activity, and elaborate social and economic linkages between refugees and host communities.

The implementation of the JLIRP was government-led involving the respective subsector lead Ministries; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Ministry of Trade, Industries, and Cooperatives, Ministry of Education and Sports – as well as UN agencies (notably UNHCR, ILO and WFP), international and local NGOs, Development agencies, and the private sector.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) was entrusted with the responsibility of playing an oversight function for this plan and undertaking resource mobilization, establishing a JLIRP Secretariat, providing technical support to the directorate of community-based service in local governments, and monitoring the implementation of the plan. UNHCR co-lead the rollout of the JLIRP with MGLSD, while development partners and UN agencies were expected to provide technical and financial support to MGLSD to operationalize the plan. The JLIRP was aligned with Uganda's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the third National Development Plan (NDP III), which aims to strengthen livelihoods and create sustainable income-generating activities for refugees and host communities alike.

Launched in 2020, this five (05) year response plan ended in June 2025 and to guide the development of the next plan running from 2025/26 to 2030, the 5th JLIRP National steering Committee commissioned this evaluation. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the overall performance of the JLIRP in relation to its strategic objectives, while generating lessons to inform future programming. Specifically, the evaluation examined the achievements of the programme, the extent to which its interventions contributed to the intended outcomes, and their effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability.

Evaluation Objectives

The end term evaluation of the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities focused on five core objectives:

i. To assess the effectiveness of the implementation of interventions planned under each pillar of the JLIRP by respective ministries in charge. Particularly assess progress towards implementation of planned activities and delivery of outputs aligned to JLIRP objectives.
ii. To assess the relevance and coherence of planned interventions under each pillar, specifically, examine the extent to which interventions implemented address the needs and priorities of targeted beneficiaries including complementarity of interventions, harmonization, and coordination of implementation.
iii. Examine the extent to which strategic interventions were delivered in an efficient and timely manner.
iv. Identify key challenges, successes, and areas for improvement.
v. To identify and document key areas of learning for partners and stakeholders engaged in the implementation of JLIRP and provide actionable recommendations for future JLIRP.

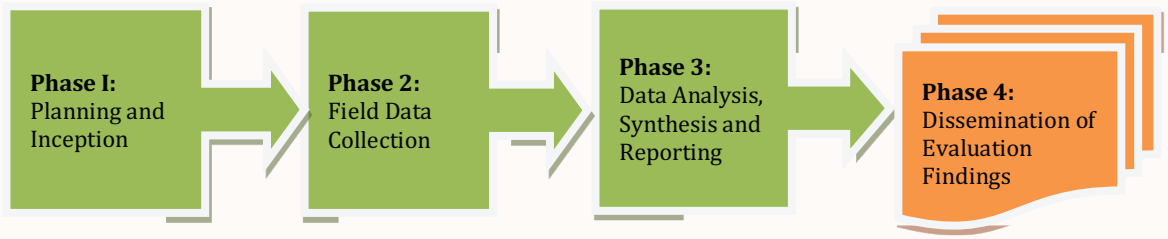
2. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

2.1 Evaluation Design and Approach

The evaluation adopted a theory-based mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a comprehensive assessment of the Joint Local Integration and Refugee Plan (JLIRP). Guided by the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and learning, the methodology sought to measure not only the outcomes achieved but also the underlying factors explaining how and why these changes occurred. Anchored in the JLIRP's Theory of Change, the evaluation employed a non-experimental design suitable for the plan's multi-sectoral nature and nationwide implementation, which lacked control groups. This approach enabled an in-depth analysis of the programme's contribution to improved livelihoods, skills development, social cohesion, and inclusion among refugees and host communities, while drawing lessons to inform the next response plan (2025/26–2030).

Furthermore, the evaluation process took a four-phased approach, including Planning and Inception; Field Data Collection; Data Analysis, Synthesis, and Reporting; and Dissemination of Evaluation Findings.

Figure 1: Evaluation Phases



2.2 Evaluation Scope

The evaluation covered the entire implementation period of the JLIRP from July 2020 to June 2025, focusing on assessing the programme's performance, results, and lessons learned. Geographically, it targeted all the 13 refugee-hosting districts: Adjumani, Terego, Madi-Okollo, Kikuube, Isingiro, Kampala, Kamwenge, Kiryandongo, Koboko, Kyegegwa, Lamwo, Obongi, and Yumbe, although only 07 were included in the sample, capturing perspectives from both refugee settlements and host communities.

The content scope included collecting primary and secondary data from a wide range of stakeholders such as local communities, MDAs, local governments, UN agencies, sector working groups, livelihood partners, and Refugee-led organizations.

Technically, the evaluation examined key thematic areas including access to employment and livelihood opportunities, skills development, social cohesion, food and income security, financial inclusion, business and cooperative development, social protection systems, and resource allocation efficiency, alongside aspects of system strengthening, coordination, and data management at national, district, and settlement levels.

2.3 Sample Size determination and selection

The evaluation employed both quantitative and qualitative sampling methods to ensure broad and representative stakeholder inclusion.

2.3.1 Quantitative sampling

Stratified multistage cluster sampling approach was adopted to capture variations across Uganda's refugee-hosting contexts.

The 13 refugee-hosting districts were grouped into five strata based on geographic and contextual similarities. From these strata, seven districts were sampled using Hamilton's method of proportional allocation, based on the combined refugee and host population size per sub-region. This ensured fair representation while remaining logistically feasible. The selection process aligned with the **UNHCR/WFP (2017)** Joint Assessment Guidelines, which recommend sampling between 6–10 districts for national-level evaluations, and was supported by sampling theory (Kish, 1965; Lohr, 2019), emphasizing broader distribution across primary sampling units for improved representativeness and reliability. Within each selected district, settlements with the largest refugee populations were chosen to maximize coverage and data validity.

To determine the household survey sample size, the end-term evaluation employed a Cochran's sample size formula. The formula was deemed feasible because it is appropriate for large populations exceeding 10,000 households.
Based on the total population of **1,505,765** households in refugee-hosting areas, a **95%** confidence level **(Z = 1.96)**, an estimated population proportion **(P) of 0.5**, and a margin

of error **(E) of 6.5%**, the initial sample size **(n)** was calculated to be **227** households. To account for an anticipated **5%** non-response rate, the adjusted sample size was computed, resulting in a final target of **239** households. In alignment with the ReHoPE Strategy, which recommends that **70%** of assistance targets refugees and **30%** host communities, the sample was proportionally distributed to reflect this balance. Additionally, to ensure representativeness of the urban refugee context, **8%** of the sample was allocated to Kampala, where a significant concentration of refugees resides, while the remaining **92%** was proportionately distributed among the sampled refugee-hosting districts based on their household population sizes. The table below illustrates the extent to which the household survey sample was achieved.

Table 2: Household survey target vs. actual

Location	Host Community		Refugees		Total		
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	% Achieved
Kampala	6	6	13	13	**19**	19	100%
Kikuube	10	10	24	24	**34**	34	100%
Isingiro	19	20	44	47	**63**	67	106%
Kyegegwa	11	11	26	27	**38**	38	100%
Yumbe	14	13	33	35	**47**	48	102%
Adjumani	6	6	15	15	**21**	21	100%
Lamwo	5	5	12	12	**17**	17	100%
Total	**71**	**71**	**167**	**173**	**239**	**244**	**102%**

2.3.2 Qualitative sampling

The evaluation employed a purposive sampling approach to identify respondents for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Participants were drawn from relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), National Steering Committee, Refugee Hosting Local Governments, development partners, sector working groups such as the Livelihoods and Resilience Sector Working Group, livelihood partners, local leaders and both refugee and host communities.

A total of **eight (8) FGDs** were conducted, targeted at Youth **(04)** and Parents **(04)**, each comprising between 6–12 participants, ensuring balanced representation across key demographic and interest groups. This number aligns with qualitative research standards (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022), which recommend 4–8 FGDs to achieve thematic saturation. Adjumani and Kyegegwa districts were purposively selected for the FGDs due to their contrasting contexts, thus enabling a diversity of perspectives.

In addition, **48 KIIs** were conducted with stakeholders selected for their strategic roles and insights relevant to JLIRP implementation. Although thematic saturation is generally achieved within 20–30 interviews, a larger number was necessary to ensure adequate representation across the diverse stakeholder categories, given the multi-sectoral approach of the JLIRP, thereby enhancing the credibility and depth of the evaluation findings. The key informant interviews conducted are summarised below;

Table 3: Key informant Interview Target Vs Actual

Category of stakeholder	Target	Actual	% Coverage
Local Governments	21	20	95%
Central Government/ JLIRP National Steering Committee	13	12	92%
Development Partners	5	5	100%
Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework Secretariat	1	1	100%
Sector working groups	1	1	100%
Non-state Actor	2	3	100%
Local Community	6	6	100%
Total	**50**	**48**	**96%**

2.4 Data Collection Methods and Tools

The evaluation employed both primary and secondary data sources, using quantitative and qualitative approaches to ensure comprehensive analysis and triangulation of findings.

A document review was undertaken to provide **a** contextual understanding of the JLIRP and its implementation progress. Key documents reviewed included the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP), Uganda Country Refugee Response Plan (UCRRP), Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities, National Development Plans (III and IV), Multi-Sector Needs Assessment reports, Food Security and Nutrition Assessment report, Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation (UCSAT) Project Process Framework, Kampala Declaration on Jobs and Livelihoods, and MSNI Bulletins among others.

Household interviews were conducted face-to-face with sampled household heads from both refugee and host communities using semi-structured questionnaires aligned to the JLIRP pillars and indicators. Data was collected digitally through Kobo Collect using handheld devices like tablets and smartphones by trained research assistants well conversant with the sampled locations and guided by a local leader of the area, which increased the response rate.

Key Informant Interviews were carried out with stakeholders knowledgeable about JLIRP implementation, including officials from relevant Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, refugee-hosting local governments, development partners, sector working groups, livelihood partners, and local leadership. Semi-structured interview guides developed in line with OECD-DAC evaluation criteria facilitated in-depth exploration of stakeholder perspectives.

In addition, **Focus Group Discussions** were conducted with selected community members, particularly caregivers and youth, to obtain deeper insights into JLIRP focus areas. Each group comprised 6 to 12 participants and was facilitated by trained moderators conversant with local languages and cultural contexts, guided by structured checklists. To ensure meaningful discussions, female and male groups for each of the

stakeholder categories were conducted independently, which provided a safe space during discussions.

2.5 Data Management and Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods were employed to enhance triangulation and strengthen the reliability and credibility of the evaluation findings.

Quantitative data collected through the Kobo Collect application on handheld devices was exported in Comma Delimited (CSV) format for analysis. The data were cleaned and edited to ensure completeness and consistency before analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS v.21). Descriptive statistics, including frequency tables and cross-tabulations, were generated to highlight district and contextual variations across the JLIRP pillars.

Qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews were transcribed and analysed using content and thematic approaches in ATLAS.ti. All transcripts were reviewed to identify information directly relevant to the evaluation objectives, and an analysis grid was prepared to organize key quotations, insights, and explanations derived from the coding process. The final analysis triangulated findings from all data sources, including household surveys, KIIs, and FGDs to provide a comprehensive understanding of the JLIRP's performance and outcomes.

2.6 Quality Control

To ensure the credibility, reliability, and validity of the evaluation findings, quality control measures were implemented at different stages of the evaluation process, including Inception, development of tools, field preparation, data collection, analysis, and reporting stages. This is further discussed below:

At the **Inception stage**, meetings were held with the national Steering Committee to harmonize the understanding of the assignment, agree on the evaluation approach, and identify potential quality risks early. This stage also allowed for clarification of the Terms of Reference and refinement of the work plan.

During the **development of tools**, a collaborative approach was employed, ensuring the involvement of the National Steering Committee. These tools were specifically aligned to the different key evaluation questions and JLIRP indicators to ensure relevance, clarity, and alignment with the evaluation objectives.

At the field **preparation stage**, a technical team was used to collect the data, with comprehensive training conducted for both quantitative and qualitative data collection teams, focusing on the purpose of the evaluation, the use of the tools, ethical considerations, and standard interviewing techniques. This ensured uniform understanding and application across enumerators and facilitators.

During the **data collection stage**, Information Systems were leveraged with quantitative data collected using the Kobo Toolbox, which incorporated built-in validation checks, skip logic, and GPS tagging to minimize errors and improve accuracy. For qualitative

data collection, experienced consultants facilitated interviews and focus group discussions to ensure depth and quality of information. Furthermore, regional field supervisors led the evaluation team and monitored data collection in real time, conducting spot checks and reviewing submissions daily to promptly address inconsistencies or missing data.

Furthermore, at the **data analysis and reporting stage**, quality was maintained through systematic data cleaning, strict use of the data analysis plan aligned to the evaluation framework, and triangulation of quantitative and qualitative findings to enhance reliability. Analytical outputs underwent peer review to validate interpretations, and all the report findings were evidence-based.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

The evaluation adhered to the principles of respect, dignity, and protection of participants at every stage.

During data collection, the research team was trained on ethical protocol, including safeguarding measures for vulnerable individuals. Informed consent was sought before each interview, with participants given clear explanations in their preferred language about the purpose of the study, their voluntary participation, and their right to skip questions or withdraw at any point without consequences. This ensured participants' autonomy and understanding of their role in the study.

The respondent's participation in the survey was voluntary, and interviews were conducted without disrupting the normal day-to-day activities of the respondents, as the interviews were conducted at the household level.

Privacy and confidentiality were maintained by anonymising all data during transcription and analysis, and ensuring the security of the data collected. Subsequently, the report was stripped of the respondents' names to ensure their confidentiality. To prevent harm, sensitive topics were approached with care, and participants were given the option to discontinue if they felt uncomfortable.

3. FINDINGS

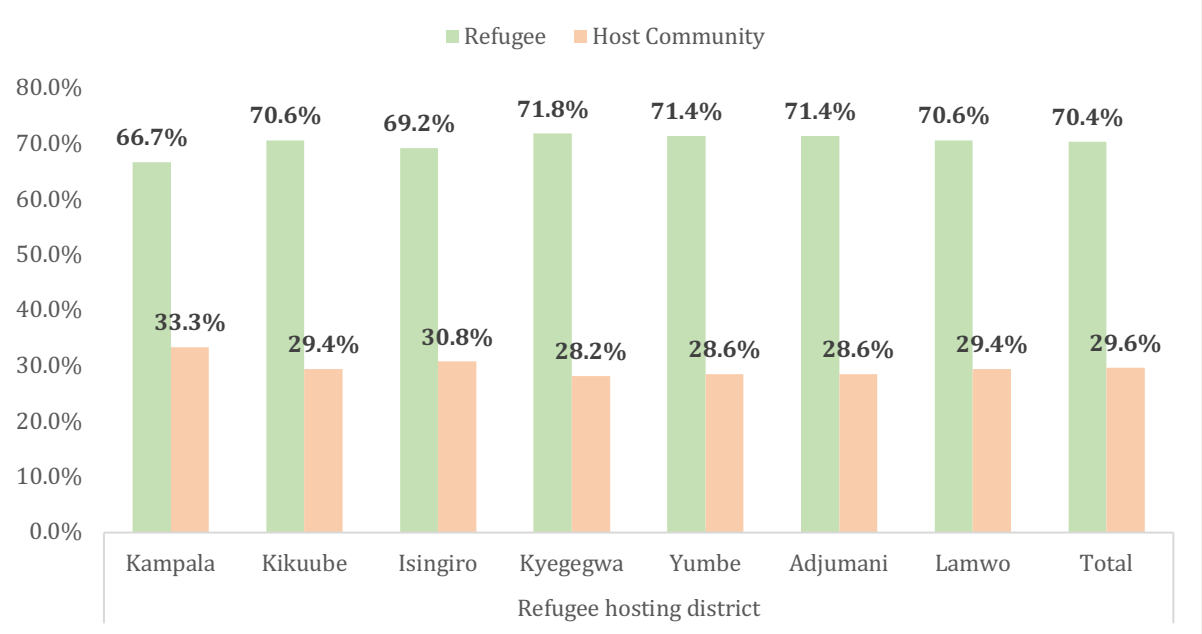
3.1: Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents summarize important background information critical in providing contextual meaning and interpretation of the survey findings. The evaluation collected demographic data on citizenship status, gender, age, education level, occupation, religion, disability status, and marital status as discussed below;

3.1.1 Citizenship of the respondent

The majority of respondents **(70.4%)** were refugees, while **29.6%** were members of host communities. This distribution reflects the primary focus of the JLIRP on refugee populations while also including host community members to promote coexistence and shared benefits. Furthermore, this is consistent with the Refugee and Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategy, which emphasizes that **70%** of humanitarian and development assistance should target refugees, while **30%** should benefit host communities. Therefore, the representation of the evaluation findings is dependable.

Figure 2: Citizenship of respondents

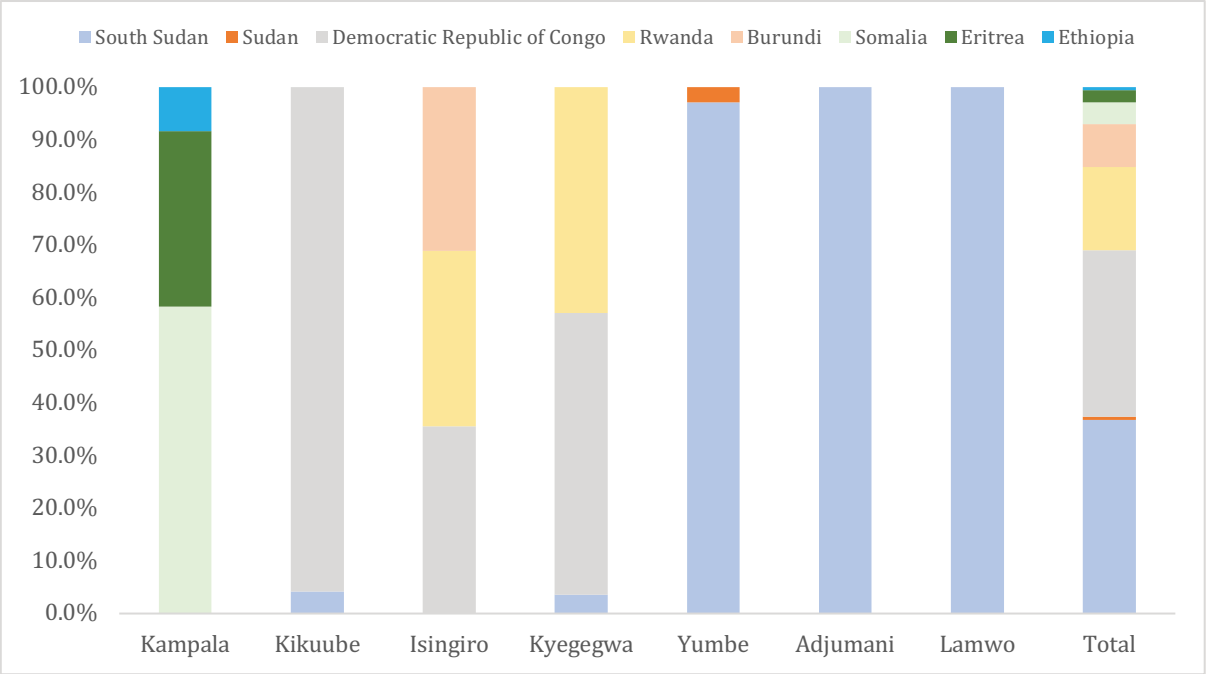


3.1.2 Country of origin of refugees

Among the refugees interviewed, the largest proportions originated from South Sudan **(36.8%)** and the Democratic Republic of Congo **(31.6%)**. Other groups included refugees from Rwanda **(15.8%)** and Burundi (**8.2%)**, with smaller numbers from Somalia **(4.1%),** Eritrea **(2.3%),** Ethiopia **(0.6%),** and Sudan **(0.6%).** This diversity not only highlights Uganda's role as a host for multiple refugee populations across the region but also substantiates the representativeness of the evaluation findings. Therefore, the subsequent JLIRP must remain sensitive to the diverse backgrounds and displacement

contexts of refugees, as needs and vulnerabilities vary by origin, although the needs of the South Sudanese and Congolese refugees are most likely to shape the plan priorities, being the majority.

Figure 3: Country of origin of refugee



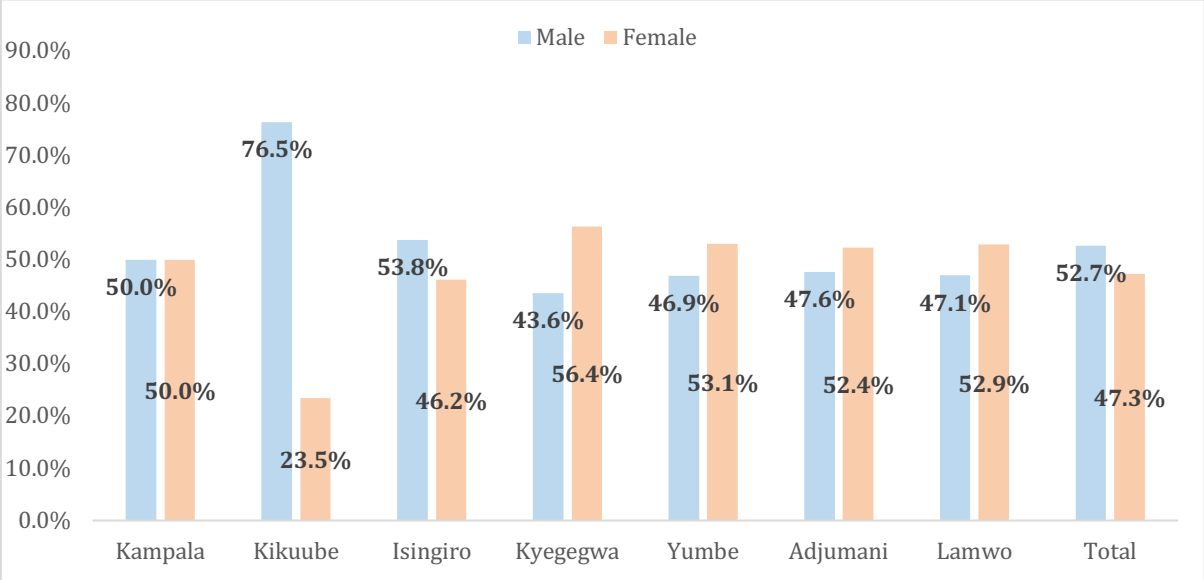
3.1.3 Length of stay in Uganda

Most respondents had lived in Uganda for over five years **(61.4%)**, suggesting relative stability and settlement. About **28.7%** had been in the country for three to five years, while only **9.9%** were more recent arrivals of less than two years. This is consistent with the period in which the JLIRP has been in force, hence further enhancing the confidence that the respondents were relevant in the context of the plan implementation.

3.1.4 Gender of respondent

The sample was fairly balanced by gender, with males accounting for **52.7%** and females **47.3%** which allows for a meaningful gender analysis across the findings.

Figure 4: Gender of Respondent by district



3.1.5 Average age of household head

The average age of household heads across the sampled districts was **39 years**, with some variation between locations. Isingiro district had the highest average age **(41 years),** while Kampala had the lowest average age of respondents **(33 years).** This falls within the productive age range, indicating that most households were led by individuals capable of engaging in livelihood activities, which is consistent with the objectives of the JLIRP.

3.1.6 Age category of household head

The majority of the household heads **(69.1%)** were aged between 31–59 years, followed by **24.3%** aged 18–30 years. These findings reveal that most of the surveyed population falls among the productive categories who can ably participate in any development initiative, a contribution to the national economy through an increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Therefore, this population was and still is useful in the participation of this end-term evaluation, the technical scope of this evaluation that included, among others, access to job opportunities and livelihood options for refugees and host communities, Investments in talent/ skills development, technical and vocational education, access to Business development services, and access to value addition facilities and market opportunities

From the evaluation, it was found that only **6.6%** of households were headed by older persons (60 years and above). These findings indicate that most households were under relatively young or middle-aged leadership, who are critical in the plan's objectives on enhancement or livelihoods and employment opportunities. The older persons also provide valuable insights in line with the plan's targeted approach for vulnerable persons.

3.1.7 Disability status of Household Head

Overall, **14%** of household heads reported having a disability, which is consistent with the national average of **13.6%** (UNHS 2024). This notable minority included in the evaluation points to the importance of inclusive programming and strengthens the inclusivity of the findings.

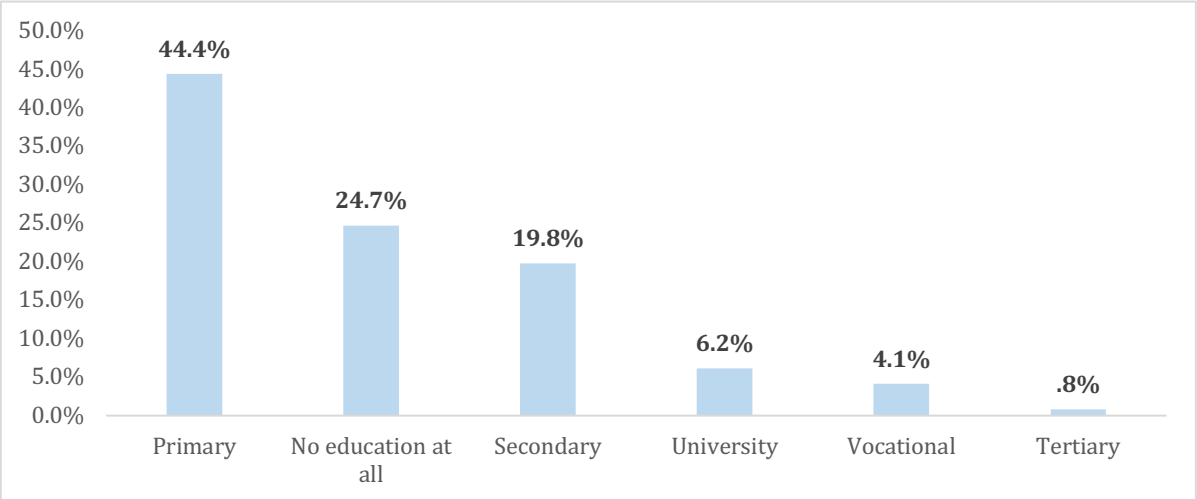
3.1.8 Religion of household head

The religious affiliations of household heads were diverse, with Pentecostal/Evangelical churches **(28.0%),** Roman Catholic **(25.5%),** and Anglican **(20.2%)** being the most common. Muslims accounted for **13.6%,** while smaller portions belonged to the Seventh-day Adventist **(9.1%)** and Orthodox (**3.7%)** faiths. This reflects the mixed religious composition of refugee-hosting communities within which the JLIRP operated and provides a reflection point on the effect of religion on the plan's objectives. Going forward, partnerships with faith-based organizations could enhance community mobilization, trust building, and sustainability of interventions for refugees and host communities.

3.1.9 Education level of household head

The findings revealed that the highest level of education among household heads varied significantly, with nearly half **(44.4%)** having completed primary education, while **19.8%** had completed secondary education and **6.2%** attained university education. However, **24.7%** reported no formal education, highlighting critical education gaps that can affect the employability and livelihoods of these communities. The low levels of formal education among household heads could limit uptake of certain livelihood opportunities, making literacy and vocational training critical to achieving JLIRP's skilling for employment objective.

Figure 5: Highest Education Level of Household Head



3.1.10 Main Occupation of Household Head

Overall, peasant farming was the major occupation **(48.6%)**, above the national average of **33.1%** (UNHS, 2024), reflecting the rural settlement patterns of most of the locations and reliance on subsistence agriculture. Other common occupations included casual

labor **(20.2%)** and small-scale business **(19.3%)**. Only **4.5%** reported formal employment, while **7.4%** were unemployed. These findings indicate limited engagement in the formal labor market and high dependence on informal and subsistence livelihoods by refugees and host communities. The heavy reliance on subsistence agriculture and informal work highlights the vulnerability of these communities to shocks such as climate change and market fluctuations, hence reinforcing the importance of diversifying livelihoods and promoting resilience within subsequent JLIRP programming.

Table 4: Summary of Household Demographics

		Kampala	Kikuube	Isingiro	Kyegegwa	Yumbe	Adjumani	Lamwo	Total
Citizenship of Respondent									
Refugee	N	12	24	45	28	35	15	12	171
	%	66.7%	70.6%	69.2%	71.8%	71.4%	71.4%	70.6%	70.4%
Host Community	N	6	10	20	11	14	6	5	72
	%	33.3%	29.4%	30.8%	28.2%	28.6%	28.6%	29.4%	29.6%
Country of origin of refugee									
South Sudan	N	0	1	0	1	34	15	12	63
	%	0.0%	4.2%	0.0%	3.6%	97.1%	100.0%	100.0%	36.8%
Sudan	N	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	0.0%	0.0%	.6%
Democratic Republic of Congo	N	0	23	16	15	0	0	0	54
	%	0.0%	95.8%	35.6%	53.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	31.6%
Rwanda	N	0	0	15	12	0	0	0	27
	%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	15.8%
Burundi	N	0	0	14	0	0	0	0	14
	%	0.0%	0.0%	31.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	8.2%
Somalia	N	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	%	58.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%
Eritrea	N	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
	%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%
Ethiopia	N	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	%	8.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	.6%
Length of Stay in Uganda									
1-2 years	N	4	0	11	1	0	1	0	17
	%	33.3%	0.0%	24.4%	3.6%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	9.9%
3-5 years	N	7	9	14	12	0	1	6	49
	%	58.3%	37.5%	31.1%	42.9%	0.0%	6.7%	50.0%	28.7%
5+ years	N	1	15	20	15	35	13	6	105
	%	8.3%	62.5%	44.4%	53.6%	100.0%	86.7%	50.0%	61.4%
Gender of Respondent									
Male	N	9	26	35	17	23	10	8	128
	%	50.0%	76.5%	53.8%	43.6%	46.9%	47.6%	47.1%	52.7%
Female	N	9	8	30	22	26	11	9	115
	%	50.0%	23.5%	46.2%	56.4%	53.1%	52.4%	52.9%	47.3%
Average age of Household Head									
Average age	N	18	34	65	39	49	21	17	243
	Mean	33.39	40.62	41.23	39.74	39.33	38.67	35.29	39.30
	Std. Dev	9.166	9.670	12.350	11.292	11.357	8.027	10.942	11.085
Age category of Household Head									
18–30 years	N	10	5	16	10	9	2	7	59
	%	55.6%	14.7%	24.6%	25.6%	18.4%	9.5%	41.2%	24.3%
31–59 years	N	8	28	41	25	37	19	10	168
	%	44.4%	82.4%	63.1%	64.1%	75.5%	90.5%	58.8%	69.1%

		Kampala	Kikuube	Isingiro	Kyegegwa	Yumbe	Adjumani	Lamwo	Total
60–64 years	N	0	0	5	4	1	0	0	10
	%	0.0%	0.0%	7.7%	10.3%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%
65+ years	N	0	1	3	0	2	0	0	6
	%	0.0%	2.9%	4.6%	0.0%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%
Disability Status of Household Head									
No	N	17	30	51	35	39	21	16	209
	%	94.4%	88.2%	78.5%	89.7%	79.6%	100.0%	94.1%	86.0%
Yes	N	1	4	14	4	10	0	1	34
	%	5.6%	11.8%	21.5%	10.3%	20.4%	0.0%	5.9%	14.0%
Religion of Household Head									
Roman Catholic	N	0	6	19	4	15	9	9	62
	%	0.0%	17.6%	29.2%	10.3%	30.6%	42.9%	52.9%	25.5%
Islam	N	9	3	4	2	15	0	0	33
	%	50.0%	8.8%	6.2%	5.1%	30.6%	0.0%	0.0%	13.6%
Anglican (Church of Uganda, Protestant)	N	4	5	12	13	9	3	3	49
	%	22.2%	14.7%	18.5%	33.3%	18.4%	14.3%	17.6%	20.2%
Pentecostal/Evangelical/ Born-Again churches	N	0	17	17	11	9	9	5	68
	%	0.0%	50.0%	26.2%	28.2%	18.4%	42.9%	29.4%	28.0%
Seventh-day Adventist	N	0	3	10	9	0	0	0	22
	%	0.0%	8.8%	15.4%	23.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	9.1%
Orthodox	N	5	0	3	0	1	0	0	9
	%	27.8%	0.0%	4.6%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.7%
Education Level of Household Head									
No education at all	N	3	7	13	14	13	8	2	60
	%	16.7%	20.6%	20.0%	35.9%	26.5%	38.1%	11.8%	24.7%
Primary	N	2	13	31	19	29	5	9	108
	%	11.1%	38.2%	47.7%	48.7%	59.2%	23.8%	52.9%	44.4%
Secondary	N	2	13	11	3	6	7	6	48
	%	11.1%	38.2%	16.9%	7.7%	12.2%	33.3%	35.3%	19.8%
Vocational	N	1	1	7	1	0	0	0	10
	%	5.6%	2.9%	10.8%	2.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.1%
University	N	10	0	3	1	0	1	0	15
	%	55.6%	0.0%	4.6%	2.6%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	6.2%
Tertiary	N	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
	%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	2.0%	0.0%	0.0%	.8%
Main Occupation of Household Head									
Formal Employment	N	1	5	2	2	0	1	0	11
	%	5.6%	14.7%	3.1%	5.1%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	4.5%
Business	N	6	9	23	6	0	0	3	47
	%	33.3%	26.5%	35.4%	15.4%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	19.3%
Casual labourer	N	1	12	11	10	6	3	6	49
	%	5.6%	35.3%	16.9%	25.6%	12.2%	14.3%	35.3%	20.2%
Peasant farmer	N	0	5	27	21	43	14	8	118
	%	0.0%	14.7%	41.5%	53.8%	87.8%	66.7%	47.1%	48.6%
Unemployed	N	10	3	2	0	0	3	0	18
	%	55.6%	8.8%	3.1%	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	0.0%	7.4%

3.2: Relevance of the JLIRP

The evaluation found that the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) was highly relevant to the needs and priorities of refugees and host communities. Its interventions effectively addressed critical livelihood dimensions, including self-reliance, income generation, food security, and skills development. The plan's integrated design aligned well with national and international frameworks such as the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Uganda's National Development Plan III, hence its responsiveness to contextual priorities. As one respondent observed,

Agriculture and livelihood interventions programmed under JLIRP enhanced household production and resilience by providing seeds, tools, livestock, and agriculture training, which improved food availability and nutrition for both refugee and host households. This is evidenced by the evaluation findings that indicated that communities engaged in farming were mainly supported with planting seeds **(32.7%)** and training on sustainable farming methods **(24.5%).** Subsequently, the relevance of this support was demonstrated in the improved self-reliance as fewer refugees depended on humanitarian aid **(4.7%)** as their main source of income.

A key informant noted that the plan *"promoted self-reliance among refugees because they started growing their own food."*

JLIRP also tackled income generation and market access by equipping beneficiaries with practical skills in trades such as tailoring, carpentry, mechanics, and agribusiness, hence increasing employability, with over half **(56.8%)** of those who received vocational training currently employed. However, the relevance of the trades pioneered remains in question, given the significant proportion that was not employed mainly due to a mismatch between the courses offered and the actual market demand.

A key informant noted, *"The courses offered to the communities in these areas are still business as usual and within saturated fields like mechanics, carpentry, and tailoring, yet the market now requires more innovative skills like ICT, which leaves many trainees unemployed."*

Relatedly, the JLIRP design mainstreamed social inclusion, prioritizing women, girls, and persons with disabilities to ensure equitable participation in livelihood and skills development activities. This focus on vulnerable groups reflected a deliberate effort to promote gender equity and leave no one behind. This plan aligns with other legal and policy frameworks, both at national and international levels, for example, the National Gender Policy 2007, the Equal Opportunities Act that guarantees equality of all persons, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, emphasizing equality, freedoms of participation, expression, and non-discrimination, among others. Uganda is a party and signatory to international conventions such as; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the African Union Declaration on Gender Equity, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women, among others.

Notably, the plan's design and implementation processes to some extent were informed by stakeholder consultations involving government entities, development partners, and civil society organisations. These engagements strengthened ownership and ensured that interventions responded to local needs. However, consultations were not uniformly extensive across all refugee-hosting districts, hence the need for a more robust consultation process in the plan cycles.

3.1: Coherence of the JLIRP

The coherence analysis of the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) examined the extent to which the programme's goals, objectives, and actions were aligned and mutually reinforcing during implementation. The assessment covered four key dimensions: internal coherence, which assessed consistency within the plan's goals and actions; horizontal coherence, which examined alignment across the sectors and ministries implementing the plan; vertical coherence, which evaluated coordination between national, regional, and local government levels; and external coherence, which analyzed alignment with international commitments such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Overall, the assessment provides valuable insights into how well the JLIRP's design and implementation complemented broader policy frameworks and objectives

The evaluation established that the JLIRP demonstrated strong coherence with Uganda's national development frameworks, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), and development partner strategies. The plan's design and implementation were specifically consistent with the objectives of the National Development Plan (NDP) III, Vision 2040, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize inclusive growth, resilience, and self-reliance.

Agricultural interventions under JLIRP directly supported Agro-industrialization priorities of NDP III, focusing on production, value addition, and market linkages. This integration linked humanitarian response to long-term national development goals and demonstrated Uganda's commitment to the CRRF principle of enabling refugees to live productive, dignified lives while contributing to host community development.

A respondent confirmed this, noting that, *"NDP III's Agro-industrialization priorities align with JLIRP's Pillar 3 on agricultural productivity, value chains, and market linkages."*

Similarly, another noted, *"JLIRP's focus on resilience and livelihoods links humanitarian response to long-term development, which is exactly what Vision 2040 envisions for inclusive national growth."*

JLIRP interventions also contributed to several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), demonstrating an integrated humanitarian development approach.

Furthermore, alignment with key partner strategies and priorities, including those of WFP, FAO, IGAD, UNDP, and UNHCR, enhanced program synergy and minimized duplication, hence strengthening efficiency and coherence across humanitarian and development initiatives.

A respondent observed that ***"****WFP's self-reliance programme is very much in alignment with the JLIRP."*

Additionally, JLIRP was also well aligned with other sector-specific refugee response frameworks developed under Uganda's Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), including the Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (ERP), the Health Sector Integrated Refugee Response Plan (HSIRRP), and the Water and Environment Sector Refugee Response Plan (WESRRP). JLIRP's livelihood and resilience interventions complemented these sectoral plans by addressing the economic and infrastructural foundations that support service delivery in education, health, and water access. For example, improved livelihoods enhanced the ability of households to meet education and health-related costs, while investments in community services like vocational skilling centres promoted employment and livelihoods. This alignment promoted complementarity and reduced fragmentation across humanitarian and development efforts. However, gaps in joint monitoring and data harmonization limited the full realization of integrated, multi-sectoral planning and accountability. However, the evaluation pointed out some gaps that remain in sectoral coverage, particularly in areas such as energy, infrastructure, and social services, hence the need for more comprehensive planning in future plans to achieve holistic and sustainable development outcomes.

In order to enhance coherence of the JLIRP, stakeholder consultation during the design and implementation was established to be moderate but meaningful, with active involvement of key actors from government ministries, development partners, and implementing agencies. The design process was characterized by inter-ministerial coordination, which ensured policy alignment and collective ownership. Development partners such as FAO, WFP, UNHCR, and AVSI played an instrumental role by providing technical expertise, financial support, and implementation oversight, while platforms such as the JLIRP Steering Committee facilitated communication and coordination.

A respondent observed that *"the design of JLIRP was inter-ministerial and so all the key stakeholders from different ministries were engaged, which supported harmonization."*

Another added that, *"Development partners were central throughout the entire process of the plan's design, implementation, and monitoring."*

However, consultations were not uniformly extensive across all refugee-hosting districts, with limited participation of local governments, private sector actors, and community structures in some areas. This uneven engagement reduced opportunities for localized adaptation and learning. Therefore, strengthening bottom-up consultation

mechanisms in future program cycles, particularly at district and community levels, could enhance contextual relevance, stakeholder ownership, and sustainability of JLIRP outcomes.

3.2: Effectiveness of the JLIRP

3.2.1 Pillar 1: Strengthening refugee and host community social cohesion

This pillar was designed to foster peaceful coexistence and socio-economic interaction between refugees and host communities by 2025. The focus was on reducing conflicts, building trust, and encouraging cooperation to create a stable environment where both groups could live and work productively. It recognized that social cohesion is foundational for livelihoods, since conflicts over land, resources, or cultural tensions undermine development gains.

To achieve this, the plan emphasized building local conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, strengthening community structures, and investing in peace-building networks. It also prioritized mindset change through literacy, numeracy, and soft-skills training, alongside supporting joint community activities that improve resilience and mutual understanding. These interventions sought to create empowered communities capable of addressing disputes, fostering collaboration, and sustaining long-term peace

Perception on Community Safety

The evaluation established that **95.1% of respondents** (94.7% refugees and 95.8% hosts) felt safe walking alone, a substantial improvement from **4%** at baseline **(2020)** but equivalent to the five-year target of **95%**. This sharp increase is largely attributed to the fact that the baseline was conducted during the COVID-19 period, when movement restrictions, economic hardship, and social tension had heightened insecurity across many refugee-hosting communities in Uganda. However, post-COVID-19 recovery projects by humanitarian and government actors extensively tackled insecurity issues, hence the significant improvements.

Despite this progress, safety concerns persist in Isingiro, Lamwo, and Kyegegwa districts, with women **(7%)** reporting higher feelings of insecurity compared to men **(3.1%)**, and the elderly **(65+ years)** also expressing greater vulnerability **(16.7%)**. Qualitative responses indicated that insecurity among refugees stemmed from tribal conflicts, theft, discrimination, harassment, and sexual violence risks, while host communities cited theft, drunken behaviour, and occasional hostility from some refugees.

Therefore, to improve safety, the respondents from both host and refugee communities proposed measures such as installing more community lighting, strengthening local security teams, and conducting peacebuilding and coexistence dialogues. Additional recommendations included regular police-community meetings, awareness campaigns, and sensitization on peaceful coexistence. Addressing these lingering concerns, particularly those affecting women and the elderly, will be critical to sustaining social cohesion, enhancing mobility, and enabling broader participation in economic activities during the next phase of the JLIRP.

Table 5: Refugees and host communities that feel safe walking alone in their dwellings

District	Refugees				Host community				Overall			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
District												
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kikuube	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Isingiro	45	91.7%	95.2%	93.3%	20	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	65	94.3%	96.7%	95.4%
Kyegegwa	28	83.3%	87.5%	85.7%	11	100.0%	66.7%	81.8%	39	88.2%	81.8%	84.6%
Yumbe	35	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	14	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	49	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Adjumani	15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	21	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Lamwo	12	100.0%	66.7%	83.3%	5	100.0%	66.7%	80.0%	17	100.0%	66.7%	82.4%
Sub Region												
West Nile	50	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	20	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	70	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
South West	73	88.9%	91.9%	90.4%	31	100.0%	86.7%	93.5%	104	92.3%	90.4%	91.3%
Mid-West	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Northern	12	100.0%	66.7%	83.3%	5	100.0%	66.7%	80.0%	17	100.0%	66.7%	82.4%
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age Category												
18–30 years	47	95.0%	88.9%	91.5%	12	100.0%	90.0%	91.7%	59	95.5%	89.2%	91.5%
31–59 years	113	96.7%	96.2%	96.5%	55	100.0%	90.9%	96.4%	168	97.8%	94.7%	96.4%
60–64 years	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	4	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65+ years	5	75.0%	100.0%	80.0%	1	100.0%		100.0%	6	80.0%	100.0%	83.3%
Disability status												
With disability	26	100.0%	93.3%	96.2%	8	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	100.0%	94.7%	97.1%
Without disability	145	94.9%	94.0%	94.5%	64	100.0%	89.7%	95.3%	209	96.5%	92.7%	94.7%
Total	**171**	**95.5%**	**93.9%**	**94.7%**	**72**	**100.0%**	**90.9%**	**95.8%**	**243**	**96.9%**	**93.0%**	**95.1%**

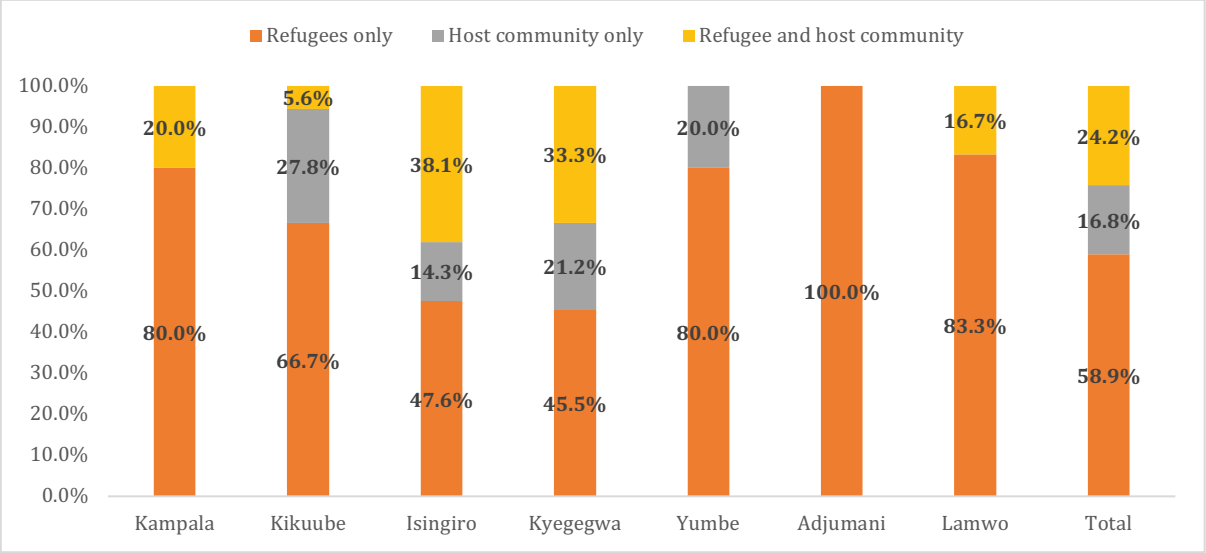
Prevalence of conflict within Refugee and host communities

Conflict is a disagreement or clash of interests, needs, or goals between two or more parties. It can range from a minor argument to a major war, and while often associated with negative outcomes like stress or violence, it can also be a catalyst for positive change, such as innovation or deeper relationships, if managed effectively. Thus, this end-term evaluation assessed the target population on matters concerning conflict, including the prevalence of conflict, the various forms of conflict, the current conflict resolution mechanisms, and how conflict affects them.

Overall, **39.1%** of respondents reported experiencing or observing conflict within the past 12 months. The prevalence was highest in Kyegegwa **(84.6%)** and Lamwo **(70.6%)**, and lowest in Adjumani **(4.8%)** and Yumbe **(10.2%)**, indicating the presence of district-specific drivers of conflict. Furthermore, most disputes occurred among refugees **(58.9%)**, followed by refugee-host conflicts **(24.2%)**, while host-only conflicts **(16.8%)** were least common. This pattern indicates higher tension within refugee populations and at the refugee–host interaction, where pressures on shared

resources such as land for farming due to increasing refugee influx are most intense compared to entirely host community engagement.

Figure 6: Actors involved in conflict by district



The evaluation established that the most noticeable conflicts emanate from pressures exerted on the already scarce resources, particularly land. Furthermore, domestic violence, alcohol abuse, lawlessness, and above all, the 'historic differences' that refugees had in their countries of origin worsen the situation. On a sad note, most of the conflicts mainly affected women, children, those with disabilities, and those with chronic illnesses, as discussed in this report. Economic stresses among household heads were also cited as a conflict driver. Regional variations in terms of root causes of conflict were observed; in West Nile, South West, and Mid-West, conflicts were mainly driven by competition over land, grazing, and livelihoods, compounded by gender-based violence, domestic disputes, and theft.

A community member from West Nile was quoted saying, "The *host communities who hire us land sometimes chase us from their land just after one season of planting when they see that we have got a big harvest, yet we invest a lot to clear the land. This sometimes causes misunderstanding*."

A key informant also reaffirmed these drivers, stating, *"limited land to be shared by the growing number of refugees in some settlements has led to pressure on the limited available land and resources, which is causing tensions."*

Further still, Northern Uganda recorded disputes linked to alcoholism, tribal tensions, and competition for basic resources, while Kampala faced more individual, economically driven disputes such as wage disagreements and relationship-related fights. These findings highlight how social and economic vulnerabilities fuel community-level tensions, emphasising the need to strengthen the JLIRP's integrated approach through livelihood diversification, community mediation, gender empowerment, and regulation of alcohol consumption to foster peaceful coexistence and resilience among refugee and host communities.

A local government staff member attested to this approach, noting, *"When livelihoods and social cohesion interventions were implemented together, and both communities benefited equally, tensions between refugees and host communities reduced."*

Table 6: Prevalence of conflict within Refugee and host communities (Conflict experienced or observed in the community)

	Refugees			Host community			Overall		
	n	Yes	No	n	Yes	No	N	Yes	No
District									
Kampala	12	8.3%	91.7%	6	66.7%	33.3%	18	27.8%	72.2%
Kikuube	24	54.2%	45.8%	10	50.0%	50.0%	34	52.9%	47.1%
Isingiro	45	33.3%	66.7%	20	30.0%	70.0%	65	32.3%	67.7%
Kyegegwa	28	78.6%	21.4%	11	100.0%	0.0%	39	84.6%	15.4%
Yumbe	35	14.3%	85.7%	14	0.0%	100.0%	49	10.2%	89.8%
Adjumani	15	6.7%	93.3%	6	0.0%	100.0%	21	4.8%	95.2%
Lamwo	12	66.7%	33.3%	5	80.0%	20.0%	17	70.6%	29.4%
Sub Region									
West Nile	50	12.0%	88.0%	20	0.0%	100.0%	70	8.6%	91.4%
South West	73	50.7%	49.3%	31	54.8%	45.2%	104	51.9%	48.1%
Mid-West	24	54.2%	45.8%	10	50.0%	50.0%	34	52.9%	47.1%
Northern	12	66.7%	33.3%	5	80.0%	20.0%	17	70.6%	29.4%
Kampala	12	8.3%	91.7%	6	66.7%	33.3%	18	27.8%	72.2%
Total	**171**	**38.0%**	**62.0%**	**72**	**41.7%**	**58.3%**	**243**	**39.1%**	**60.9%**

Awareness of conflict resolution and redress mechanisms

It is worth noting that, Uganda's conflict resolution mechanisms include formal Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) methods like mediation, arbitration, and negotiation, which are increasingly integrated into the formal justice system. Alongside these, traditional and community-based approaches remain vital, utilizing local leaders, clan courts, and faith-based organizations, especially in areas with customary land tenure. Other mechanisms involve reconciliation programs using community dialogue and peacebuilding initiatives, particularly in post-conflict regions.

Relatedly, the refugee communities too have local structures like the Refugee Welfare Committees whose main duty is to handle conflicts and or refer them to further authorities like local council leadership or even police. Although these committees have female representation, the majority of the members are male, which at times restricts the women from fully expressing themselves. Besides, these committees are constrained by financial limitations such as transport, stationery, and capacity limitations, among others, that also hinder their active implementation. Therefore, this end-term evaluation recommends the rejuvenation of these committees to be integrated into a sound Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) to handle conflicts and grievances.

Generally, the evaluation established that refugees and host communities have, over time, become aware of places or institutions where they can report any case of violence, conflict, or dispute within their community, with the evaluation findings indicating that **96.7% (refugees =96.5%, host communities 97.2%)** of the respondents were aware of at least one avenue. However, cases of ignorance were mainly sighted in Yumbe **(8.2%),** Isingiro **(4.6%)**, and Kyegegwa **(2.6%)** districts, hence calling for a more

proactive and targeted awareness through continuous trainings on the grievance redress mechanism to bridge these gaps. Sensitization engagements should also largely target the young (18-30 years) and middle-aged (31-59 years) populations, given that they recorded a slightly lower proportion aware of these redress mechanisms compared to the elderly household heads above 60 years.

Furthermore, male household heads (**98.4%**) were more likely to be aware of these mechanisms compared to their female counterparts (**94.8%**), hence the need for more targeted and deliberate awareness programs. For sustainability, the next phase of the JLIRP should advocate for a well-coordinated budget to facilitate these Grievance Redress Committees (GRCs).

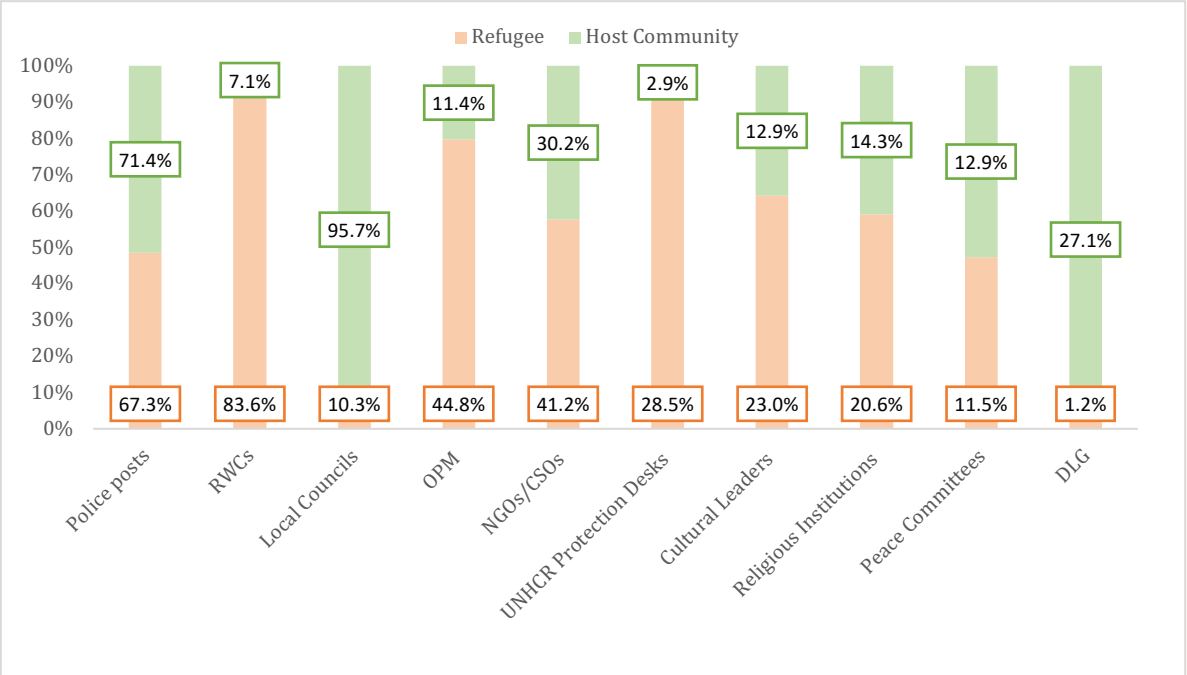
Table 7: Households aware of conflict resolution and redress mechanisms

	Refugees				Host community				Overall			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
District												
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kikuube	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Isingiro	45	95.8%	95.2%	95.6%	20	100.0%	88.9%	95.0%	65	97.1%	93.3%	95.4%
Kyegegwa	28	100.0%	93.8%	96.4%	11	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	39	100.0%	95.5%	97.4%
Yumbe	35	93.3%	90.0%	91.4%	14	100.0%	83.3%	92.9%	49	95.7%	88.5%	91.8%
Adjumani	15	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	21	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Lamwo	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	17	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Sub Region												
West Nile	50	95.5%	92.9%	94.0%	20	100.0%	88.9%	95.0%	70	97.0%	91.9%	94.3%
South West	73	97.2%	94.6%	95.9%	31	100.0%	93.3%	96.8%	104	98.1%	94.2%	96.2%
Mid-West	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Northern	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	17	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age Group												
18–30 years	47	95.0%	96.3%	95.7%	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	59	95.5%	97.3%	96.6%
31–59 years	113	98.3%	94.3%	96.5%	55	100.0%	90.9%	96.4%	168	98.9%	93.3%	96.4%
60–64 years	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	4	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
65+ years	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	1	100.0%		100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Disability status												
With disability	26	90.9%	100.0%	96.2%	8	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	93.3%	100.0%	91.1%
Without disability	145	98.7%	94.0%	96.6%	64	100.0%	93.1%	96.9%	209	99.1%	93.8%	96.7%
Total	**171**	**97.8%**	**95.1%**	**96.5%**	**72**	**100.0%**	**93.9%**	**97.2%**	**243**	**98.4%**	**94.8%**	**96.7%**

The evaluation also revealed the existence and use of conflict resolution and redress structures within the refugee and host communities, with the majority of the respondents most likely to report cases of violence, conflict, or dispute within their community to the Police posts **(68.5%)** and Refugee Welfare Committees **(60.9%).** Other often sought structures include: Local Council structures, OPM, and Civil Society Organizations.

Furthermore, the status of the respondents was also a key determinant of the structures they were more likely to approach with refugees, notably more comfortable reporting to the Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs), while the local council structures appealed more to the host communities.

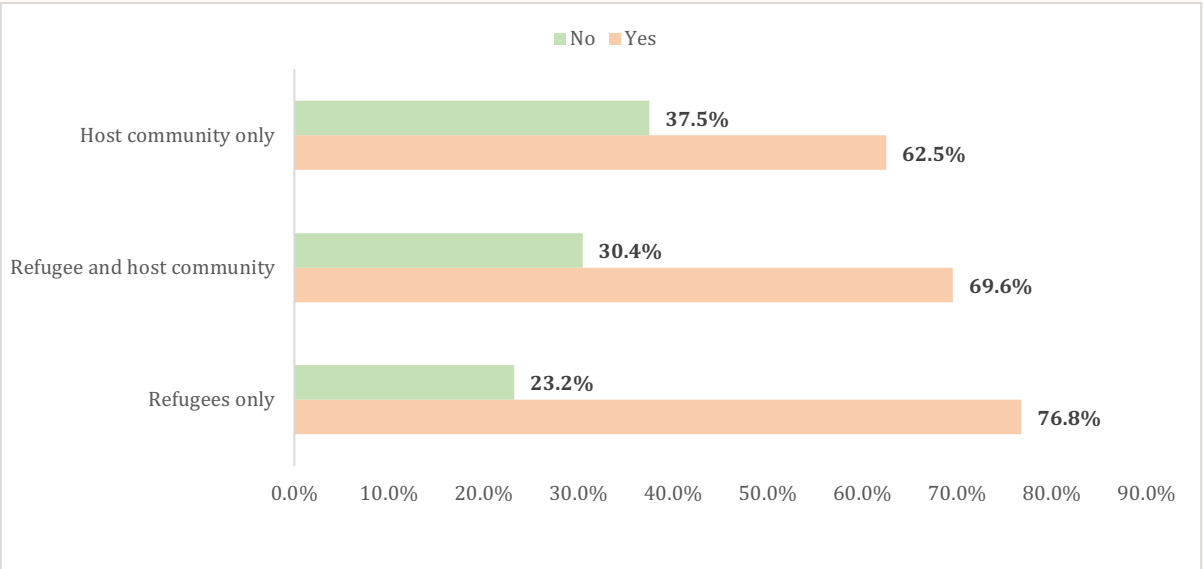
Figure 7: Avenues where cases are reported.



Effectiveness of Conflict resolution mechanisms in refugee hosting districts.

Conflicts within refugee hosting districts were resolved to a large extent, with **72.6%** of respondents confirming successful resolution of incidents. However, unresolved cases remain significant in Kyegegwa **(48.5%)**, Kikuube **(27.8%)**, and Isingiro **(23.8%)**, posing a threat to efforts aimed at strengthening refugee host social cohesion. Conflicts involving host communities only were least likely to be resolved **(37.5% unresolved)**, followed by refugee-host disputes **(30.4%)**, revealing persistent gaps in conflict resolution mechanisms particularly in the Mid-Albertine and Western regions where land and livelihood pressures are high.

Figure 8: Conflict resolution disaggregated by actors involved



Qualitative insights indicate that community-based mechanisms remain the backbone of conflict resolution, complemented in some areas by formal systems. For instance, in West Nile and Northern Uganda, conflicts, especially among refugees, were resolved mainly through dialogue and mediation by elders, religious leaders, and RWCs, with agencies such as OPM and Alight intervening in complex cases. South West and Mid West regions demonstrated a more structured, hybrid approach, blending local leadership, police involvement, and NGO support, particularly for land and aid-related disputes.

A local government staff member stated, *"By engaging both refugees and hosts in the same livelihood programs like savings groups, tension reduced, and communities now see each other as business partners."*

On the other hand, Kampala's urban context relied largely on formal justice systems. Overall, the regional context and the type of community involved significantly determined resolution pathways. Therefore, strengthening coordination between traditional, community, and formal mechanisms, alongside capacity building for local and humanitarian actors on conflict resolution, is crucial for promoting sustainable peace and social cohesion across refugee-hosting districts.

To enhance the effectiveness of the conflict resolution mechanism within this community, both refugees and host community members emphasized that community dialogue, reconciliation, and continuous sensitization are the most effective ways to reduce or resolve conflicts. The need for open communication and mediation led by local, religious, and cultural leaders, supported by police for more serious cases, was critically highlighted. Notably, poverty, unemployment, and food shortages were noted to fuel most disputes; hence, creating livelihood and income-generating opportunities was viewed as essential to prevent theft and tension.

Other proposed mechanisms include: strengthening community structures through training in conflict resolution and law awareness, establishing accessible reporting and complaint desks, and ensuring fair enforcement of justice without corruption. Therefore, promoting peaceful coexistence, mutual respect, and mindset change campaigns, especially among youth in the next phase of the JLRIP will create harmony and reduce recurring disputes in refugee-hosting areas.

Satisfaction with local services

Satisfaction refers to the degree to which all project stakeholders' that is; clients, end-users or beneficiaries, team members' expectations, needs, and concerns are met or exceeded by the project's processes and final deliverables or expectations.

Overall**, 69.1%** of the respondents **(refugees 68.4%, host community= 70.8%)** were satisfied with at least one of the five key services, including Education, Health, WASH, Security, and Social Protection, up from **3.5%** at baseline (2020) but below the five-year target of **95%**. Significant variations were observed across different districts, with Lamwo and Kikuube notably registering high satisfaction levels compared to Adjumani

where less than 50% were satisfied. Overall, at the national level, gender disparities were not pronounced in terms of satisfaction, with both males and females reporting almost similar averages of **68.8%** and **69.6%** respectively. However, gender disparities were observed within some districts like Kampala, where the males who were satisfied were more than twice as many as the females.

Table 8: Percentage of refugees and host communities that are satisfied with local services.

District	Refugees				Host community				District Average			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
District												
Lamwo	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	17	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kikuube	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	37.5%	50.0%	40.0%	34	80.8%	87.5%	82.4%
Yumbe	35	66.7%	60.0%	62.9%	14	100.0%	83.3%	92.9%	49	78.3%	65.4%	71.4%
Isingiro	45	62.5%	81.0%	71.1%	20	63.6%	66.7%	65.0%	65	62.9%	76.7%	69.2%
Kyegegwa	28	41.7%	62.5%	53.6%	11	80.0%	83.3%	81.8%	39	52.9%	68.2%	61.5%
Kampala	12	71.4%	60.0%	66.7%	6	50.0%	0.0%	16.7%	18	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Adjumani	15	14.3%	37.5%	26.7%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	21	40.0%	54.5%	47.6%
Sub Region												
West Nile	50	50.0%	53.6%	52.0%	20	100.0%	88.9%	95.0%	70	66.7%	62.2%	64.3%
South West	73	55.6%	73.0%	64.4%	31	68.8%	73.3%	71.0%	104	59.6%	73.1%	66.3%
Mid-West	24	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	10	37.5%	50.0%	40.0%	34	80.8%	87.5%	82.4%
Northern	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	17	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kampala	12	71.4%	60.0%	66.7%	6	50.0%	0.0%	16.7%	18	66.7%	33.3%	50.0%
Age Group												
18–30 years	47	70.0%	70.4%	70.2%	12	100.0%	80.0%	83.3%	59	72.7%	73.0%	72.9%
31–59 years	113	68.3%	69.8%	69.0%	55	72.7%	63.6%	69.1%	168	69.9%	68.0%	69.0%
60–64 years	6	40.0%	100.0%	50.0%	4	33.3%	100.0%	50.0%	10	37.5%	100.0%	50.0%
65+ years	5	75.0%	0.0%	60.0%	1	100.0%		100.0%	6	80.0%	0.0%	66.7%
Disability status												
With disability	26	45.5%	60.0%	53.8%	8	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	34	60.0%	68.4%	64.7%
Without disability	145	70.5%	71.6%	71.0%	64	68.6%	65.5%	67.2%	209	69.9%	69.8%	69.9%
Total	**171**	**67.4%**	**69.5%**	**68.4%**	**72**	**71.8%**	**69.7%**	**70.8%**	**243**	**68.8%**	**69.6%**	**69.1%**

3.2.2 Pillar 2: Enabling entrepreneurial-led development and market growth system

The second pillar aimed to expand sustainable economic opportunities in refugee-hosting districts by 2025 through stronger private sector engagement and market development. It focused on enabling refugees and host communities to establish and grow businesses, thereby reducing aid dependency and fostering inclusive growth. The rationale was that by stimulating local enterprise, both communities could create jobs, build wealth, and strengthen their participation in the wider Ugandan economy.

The approach included investing in micro and small enterprises, supporting agricultural household enterprises, and strengthening market systems for fair competition. Business development services such as financial literacy, access to credit and insurance, and digital financial inclusion were emphasized. The plan also promoted private sector investment in refugee-hosting districts and encouraged partnerships to develop productive alliances, ensuring that entrepreneurial activity was both competitive and sustainable.

Prevalence of Poverty among Refugee and Host Community Households

The evaluation established that poverty remains a critical challenge among both refugee and host communities, with hosts generally faring slightly better than refugees. Only **19.3%** of households lived above the international poverty line of **$1.9 per day**, with refugees (**14.6%**) significantly more affected than hosts (**30.6%**). This reflects a significant increase from **2%** at baseline (2020), although still below the plan's five-year target **(35%).**

Regional inequalities were evident as Kampala, Western, and Mid-Albertine regions had relatively higher living standards, while Northern and West Nile regions lagged. Poverty was also more pronounced among female-headed households **(85.2%)** and persons with disabilities **(88.2%)** compared to their counterparts. Occupation and country of origin influenced economic wellbeing, with peasant farmers **(31.9%)** and small business owners **(27.7%)** faring better than casual laborers **(4.3%)** in terms of living above the poverty line, while Somali **(28%)** and Rwandese **(20%)** refugees were less affected contributing the highest of those living above the poverty line compared to South Sudanese **(42.5%)** and Congolese **(34.9%)** who topped the list for those below the poverty line.

Furthermore, following the World Bank's June 2025 adjustment of the poverty line to **$3.00** per day, only **9.9%** of households remained above this threshold, highlighting the limited economic resilience among refugees (**8.8%**) relative to hosts (**12.5%**).

Table 9: households living above the international poverty line of $1.9 per day

	Refugees				Host community				Overall			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
District												

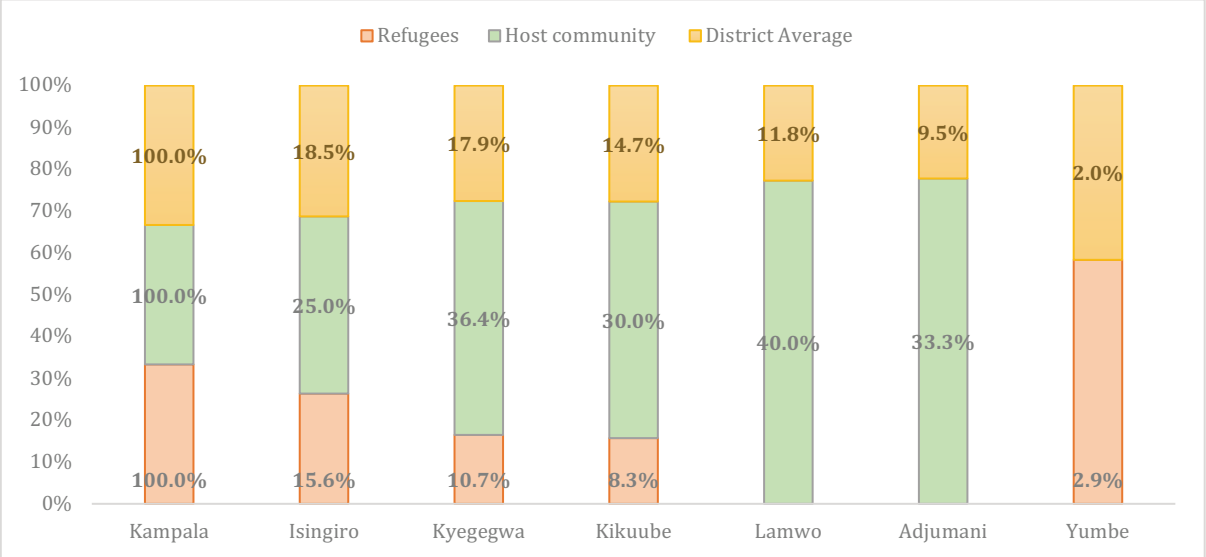
	Refugees				Host community				Overall			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Kikuube	24	11.1%	0.0%	8.3%	10	37.5%	0.0%	30.0%	34	19.2%	0.0%	14.7%
Isingiro	45	20.8%	9.5%	15.6%	20	18.2%	33.3%	25.0%	65	20.0%	16.7%	18.5%
Kyegegwa	28	25.0%	0.0%	10.7%	11	40.0%	33.3%	36.4%	39	29.4%	9.1%	17.9%
Yumbe	35	6.7%	0.0%	2.9%	14	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	49	4.3%	0.0%	2.0%
Adjumani	15	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	6	66.7%	0.0%	33.3%	21	20.0%	0.0%	9.5%
Lamwo	12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5	50.0%	33.3%	40.0%	17	12.5%	11.1%	11.8%
Sub Region												
West Nile	50	4.5%	0.0%	2.0%	20	18.2%	0.0%	10.0%	70	9.1%	0.0%	4.3%
South West	73	22.2%	5.4%	13.7%	31	25.0%	33.3%	29.0%	104	23.1%	13.5%	18.3%
Mid-West	24	11.1%	0.0%	8.3%	10	37.5%	0.0%	30.0%	34	19.2%	0.0%	14.7%
Northern	12	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5	50.0%	33.3%	40.0%	17	12.5%	11.1%	11.8%
Kampala	12	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	18	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Age Group												
18–30 years	47	35.0%	14.8%	23.4%	12	0.0%	40.0%	33.3%	59	31.8%	21.6%	25.4%
31–59 years	113	16.7%	5.7%	11.5%	55	33.3%	22.7%	29.1%	168	22.6%	10.7%	17.3%
60–64 years	6	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4	33.3%	100.0%	50.0%	10	12.5%	50.0%	20.0%
65+ years	5	25.0%	0.0%	20.0%	1	0.0%		0.0%	6	20.0%	0.0%	16.7%
Disability status												
With disability	26	9.1%	0.0%	3.8%	8	25.0%	50.0%	37.5%	34	13.3%	10.5%	11.8%
Without disability	145	21.8%	10.4%	16.6%	64	31.4%	27.6%	29.7%	209	24.8%	15.6%	20.6%
Total	**171**	**20.2%**	**8.5%**	**14.6%**	**72**	**30.8%**	**30.3%**	**30.6%**	**243**	**23.4%**	**14.8%**	**19.3%**

Qualitative evidence supports these disparities, showing that while JLIRP interventions improved livelihoods through skills training, agricultural production, and financial inclusion, the benefits were unevenly distributed.

A respondent noted that, *"Guided by the JLIRP, we implemented skills development and technical training programs targeting both refugees and host communities to enhance employability, self-reliance, and household economic productivity."*

Yet, limited coverage and resource constraints slowed broader poverty reduction ambitions. As one respondent explained, *"Decline in donor funding and increasing refugee populations created a widening gap between needs and available resources"*. These insights illustrate that while interventions laid foundations for self-reliance, persistent poverty highlights the need for more inclusive, region-specific livelihood strategies that empower, especially women, youth, and persons with disabilities, and deepen private sector participation in local economies

Figure 9: % of refugees and host communities living above the international poverty line of 1.9 USD per day



Household Income Levels and Livelihood Sources

a) Average Household Income

On average, respondents earned **USD 46.5 per month** (≈ UGX 166,000), with refugees reporting a lower income (**USD 36.2**) compared to host communities (**USD 70.9**). Female-headed households averaged **USD 42.5**, while those in formal employment reported significantly higher earnings (**USD 99.7**). These income disparities align with the poverty findings, confirming the limited capacity of refugee households to generate sufficient income. Qualitative evidence supports this, with respondents highlighting that vocational training, savings groups, and enterprise development have improved financial capacity among some households.

> For instance respondent was quoted saying, *"Village Enterprise Uganda has supported approximately 12,000 households in financial training, enterprise development, and extended grants of UGX 743,000 to each supported group."*

> Similarly, a district official noted that, *"savings and loan groups for refugee women are still functional even after the partner projects ended; some even rent small stalls now, which has improved their income."*

These testimonies indicate incremental income growth where access to credit and training existed, though such opportunities remain limited to select areas and groups, leaving gaps in refugee-hosting districts like Lamwo and Yumbe.

Table 10: Average monthly household income by district and status

Refugee Hosting District	Status of Respondent	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum	N
Kampala	Refugee	133.1019	44.10315	69.44	194.44	12
	Host Community	296.2963	228.16138	83.33	694.44	6
	Total	187.5000	151.11619	69.44	694.44	18
Kikuube	Refugee	33.3796	24.21938	5.56	116.67	24
	Host Community	59.5833	44.25330	19.44	166.67	10
	Total	41.0866	33.01209	5.56	166.67	34
Isingiro	Refugee	41.3827	32.19949	5.56	138.89	45
	Host Community	52.9167	50.60128	2.78	222.22	20
	Total	44.9316	38.75218	2.78	222.22	65
Kyegegwa	Refugee	37.6984	22.79895	8.33	111.11	28
	Host Community	51.0101	23.80712	13.89	83.33	11
	Total	41.4530	23.56492	8.33	111.11	39
Yumbe	Refugee	14.0317	18.87283	1.39	111.11	35
	Host Community	12.5794	11.08674	1.39	44.44	14
	Total	13.6168	16.91230	1.39	111.11	49
Adjumani	Refugee	15.0000	17.96528	.00	55.56	15
	Host Community	117.5926	215.90083	5.56	555.56	6
	Total	44.3122	118.88914	.00	555.56	21
Lamwo	Refugee	12.9630	10.29744	2.78	41.67	12
	Host Community	46.1111	30.46704	8.33	83.33	5
	Total	22.7124	23.39536	2.78	83.33	17
Overall	**Refugee**	**36.1858**	**38.87383**	**.00**	**194.44**	**171**
	Host Community	**70.9066**	**115.75229**	**1.39**	**694.44**	**72**
	Total	**46.4735**	**72.42209**	**.00**	**694.44**	**243**

b) Sources of income

Subsistence agriculture remains the dominant income source (**42.4%**) across both refugees and hosts, followed by simple trade (**16.0%**) and agricultural casual labor (**14.8%**). Skilled labor (**6.2%**) and salaried work (**4.5%**) remain rare. Area-specific variations were observed, with salaried employment more common in urban settings like Kampala, with more employment opportunities, while rural settlements depend heavily on smallholder agriculture and petty trade. Qualitative data confirm this pattern, as many respondents attributed this to increased participation by communities in climate-smart farming and farmer field schools, which have improved food security but have not yet translated into substantial income gains.

"Many refugee households that were previously relying on food assistance are now able to grow food to feed themselves and even sell surplus" (KII, Isingiro).

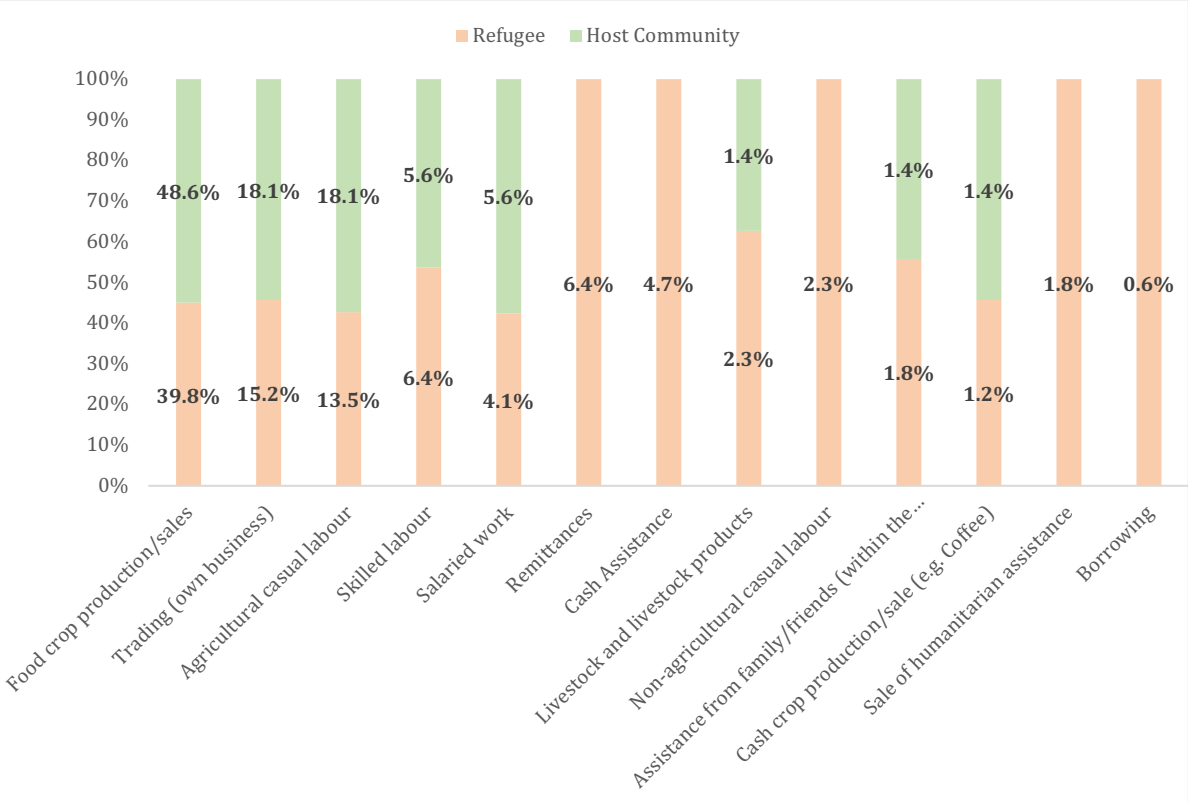
However, key informants in West Nile and Northern Uganda noted persistent challenges to the predominant subsistence agriculture, such as limited land access, and poor yields due to bad.

Gender disparities also persist, with men more active in higher-value activities such as trade and skilled labor, while women remain concentrated in crop production and cash assistance for a livelihood source. Qualitative findings attributed this to limited access to finance and training for women, despite notable progress under JLIRP's inclusive livelihood approach, as one of the respondents noted,

"VSLA support mainly targeted women, giving them decision-making power over household finances and access to credit, which strengthened their economic resilience, although coverage remains low."

Furthermore, education was also a critical determinant, as respondents with vocational training accessed better-paying skilled jobs while those with a maximum of primary level education relied more on subsistence farming, confirming that education and skills development are key enablers of income diversification and resilience among refugees and host communities.

Figure 10: Main source of income for refugee and host communities



Economic opportunities

The JLIRP sought to enable refugees and host communities to establish and grow businesses, reducing aid dependency and promoting inclusive growth. The evaluation found that **40.3%** of households had established or expanded a business within the past three years, with higher participation among hosts (**45.8%**) than refugees (**38.0%**). Most ventures were small-scale, low-capital enterprises in agriculture and petty trade, such as crop farming, groceries, tailoring, mobile money, and boda-boda transport. These findings align with qualitative insights showing that JLIRP-aligned

interventions stimulated entrepreneurship through vocational skills training, enterprise incubation, and market linkages.

"Trained youth have opened workshops, salons, and garages in refugee settlements; they employ others now, which shows a clear impact of the training" (KII, Isingiro).

However, the evaluation revealed persistent challenges hindering enterprise sustainability, including limited access to capital **(77.6%),** especially among refugees, weak business management skills, and poor market access. Qualitative findings corroborate this, as noted by a key informant,

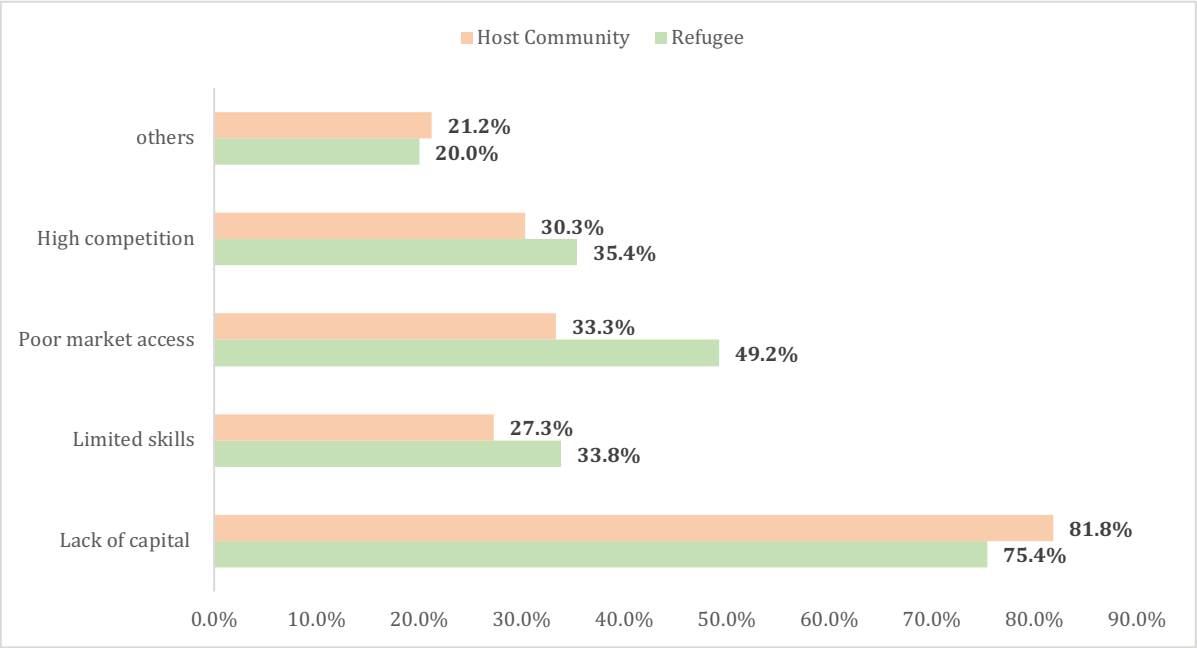
"Microfinance institutions were cautious to lend to refugees because of a lack of collateral requirements and limited financial literacy."

Other barriers include climate change, land scarcity, and market infrastructure gaps that limit the profitability and scalability of enterprises, as an informant noted,

"The private sector was reluctant to invest in refugee-hosting districts because the operating environment is still uncertain. Infrastructure is poor, and market volumes are unpredictable."

These constraints have constrained progress toward the JLIRP pillar's broader goal of private sector-led growth.

Figure 11: Challenges faced by entrepreneurs in refugee and host communities



3.2.3 Pillar 3: Increasing agricultural productivity, production, and marketable volume

This pillar was intended to address food, nutrition, and income security for 486,861 refugee and 1,152,087 host community households by 2025. It sought to improve livelihoods by boosting agricultural output and ensuring that households not only produce enough for subsistence but also generate surplus for markets. The underlying goal was to enhance resilience, reduce hunger, and promote economic independence through agriculture, given its significance to rural livelihoods.

The plan outlined interventions such as improving access to agricultural extension services, introducing better technologies and inputs, and promoting farmer organizations. It also prioritized upgrading post-harvest handling, attracting Agro-processors to off-take produce, and strengthening value chains through processing and marketing. Addressing land access and management was another critical strategy of this pillar, enabling both refugees and hosts to benefit from productive agricultural activities and engage in broader market opportunities.

Participation in crop and livestock farming

Government and humanitarian actors have been effective in boosting agricultural output, with over half **(65.4%)** of the households across all rural refugee and host communities engaging in farming, although host communities **(76.4%)** were more likely to engage in farming compared to refugees **(60.8%).** The majority of these households mainly engaged in crop farming **(90.6%)** while only **21.6%** engaged in livestock farming. Urban districts like Kampala had negligible agricultural engagement due to limited land. Refugees were also increasingly adopting crop cultivation, a sign of growing self-reliance and integration of refugees with the host community, which is highly relevant amidst the dwindling humanitarian response resources and the push for sustainability.

For instance, a refugee farmer was quoted as saying, "Refugees have embraced agriculture; we now grow our food instead of depending on rations."

Table 11: Participation in crop and livestock farming

District	Status	N	% Engaged in farming	n	% Engaged in crop farming	% Engaged in livestock farming
Kikuube	Refugee	24	25.0%	6	83.3%	33.3%
	Host Community	10	90.0%	9	77.8%	22.2%
	Total	34	44.1%	15	80.0%	26.7%
Isingiro	Refugee	45	53.3%	24	83.3%	20.8%
	Host Community	20	60.0%	12	83.3%	33.3%
	Total	65	55.4%	36	83.3%	25.0%
Kyegegwa	Refugee	28	82.1%	23	82.6%	39.1%
	Host Community	11	100.0%	11	81.8%	36.4%
	Total	39	87.2%	34	82.4%	38.2%
Yumbe	Refugee	35	97.1%	34	100.0%	2.9%
	Host Community	14	92.9%	13	100.0%	0.0%
	Total	49	95.9%	47	100.0%	2.1%
Adjumani	Refugee	15	73.3%	11	100.0%	9.1%
	Host Community	6	100.0%	6	100.0%	16.7%
	Total	21	81.0%	17	100.0%	11.8%
Lamwo	Refugee	12	50.0%	6	100.0%	50.0%
	Host Community	5	80.0%	4	100%	50.0%

	Total	17	58.8%	10	100%	50.0%
Total	**Refugee**	**171**	**60.8%**	**104**	**91.3%**	**20.0%**
	Host Community	**72**	**76.4%**	**55**	**89.1%**	**23.6%**
	Total	**243**	**65.4%**	**159**	**90.6%**	**21.3%**

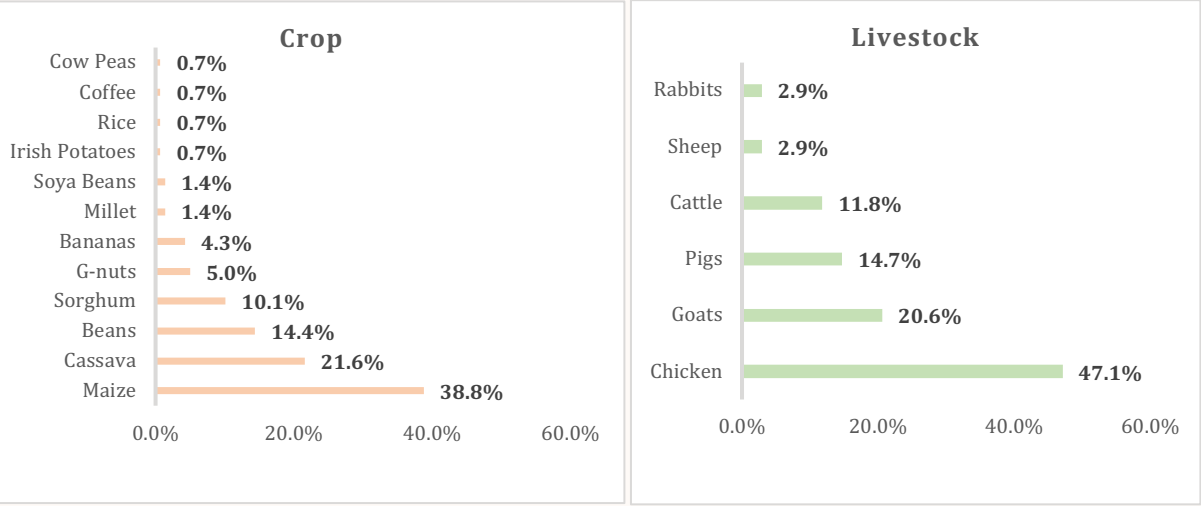
Crop production was dominated by maize **(38.8%)**, cassava **(21.6%)**, beans **(14.4%)**, and sorghum **(10.1%)**, consistent with national FSNA 2023 findings. Livestock farming was primarily poultry **(47.1%)** and goats **(20.6%)**, while piggery was limited in West Nile and Northern Uganda due to religious restrictions, highlighting the need to contextualize interventions to community faith and cultural practices. Qualitative evidence confirmed strong NGO and government involvement in promoting sustainable farming within the refugee and host communities.

As one key informant noted, *"ADRA and AVSI have trained farmers and distributed Irish potato seeds in Isingiro, which has contributed to the high production levels."*

Across regions, organizations such as **World Vision, DCA, CARITAS, Action Against Hunger, CARE, and African Women Rising** provided seeds and training, with findings indicating that communities engaged in farming were mainly supported with planting seeds **(32.7%)**, and training on sustainable farming methods **(24.5%),** hence demonstrating a robust partnership ecosystem where the JLIRP can thrive. However, **59.1%** of farming households, mostly hosts **(61.8%),** reported receiving no agricultural support in the past year, attributed to the humanitarian response programming that targets more of the refugees compared to the host community, calling for government and private sector collaborations to ensure equitable support within these communities. Focus groups in Kikuube and Adjumani echoed this, saying, *"Support by the NGOs mostly targets refugees while we hosts are left out."*

Furthermore, the limited outreach of extension services, especially in Kikuube, Isingiro, and Adjumani, emphasizes the need to strengthen local extension systems.

Figure 12: Main crop grown and livestock reared in refugee and host communities



Change in agricultural production

Agricultural production improved substantially, with yields increasing from **3.5% (2020)** to **14.4% (2025)**. However, this was below the five-year target of **30%**. The highest increases were recorded in **Lamwo (28.3%)**, while **Yumbe (2.1%)** registered the lowest. Women-led households showed greater production gains, reflecting the effectiveness of women's empowerment in agriculture. Farmers attributed these gains to improved inputs, better agronomic practices, and training support, thanks to the humanitarian interventions in these refugee-hosting districts.

One farmer in Isingiro remarked, *"This season I planted early and used manure, and I harvested more maize than ever before."*

Notably, regional variations were observed with farmers in South Western Uganda citing improved agronomic practices (like timely planting and fertilizer use), while those in Mid-Western and Northern Uganda attributed an increase in yield to better breeds and livestock feeding practices. In West Nile, access to communal land and seeds distributed by humanitarian partners like World Vision and Food for the Hungry have significantly boosted yields.

Nonetheless, **49.3%** of households reported farm yield declines due to climate shocks, pests, soil infertility, and land access challenges. In West Nile, a refugee farmer was quoted as saying, *"The landlords took over part of the land, leaving us with little space for agriculture."* Such cases highlight persistent vulnerability to environmental and land-related shocks by these communities, and it even worsens for the refugees. Therefore, strengthening climate-resilient agriculture, land governance mechanisms, especially in refugee-hosting areas with communal land tenure systems like West Nile, and inclusive support for persons with disabilities remains vital for sustaining gains under the JLIRP.

Figure 13: % change in agriculture production

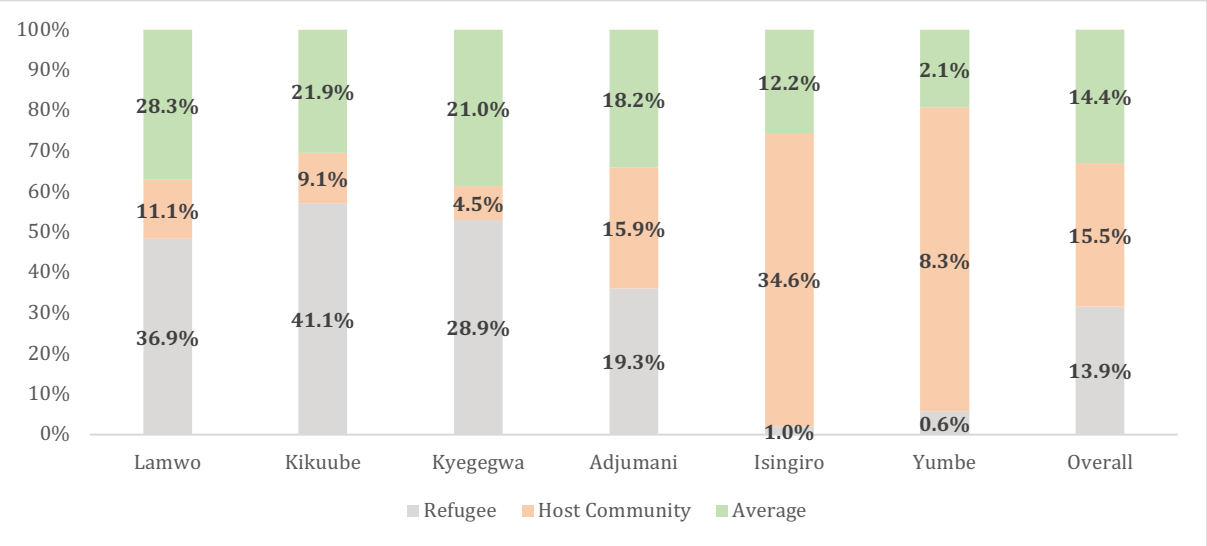


Table 12: Change in agricultural production disaggregated by district, citizenship and gender of household head

District	Refugees				Host Community				District Average			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
Kikuube	5	31.0%	71.4%	41.1%	7	17.5%	-33.3%	9.1%	12	22.6%	19.0%	21.9%
Isingiro	20	8.1%	-7.6%	1.0%	10	45.3%	27.4%	34.6%	30	18.0%	6.4%	12.2%
Kyegegwa	19	-16.4%	61.8%	28.9%	9	-13.2%	18.7%	4.5%	28	-15.4%	48.3%	21.0%
Yumbe	34	-33.3%	19.7%	0.6%	13	16.7%	0.0%	8.3%	47	-20.8%	16.6%	2.1%
Adjumani	11	24.4%	11.7%	19.3%	6	-47.5%	111.1%	15.9%	17	0.4%	44.8%	18.2%
Lamwo	6	-1.1%	75.0%	36.9%	4	-8.3%	50.0%	11.1%	10	-4.0%	68.8%	28.3%
Total	**95**	**-2.7%**	**28.9%**	**13.9%**	**49**	**5.1%**	**27.6%**	**15.5%**	**144**	**0.0%**	**28.5%**	**14.4%**

Change in income from the Sale of agricultural products

There was a notable improvement in the commercialization of agriculture within refugee and host communities, with **52.1%** of farming households selling produce in the most recent season compared to **43.1%** in the previous season. Subsequently, **54.0%** reported higher incomes from sales, up from **20%** at baseline, demonstrating progress toward self-reliance, although the performance was slightly below the targeted **75%**. Host communities **(66.7%)** recorded higher income gains compared to refugees **(44.8%)**, as a result of their stronger market access and production. Qualitative insights substantiated this, revealing that both refugees and hosts increasingly participate in local markets. Notably, farmers engaged in Maize **(61.1%)** and cassava **(57.1%)** production reported the greatest changes in incomes above the national average. Beans **(36.4%)** were also a key contributor to this change.

A key informant noted that, "Refugees now sell beans, maize, and vegetables to traders and some even save proceeds through VSLA groups."

However, challenges such as poor road infrastructure, high transport costs, and unstable prices limit the profitability of the farming enterprises, as a farmer in Lamwo explained,

"We have much produce, but no buyers, even roads are poor, and the transport is expensive."

Gender disparities were not noticeable; however, disparities in income earned from agricultural sales persist, particularly for persons with disabilities, of whom only **40%** reported an increase, and refugee groups from Burundi and DRC, who fetched low incomes due to lower market participation compared to the Rwandese. Therefore, to

sustain progress towards meaningful commercialisation of agricultural products from these areas, JLIRP should scale up value addition initiatives, inclusive market linkages, and post-harvest handling support to strengthen the competitiveness of their products in the market and household income stability.

Figure 14: % farmers with increased income from the sale of agricultural products

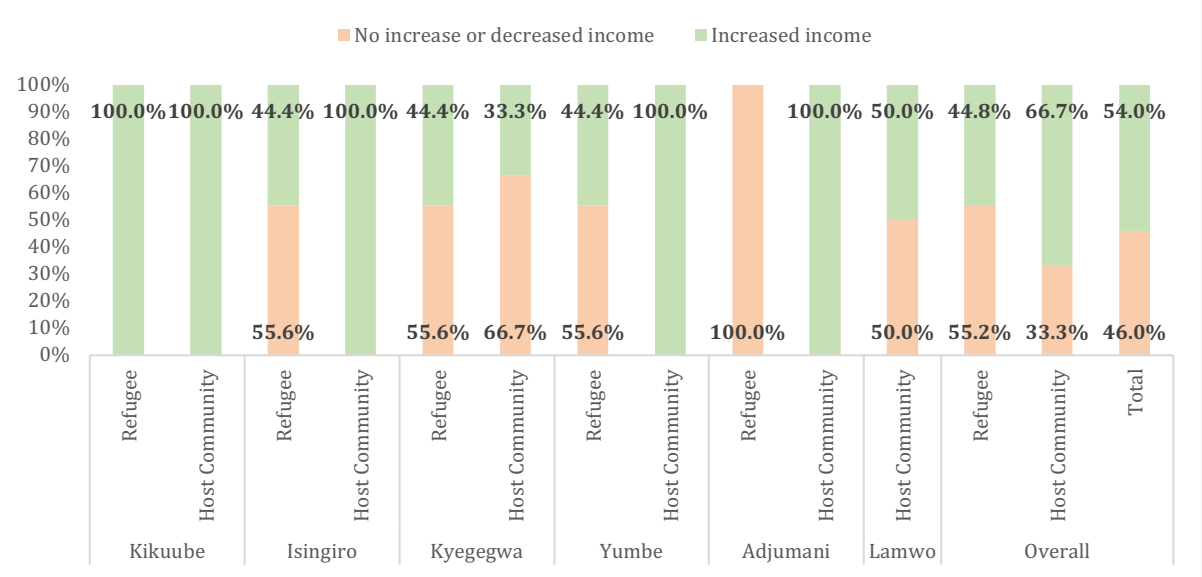


Table 13: farmers with increased income from sale of agricultural products disaggregated by location, citizenship and gender

	Refugees				Host community				District Average			
	n	Male	Female	Total	n	Male	Female	Total	N	Male	Female	Total
District												
Lamwo					2	50.0%		50.0%	2	50.0%		50.0%
Kikuube	1	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Yumbe	9	50.0%	40.0%	44.4%	1	100.0%		100.0%	10	60.0%	40.0%	50.0%
Isingiro	9	42.9%	50.0%	44.4%	3	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	12	50.0%	75.0%	58.3%
Kyegegwa	9	33.0%	50.0%	44.4%	9	25.0%	40.0%	33.3%	18	28.6%	45.5%	38.9%
Adjumani	1		0.0%	0.0%	1	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	2		50.0%	50.0%
Sub Region												
West Nile	10	50.0%	33.3%	40.0%	2	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	12	60.0%	42.9%	50.0%
South West	18	40.0%	50.0%	44.4%	12	40.0%	57.1%	50.0%	30	40.0%	53.3%	46.7%
Mid-West	1		100.0%	100.0%	5	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	6	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Northern					2	50.0%		50.0%	2	50.0%		50.0%
Disability status												
With disability	26	46.2%	46.2%	46.2%	19	66.7%	71.4%	68.4%	45	56.0%	55.0%	55.6%
Without disability	3	0.0%	50.0%	33.3%	2		50.0%	50.0%	5	0.0%	50.0%	40.0%
Total	**29**	**42.9%**	**46.7%**	**44.8%**	**21**	**66.7%**	**66.7%**	**66.7%**	**50**	**53.8%**	**54.2%**	**54.0%**

Household Dietary Diversity (HDD)

Household dietary diversity is the number of food groups out of the 12 food groups consumed by a household 24 hours before the survey. The 12 food groups are cereals, roots and tubers, vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, offal, eggs, fish and seafood, pulses, legumes, nuts, milk and milk products, oil/fats, sugar/honey, and miscellaneous.

Findings from the FSNA 2023 indicate that household dietary diversity remains low, with refugee households consuming an average of four food groups compared to five among host communities. Only **22.8%** of refugees and **45.5%** of hosts had high dietary diversity (6-12 food groups), highlighting persistent food insecurity and limited access to diverse foods. This evaluation confirmed this pattern with a female refugee in Adjumani, noting that,

"We mostly eat posho and beans because it's what we can afford. Other things like meat are only eaten once in a while."

This limited dietary diversity is largely attributed to low household income, market inaccessibility, and reliance on food rations, especially in rural refugee settlements. Therefore, improving dietary outcomes through plans like the JLIRP calls for nutrition-sensitive agricultural programming, promotion of kitchen gardens, and integration of livelihood interventions with nutrition training, ensuring households can afford and access diverse foods for consumption.

Household Food Consumption Score (FCS)

The FCS is a composite indicator that measures dietary diversity, food frequency, and the relative nutritional importance of food groups based on a seven-day recall of food consumed at the household level. A high FCS increases the probability that a household's food intake is adequate. FCS ranges from 0 to 112.

According to FSNA 2023, the average FCS stood at **34.7** for refugees and **45.6** for host communities out of 112, with **47.8%** of refugee households and **73.8%** of hosts achieving acceptable food consumption levels. These findings reflect persistent livelihood inequalities as refugees' heavy reliance on food assistance, and limited livelihood opportunities limit their dietary adequacy and resilience. Therefore, to enhance resilience, the next cycle of the JLIRP should reinforce agriculture nutrition linkages, scale up income-generating initiatives, and promote local food systems that reduce dependency on external aid while improving nutrition outcomes.

3.2.4 Pillar 4: Increasing access to market-relevant skills training to enhance employability and job creation

This pillar targeted the development of a skilled refugee and host workforce capable of harnessing employment opportunities in Uganda by 2025. It recognized that the lack of appropriate skills limited access to decent work and entrepreneurship, keeping both communities in cycles of poverty. The aim was therefore to build human capital that aligns with labor market needs, improving employability and fostering job creation.

Key strategies included expanding access to both formal and non-formal technical and vocational training, with emphasis on equity and inclusivity. Entrepreneurship and ICT were to be integrated into training delivery, while labor market information systems were to be strengthened to guide job placements. The plan also sought to increase direct job placement opportunities and build institutional capacities of vocational training centers, ensuring that skills development translated into real employment and enterprise creation

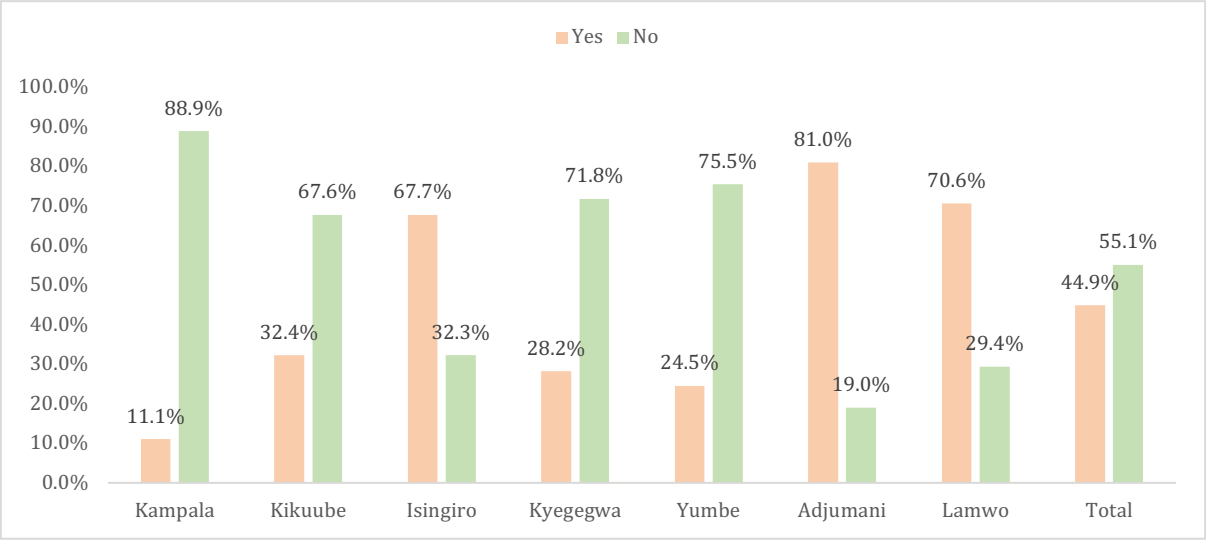
Functionality of technical and vocational institutions in refugee and host communities

The evaluation established that access to vocational skilling centers remains limited in refugee-hosting districts, with only **44.9%** of respondents aware of any functional centers within their communities. Availability was higher in refugee areas (**70.6%**) than in host communities (**29.4%**), indicating humanitarian investment concentration in settlements, risking escalating the perceptions of unequal support, which could undermine social cohesion and shared participation in livelihood enhancement programs. Furthermore, **40.4%** of households reported that at least one member had attended a training program in these training centres, again with refugees (**42.9%**) more likely to benefit than hosts (**34.4%**).

A key informant in Kikuube confirmed this imbalance, noting that, *"most training programs are implemented within the refugee settlements and host youth have to travel long distances to access them."*

Therefore, to promote inclusive growth and community harmony, future interventions should prioritize expanding skilling infrastructure equitably across both refugee and host communities.

Figure 15: Awareness of vocational skilling centers

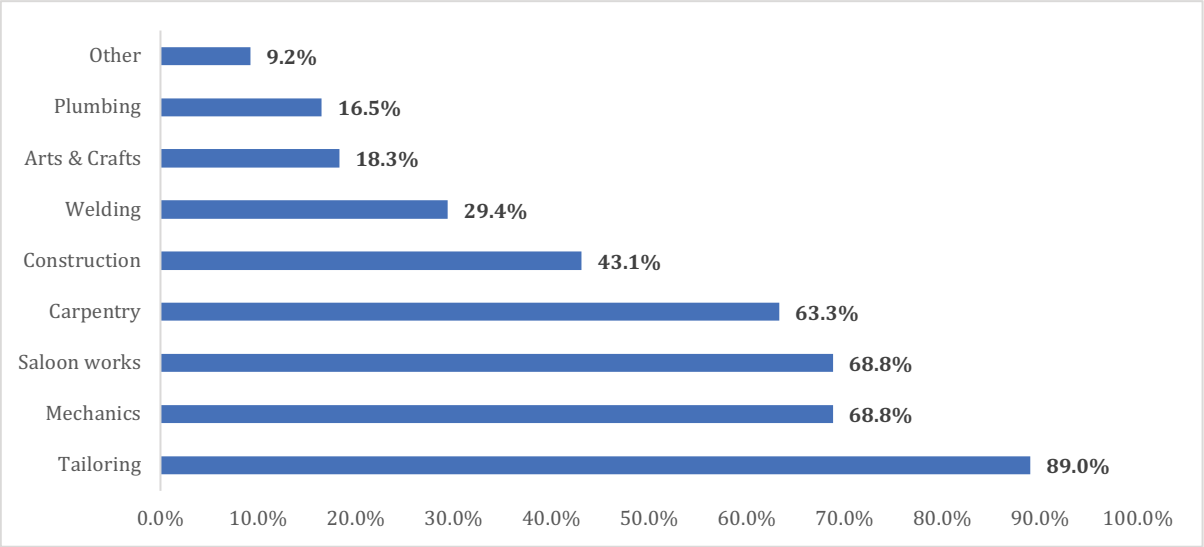


Notably, training programs within the existing vocational/ skilling centres predominantly focus on tailoring **(89.0%)**, mechanics **(68.8%)**, saloon work **(68.8%)**, and carpentry **(63.3%)**, with fewer courses in agriculture, construction, or ICT.

A key informant emphasized this, noting that, "*while skilling programs within the refugee hosting districts provide practical skills, there is limited innovation and digital training that can help youth compete in today's job market.*"

This confirms that most training centers remain oriented toward traditional trades, with minimal integration of technology-driven or green economy skills. To maximize relevance and employability, especially for women and youth within refugee hosting districts, JLIRP and partners should emphasize diversification of training portfolios for refugees and host communities to include innovative trades that respond to the evolving economic environment and job market, like digital skills, agri-business management, and renewable energy technologies, while ensuring equitable geographic coverage across refugee and host communities.

Figure 16: Courses offered in the skilling centers



Effectiveness of Vocational Skilling in Enhancing Employment Opportunities

The evaluation revealed that **56.8%** of trainees within the refugee and host communities were currently employed mostly in self-employment (**76.0%**), up from **12%** at baseline **(2020),** with minimal formal placements. Employment outcomes as a result of skilling were slightly higher among **host community members (63.6%)** than **refugees (54.5%)**, and male graduates **(52%)** were more likely to be employed than females **(48%),** highlighting persistent gender disparities in labor market absorption. Qualitative insights strongly support the observed outcomes of the skilling interventions, with an implementing partner noting that,

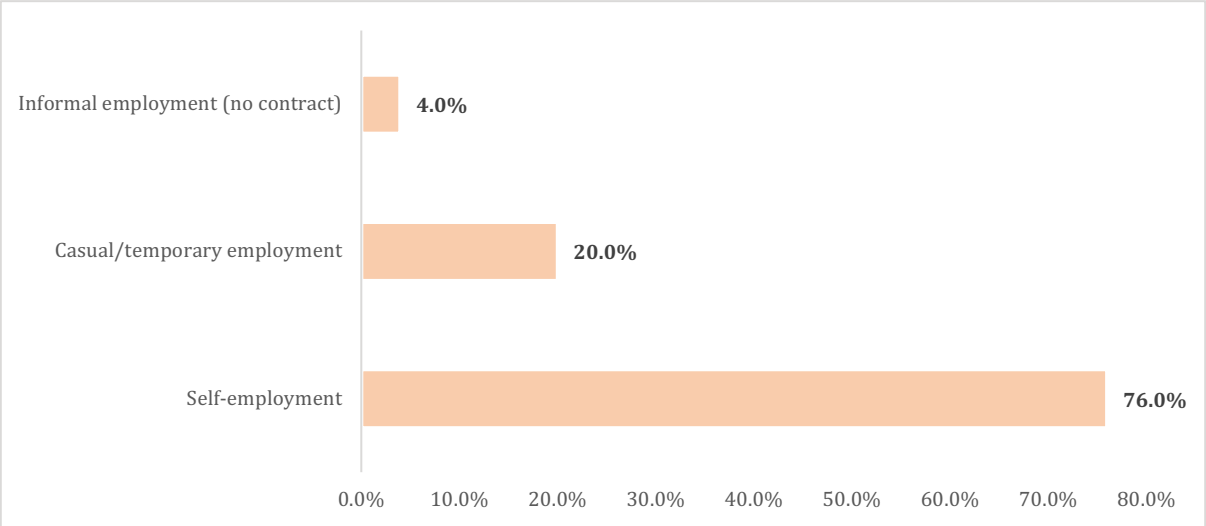
"In line with the JLIRP, large-scale skills development programs were implemented that have enhanced employability and self-reliance, especially among youth."

The community also confirmed the transformative effect of training, with many reported to have started small businesses in tailoring, welding, catering, and soap making, leveraging the skills acquired from the training. A beneficiary of the skilling programme proudly stated,

"After the training, I started with one sewing machine, and now I have four machines, which help me to pay school fees for my children."

However, occasionally, graduates lamented limited access to start-up support to put the skills gained into meaningful economic activities, as a youth from Adjumani was quoted saying, ***"We got skills in mechanics, but we have no capital to start our own work."*** These findings demonstrate that while vocational skilling has improved livelihoods and self-employment potential, its impact remains constrained by inadequate financial and institutional follow-up of trainees. Therefore, strengthening linkages between training centers, microfinance institutions, and private employers is crucial for translating skills into sustainable jobs and enterprises in refugee-hosting districts.

Figure 17: Type of employment for skilled individuals



Barriers to employment opportunities

Despite ongoing skilling initiatives, persistent barriers undermine the employment prospects of both refugees and host communities. The majority of respondents cited lack of start-up capital **(90.9%)** and absence of start-up kits **(74.5%)** as primary constraints, followed by scarcity of job opportunities **(43.6%)**, market saturation in traditional trades, and discrimination in hiring. These challenges were echoed across multiple FGDs, with one participant noting,

"We were trained in tailoring, but there are too many tailors within the settlement, and we also have no capital to open shops to compete with experienced tailors."

Additionally, the evaluation revealed that weak linkages between training institutions and employers limit apprenticeships and internships for the graduates, while refugees specifically face legal barriers such as restrictions on work permits and business registration, with limited mentorship and post-training support also cited as key gaps. Furthermore, coordination challenges among partners and fragmentation among training institutions hinder standardisation in skilling, hence low-quality graduates who are less competitive in the job market.

A key informant was quoted as saying, "*There is a lack of coordination among partners implementing skilling projects, causing duplication and wastage of resources.*"

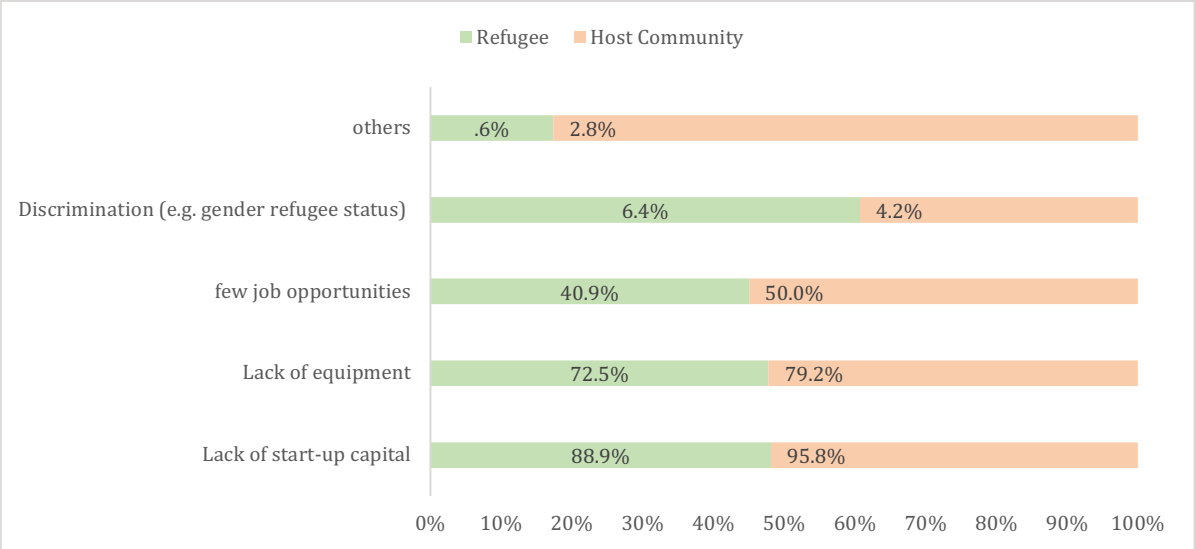
Another noted, *"Approaches used to train youth across the country and the periods for implementation widely vary. Therefore, this fragmentation does not produce a quality workforce for the job market, hence unemployment."*

These findings emphasize the need for increased coordination among implementing partners, standardisation of training course scope, structured post-training incubation programs for trainees, access to affordable credit, and policy reforms, especially in registration requirements that ease refugee participation in formal and semi-formal employment. Further still, deliberate government and private sector action to expand local

enterprises and industrial initiatives in refugee-hosting areas could also improve absorption of skilled labor from the vocational institutions.

A key informant supported this, noting, *"Government needs to improve coordination and put in place a robust database of individuals skilled in refugee hosting districts for better planning and proper resource allocation."*

Figure 18: Barriers to employment



Perception on equal pay for refugees and nationals

Perceptions of wage parity remain divided, with **35.4%** of respondents believing refugees and nationals receive equal pay, **32.9%** disagreeing, and **31.7%** uncertain. Qualitative evidence points to limited transparency and awareness of labor rights, especially in refugee-hosting districts, as a respondent from Yumbe explained, ***"Some employers pay refugees less because they think refugees can't complain."*** These disparities not only perpetuate inequality but also risk undermining social cohesion between refugees and host communities. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen labor inspection, wage monitoring, and sensitization on employment rights, especially through district labor offices and community structures, to foster fairness and build mutual trust between refugees and hosts.

3.2.5 Pillar 5: Promoting an effective shock-responsive refugee and host community social protection and social inclusion systems

The final pillar sought to ensure that at least 361,000 vulnerable individuals (5% of the refugee and host populations) are socially and economically included by 2025. Its goal was to reduce vulnerability to shocks such as poverty, displacement, and household crises by providing safety nets and support systems. This was critical for protecting disadvantaged groups who may otherwise be left behind, even with broader development gains.

The interventions included direct income support, expanded access to social services, and social insurance schemes tailored for refugees and hosts. The plan also promoted increased representation of vulnerable populations in decision-making, alongside social care and support services to strengthen families, such as positive parenting programs. By integrating social protection into the development agenda, this pillar aimed to build resilience, reduce inequalities, and promote inclusive participation in local development initiatives.

Participation of Vulnerable Persons

Vulnerable groups in Uganda include children, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, and refugees. Other vulnerable populations are ethnic minorities, low-income workers, and people living with HIV/AIDS. These groups face specific challenges like poverty, lack of access to essential services, and increased risk of exploitation.

The evaluation findings revealed that **34.2%** of households across refugee **(32.7%)** and host communities **(37.5%)** included vulnerable persons, with Kikuube **(91.2%)** reporting the highest prevalence and Kampala **(11.1%)** the lowest.

It should be noted that, regardless of one's vulnerability, there were avenues of participation in development interventions; for example, **28.9%** of households with vulnerable persons acknowledged participation in development interventions, with slightly higher participation among refugees **(30.4%)** than hosts **(25.9%)**.

The high participation of refugees was mainly attributed to the various initiatives by both government and other donors or private players on developments targeting refugees, such as UNHCR, WFP, World Vision, among others. Most vulnerable individuals engaged in vocational and skills development programs, particularly tailoring, hairdressing, carpentry, welding, and micro business. Others participated in savings groups, which were highlighted as vital in income generation and resilience building in refugee and host communities.

Despite the minimal participation, the inclusion of vulnerable persons in development programmes was attributed to the deliberate efforts of implementing partners who are mainstreaming inclusion concerns into their interventions. For example, in one of the focus group discussions in West Nile, one respondent noted that organizations such as DCA, Caritas, and Food for the Hungry supported vulnerable persons with cash handouts through livelihood and GBV recovery projects to look after their families in terms of buying food and healthcare.

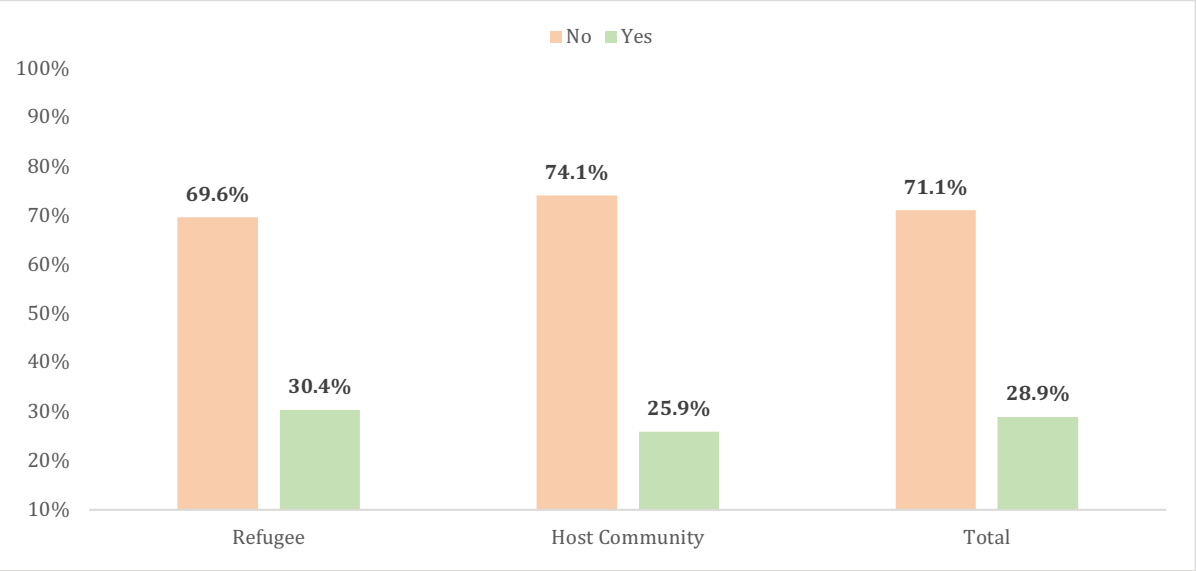
Another respondent from Yumbe explained, *"I joined a tailoring group supported by DCA; now I can earn something small every week."*

In South West Uganda, diversified efforts led by partners such as AVSI, ADRA, CARE, Ripple Effect, and Restore Africa combined skilling, financial literacy, and Agri-based support to empower vulnerable groups, particularly women. Similarly, in Mid-Western Uganda, actors such as NRC and Go Use Tech focused on market-oriented skills to strengthen self-reliance. These examples confirm that the JLIRP created pathways for inclusion, though outreach and coverage varied across districts and population categories.

Despite these achievements, the qualitative insights pointed to persistent barriers such as limited mobility for persons with disability to access services, low literacy levels among women, and inadequate follow-up after training. This highlights that vulnerability is often multidimensional, requiring holistic social protection beyond development initiatives.

One community leader in Adjumani observed, *"Some people with disability were enrolled for training but were not supported with assistive devices, so they couldn't continue."*

Figure 19: Participation of vulnerable groups in community development Programs.



Vulnerable persons owning productive assets

The evaluation assessed the percentage of vulnerable persons who own at least two productive assets, reflecting their capacity to engage in or sustain livelihood activities. Productive assets are defined as items that directly support income generation or economic activity, including agricultural assets, vocational tools, business equipment, transport assets, and financial assets. A respondent was counted as owning productive assets if they possessed two or more of these asset categories, providing a more robust measure of economic resilience and livelihood potential than ownership of a single asset.

Subsequently, the evaluation established that **26.2% (Refugees=21.5%, Host Community=37.8%)** owned productive assets. Kyegegwa registered the highest proportion with productive assets, while Kampala and Yumbe reported none.
The higher asset ownership reported among host communities compared to refugees indicates that refugees remain economically more vulnerable and have limited means to engage in productive activities, a challenge that was mainly attributed to limited access to land and restricted economic opportunities for these groups.

Table 14: Percentage of vulnerable persons owning productive assets

	Refugees		Host community		Overall	
	n	Yes	n	Yes	N	Yes
District						
Kampala	6	0.0%	4	0.0%	10	0.0%
Kikuube	9	11.1%	2	100.0%	11	27.3%
Isingiro	25	16.0%	12	16.7%	37	16.7%
Kyegegwa	17	76.5%	6	83.3%	23	78.3%
Yumbe	22	0.0%	7	0.0%	29	0.0%
Adjumani	8	0.0%	3	100.0%	11	27.3%
Lamwo	6	33.3%	3	66.7%	9	44.4%
Sub Region						
West Nile	30	0.0%	10	30.0%	40	7.5%
South West	42	40.5%	18	38.9%	60	40.0%
Mid-West	9	11.1%	2	100.0%	11	27.3%
Northern	6	33.3%	3	66.7%	9	44.4%
Kampala	6	0.0%	4	0.0%	10	0.0%
Total	**93**	**21.5%**	**37**	**37.8%**	**130**	**26.2%**

3.3: Efficiency of the JLIRP

The evaluation found that JLIRP resources, including financial, human, and technical, were far from optimally utilized, with less than 5 percent of the desired budget, as outlined in the financing strategy, formally documented through the plan's coordination and monitoring framework. This severe funding shortfall significantly constrained implementation and limited the ability to deliver interventions at the intended scale. Although development partners continued to support related livelihoods and job creation activities in refugee-hosting districts, much of this occurred in silos, as the JLIRP monitoring system was ineffective in capturing and consolidating all financial flows geared toward its objectives. Consequently, while the overall landscape reflected active interventions, they were fragmented and lacked synergy. Human resource gaps at the secretariat and the absence of integrated technical systems further compounded the inefficiencies. Therefore, strengthening the JLIRP's financial tracking mechanism, harmonizing partner reporting, and enhancing interagency coordination will be critical to achieving optimal resource utilization in future plan cycles.

Notably, most JLIRP interventions experienced significant implementation delays, with rollout lagging nearly two years behind schedule. The delays stemmed from bureaucratic bottlenecks, including prolonged budget approvals and weak inter-ministerial coordination. Respondents consistently reported that ***"****most of the interventions were not implemented on time since the implementation of the plan started after two years."* However, partners such as ILO, AVSI, PSFU, and Village Enterprise, whose activities of interest within the JLIRP were embedded within existing programs, were able to meet their internal timelines, highlighting the importance of institutional readiness and pre-established operational frameworks. To improve timeliness, future response plans should integrate synchronized planning and budgeting cycles, especially with other refugee response plans and government planning cycles, expedite approval processes, and ensure adequate staffing at the secretariat level to manage implementation demands.

Furthermore, the collaborative arrangements under JLIRP yielded mixed results towards efficiency. Positively, joint planning between government, UN agencies, and NGOs enhanced cost efficiency in certain sectors, particularly agriculture, where shared staffing and input procurement reduced operational costs. However, the limited effectiveness of the coordination and monitoring framework, especially at the district level, led to duplication of efforts and inconsistent delivery, especially in livelihood and vocational training programs. In most refugee-hosting districts, multiple partners implemented overlapping interventions without a common reporting structure, reducing overall effectiveness. Therefore, strengthening joint financial mobilisation and tracking, district-level coordination, and shared information systems will minimise duplication, improve resource use, and enhance overall efficiency of subsequent JLIRP phases.

3.3: Impact of JLIRP

The evaluation found that through the implementation of various interventions guided by the JLIRP, significant long-term outcomes have been generated in enhancing household welfare, income security, agricultural production, and social cohesion within refugee-hosting districts. The programme's integrated approach across its five pillars, particularly those focusing on livelihoods, governance, and resilience, produced tangible and lasting changes for both refugees and host communities. These outcomes align closely with national and global commitments, including the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Uganda's Vision 2040.

Economic inclusion and self-reliance were among the most prominent outcomes of JLIRP. Through skills training, entrepreneurship development, and access to credit facilities, the programme empowered refugees and host community members to engage in productive economic activities, resulting in **19.3%** of the households living above the international poverty line of **$1.9 per day** per day, up from **2%** at baseline (2020). Respondents consistently attributed increases in household income to these interventions. In several districts, youth trained under Pillar 4 established small enterprises or gained employment demonstrated by **56.8%** of those who had received training currently employed, thereby stimulating local economies and fostering a sense of self-reliance. These livelihood gains directly contribute to the CRRF Goal 2, which seeks to enhance refugee self-reliance and reduce dependence on humanitarian aid.

"There is improved household welfare, especially among refugees who got vocational training. Many are now running small businesses, tailoring, and mechanics," KII, Kyegegwa. Additionally, another key informant stated that, *"trained youth have opened workshops, salons, and garages in refugee settlements. They employ others now, which shows a clear impact."*

In terms of **food security and agricultural production**, JLIRP interventions under Pillar 3 improved agricultural output and nutrition through the promotion of climate-smart farming practices, access to improved inputs, and integrated extension services targeting both refugees and host farmers. Beneficiaries reported reductions in household food shortages and an increase in surplus production for market sale, with over half **(52.1%)** of farming households reporting selling agricultural produce in the most recent season, up from **43.1%** in the previous comparable season. These outcomes demonstrate significant progress toward **SDG 2 (Zero Hunger)** and contribute to Uganda's Vision 2040 target of achieving sustainable agricultural transformation.

"Many refugee households that were relying on food assistance are now able to feed themselves and even sell surplus." (KII, Isingiro)

Another major outcome was the **strengthening of social cohesion and peaceful coexistence** between refugees and host communities. JLIRP's inclusive design, where both groups participated jointly in livelihood, infrastructure, and service delivery interventions like savings groups, helped reduce competition and tension over resources. This inclusive programming has fostered trust and mutual respect, contributing to stability in refugee-hosting areas and advancing **CRRF Goal 3**, which

seeks to ease pressure on host communities and promote social harmony. This is supported by the low prevalence of conflict in these communities, with only **39.1%** of respondents reporting experiencing or observing conflict in the past 12 months, of which only **24.2%** were refugee-host disputes.

> *"By engaging both refugees and hosts in the same livelihood programs, tension reduced. Communities now see each other as business partners."* (KII, Kikuube District)

Furthermore, the JLIRP made notable strides in **institutional and governance strengthening,** especially at the district level. The programme enhanced the capacity of local government structures through sector coordination committees to coordinate, integrate, monitor, and report on initiatives within the districts by integrating the JLIRP into district development plans. This institutional change supports the NDP III governance and security objectives, ensuring that local governments are better equipped to manage refugee and host community development sustainably.

> *"Through JLIRP, we established coordination committees that now meet regularly even without partner funding. It has become part of our district culture."* (KII, Kyegegwa)

3.4: Sustainability of the JLIRP

The sustainability prospects of JLIRP results are moderately high, particularly where interventions have been effectively integrated into government and community systems. The evaluation found that while many results are likely to endure beyond the first plan, the degree of sustainability varies across districts, depending largely on institutional commitment, funding continuity, and local ownership. Refugee hosting districts that mainstreamed JLIRP activities into their operational structures and those with strong community engagement are better positioned to sustain JLIRP outcomes over time.

Notably, sustainability is strongest in districts that have embedded JLIRP interventions into their local development frameworks and planning processes. Where this alignment occurred, district authorities implement interventions within the JLIRP scope as part of their routine activities, including coordination, reporting, and monitoring functions. This institutional integration will ensure the continuation of refugee hosting coordination structures, hence strengthening the long-term impact of JLIRP support on local governance.

"The district integrated coordination under our Community Services Department, and we regularly hold quarterly reviews with partners." (KII, Kikuube District)

At the national level, the harmonization of planning through routine committee meetings established through JLIRP has further enhanced policy coherence and institutional resilience. These mechanisms have strengthened linkages between government entities, UN agencies, and local authorities, embedding JLIRP practices within Uganda's broader development and refugee response frameworks. However, the limited coherence in budgeting and data sharing systems, especially with the other refugee response plans and implementing partners, threatens the sustainability of this plan if not addressed in the subsequent cycle.

The JLIRP emphasised community ownership and institutional structures for sustainability. Community structures such as Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), producer cooperatives, and refugee-led SACCOs supported by the different sector players with the refugee-hosting districts were noted to have remained operational even beyond the specific projects that provided support, demonstrating strong ownership and self-reliance. The evaluation noted that these groups continue to mobilize savings, provide access to credit, and support livelihood diversification, especially benefiting women and youth who are the cornerstone of development in Uganda's economy.

A key informant noted that, *"most of the savings groups and cooperatives formed under our interventions are still active, meet weekly and manage their own funds without external support."*

Another key factor enhancing the sustainability of the JLRIP is the continued utilization of skills and knowledge acquired through the plan's vocational and entrepreneurship training initiatives, pioneered by different partners. Beneficiaries of these trainings have retained and applied practical skills in trades such as tailoring, carpentry, and

mechanics, enabling them to generate a steady income and support their households. This is evidenced by over half (**56.8%)** of those who had received vocational training currently being employed. However, the sustainability of this skilling is threatened by many factors, including the lack of start-up capital among the skilled youth, limited job opportunities to absorb the trained youth, and the limited innovation by the training providers, hence offering 'business as usual courses that are not competitive in the evolving market.

"Refugees trained in practical skills like carpentry and tailoring are earning on their own. That impact will stay even if the program ends." (KII, Isingiro)

4. LESSONS LEARNT

The lessons presented below synthesize key insights from across the five JLIRP pillars, integrating both quantitative and qualitative evidence collected from refugee and host communities, key informants, and focus group discussions. They capture what worked well, the gaps and challenges encountered, and the innovative practices that emerged during implementation. Together, these lessons provide a foundation for adaptive learning and inform future programming aimed at strengthening self-reliance, inclusion, and resilience among refugees and host communities.

4.1. Positive Learning

- Integrated programming enhances sustainability; multi-sectoral interventions that combined livelihood support, agricultural inputs, and skilling created stronger outcomes than single focus projects. Joint implementation by government and humanitarian partners also improved coherence and outcomes of the JLIRP.

District leaders emphasized that joint planning and review meetings strengthened alignment with government priorities, minimized fragmentation, and improved accountability. This collaborative approach fostered ownership, optimized resource use, and created synergies across the five JLIRP pillars, especially in livelihoods and social protection interventions.

A respondent was quoted saying, "The multi-sectoral coordination through the CRRF Steering Group and technical working groups improved coherence and reduced duplication, especially in livelihood and resilience programming."

- Refugee-host integration fosters social cohesion; Encouraging refugees and hosts to jointly participate in agricultural, business, and skilling initiatives reduced tensions and built mutual trust, validating JLIRP's area-based approach.
- Empowerment of women accelerates household recovery; Women's active involvement in agribusiness, vocational skilling, and savings groups demonstrated higher agriculture production abilities and household resilience, highlighting the value of gender sensitive programming.
- Capacity building leads to tangible income gains; Vocational and technical training in refugee hosting districts directly translated mainly into self-employment and small enterprise creation, showing that practical, hands-on skills development is a

practical path to self-reliance, hence highlighting the relevance of the JLIRP theory of change.

- Integration of refugees into national development strengthens self-reliance; Refugee participation in crop and livestock farming has significantly reduced dependency on food aid and enhanced coexistence with host communities. This demonstrates the success of the integration and self-reliance model promoted under the JLIRP.

4.2. Negative Learning

Despite significant achievements, JLIRP faced persistent challenges that constrained its overall effectiveness. These negative learnings should be avoided or mitigated in subsequent programming.

- The JLIRP financing assumptions were heavily reliant on donor financing; the most critical limitation for the JLIRP was the funding gap, which affected the desired quality of implementation. Over-reliance on donor financing introduced uncertainty and delayed implementation, and crippled coordination efforts.
- Weaknesses in coordination and information harmonization; also emerged as key lessons. While JLIRP promoted multi-sectoral coordination through the National Steering Committee, fragmentation persisted as some partners operated in isolation, using unaligned data systems and reporting frameworks. This resulted in duplication of activities, inefficient resource use, and difficulties in consolidating national progress. A harmonized data management framework and stronger oversight mechanisms would have improved collective learning and evidence-based management of the entire plan.

A respondent from Isingiro District was quoted as saying, *"Some partners implemented similar trainings in the same refugee settlement without consulting the district coordination office. That confused beneficiaries and wasted resources."* Another respondent from Kikuube also noted that, *"Some implementing partners maintained separate reporting systems not harmonized with the district."*

- Reluctance by the private sector to invest in refugee-hosting districts; despite efforts to promote economic inclusion, the private sector remained cautious due to perceived risks in refugee-hosting areas such as poor infrastructure, low purchasing power, and regulatory uncertainty. This constrained enterprise expansion and the creation of scalable job opportunities envisioned under JLIRP, as one respondent noted, *"the private sector was reluctant to invest in refugee-hosting districts because the operating environment is still uncertain, Infrastructure is poor, and market volumes are unpredictable."*
- Policy and environmental constraints affect productivity and employment; constraints like unclear refugee labour laws in the country affect access to employment, with many stakeholders citing challenges with acquiring work permits among refugees. Environmental degradation and population pressure on natural

resources affect economic enhancement. Without harmonized policies and sustained investment in environmental restoration, livelihood gains risk loss in the long term.

- Uneven access limits the inclusiveness of target groups in national development; host communities and vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and female-headed households, reported lower access to intervention benefits, which highlights the need for more equitable targeting.
- Weak market linkages reduce the economic impact of interventions; many trained or supported beneficiaries mainly lacked access to credit, start-up capital, and structured markets despite high production volumes, limiting the translation of skills and production into sustained income and self-reliance.
- Extension and follow-up support remain inadequate; limited extension visits and post-training mentorship weakened adoption of improved practices, affecting long-term sustainability of interventions.

4.3. Innovations and Strategies for scale-up

Several JLIRP innovations demonstrated strong potential for replication in future refugee and host community programs, as discussed below;

- The development and institutionalization of the Self Reliance Index (SRI), a standardized tool jointly developed by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and partners such as WFP. The SRI harmonizes measurement of household progress across refugee and host populations, enabling more targeted and evidence-based programming. Institutionalizing this tool across refugee response programs will enhance coherence, comparability, and shared accountability.
- Multi-stakeholder partnerships strengthen delivery; Collaboration between government agencies, humanitarian actors, and private sector players enabled wider reach and resource leverage. For instance, joint monitoring visits at the district level with agencies such as UNHCR, WFP, and ILO, transparency, reduced duplication, and enhanced learning across sectors. Therefore, scaling such partnerships can enhance coordination and efficiency in future programs.
- Community-led skilling and savings models; localized vocational centres and savings groups demonstrated strong ownership and sustainability, suggesting that community-driven skilling and microfinance models can be scaled up across settlements. These mechanisms deepened financial inclusion, with over half (55.6%) of the households assessed acknowledging being part of a savings group. They also promoted entrepreneurship, with 40.3% of households reporting having either established or expanded a business within the past three years. In several districts, refugee women's savings groups evolved into small enterprises, indicating the long-term viability of such grassroots financial models.

A respondent also supported this saying, *"Strengthening savings groups and farmer cooperatives ensures that benefits continue without direct partner funding."*

- Integration of digital and financial inclusion; emerging digital solutions for payments like mobile money, and financial literacy improved access to savings and markets for refugee and host communities, a practice that could be expanded to enhance livelihood resilience in these areas.
- Integrated livelihood and social cohesion programming emerged as a best practice that reduced tensions and promoted coexistence between refugees and hosts. By linking economic empowerment activities with dialogue platforms, joint training, and community events, partners aligning with the JLIRP created shared spaces for collaboration and peacebuilding. This integrated approach should be maintained and scaled in future interventions to sustain social harmony and collective resilience in refugee-hosting areas.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation concludes that the Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Response Plan (JLIRP) has made a significant contribution to improving the socio-economic conditions of refugees and host communities in Uganda. The plan's design, anchored in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the National Development Plan (NDP) III, provided a coherent, government-led approach that linked humanitarian and development programming. By addressing five interrelated pillars, the JLIRP successfully fostered self-reliance, social cohesion, and inclusive growth among refugees and host populations across the 13 implementing districts.

Overall, the JLIRP was found to be highly relevant and well aligned to both national and international priorities. Its interventions effectively addressed core livelihood dimensions such as food security, income generation, and employability. The emphasis on inclusive and gender-sensitive programming enhanced the participation of vulnerable groups, particularly women, youth, and persons with disabilities. The plan also promoted local ownership through integration into district structures and engagement of community leaders, which strengthened sustainability and accountability at the subnational level.

In terms of effectiveness, the JLIRP registered notable progress across all pillars. Under Pillar 1, peacebuilding and community development initiatives strengthened social cohesion, with most respondents reporting a sense of safety and improved trust in local authorities. Pillar 2 interventions expanded entrepreneurship and local business activity, though constrained by limited access to capital and weak market linkages. Pillar 3 interventions improved agricultural production and commercialization, evidenced by the increased proportion of households producing surplus for sale and improved food consumption patterns, particularly among host communities. Pillar 4 improved employability through vocational skilling, with over half of the trained individuals now engaged in gainful work. Under Pillar 5, social protection programs provided a safety net for vulnerable groups, though coverage and coordination remained limited.

Efficiency, however, was affected by inadequate funding, fragmentation of data systems, and duplication of roles among partners. Less than five percent of the projected JLIRP financing strategy was mobilized directly under the plan, resulting in heavy reliance on parallel partner-funded projects. This fragmented resource flow undermined harmonised tracking of performance and impact. Similarly, inconsistent coordination between national and district-level actors led to overlaps and inefficiencies in implementation, despite the existence of functional steering structures. The limited participation of the private sector and weak linkages between training institutions and the labor market further constrained the sustainability of livelihood gains.

Notably, the JLIRP's sustainability prospects are promising but not yet guaranteed. The plan to some extent succeeded in embedding livelihood and self-reliance interventions within district development structures, creating opportunities for continuity beyond

project cycles. However, the absence of a dedicated financing mechanism, weak data systems, and inadequate institutional capacity at the local government level pose risks to sustaining results. Strengthening institutional ownership, harmonizing monitoring systems, and improving multi-stakeholder coordination will therefore be essential for the next phase of the JLIRP.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the key recommendations derived from the JLIRP evaluation findings. The recommendations are structured into cross-cutting actions, which apply across all the plan components, and pillar-specific recommendations that address priority areas under each JLIRP pillar. These recommendations provide practical guidance to strengthen the effectiveness, coordination, and sustainability of subsequent JLIRP design and implementation.

Cross-Cutting Recommendations

- Strengthen coordination and harmonisation by institutionalising joint planning, monitoring, and reporting mechanisms between government, humanitarian agencies, and local governments to ensure complementarity, reduce duplication, and enhance accountability across pillars. JLIRP stakeholders could adopt harmonized digital data-sharing mechanisms and hold quarterly national and district coordination meetings to review progress and resolve overlaps.

  A respondent noted, *"There is a need to consolidate secretariats and have one central system to track contributions and avoid duplication."* Another noted that, *"there is a need to align planning periods with other sector response plans for better integration."*

- Promote equity and inclusion of JLIRP by applying affirmative actions to ensure equitable access to livelihoods, skilling, and social protection interventions for refugees, host communities, women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This can be achieved through gender sensitive training, joint refugee host cooperatives, and policies improving access to land, credit, and employment. Specific policy measures could be used to address the inclusion challenge, especially along the decentralisation policy provisions of Uganda.

  A key informant was quoted, *"UNDP promotes inclusion through self-reliance models, which could be adopted by JLIRP for scale-up to all refugee-hosting districts."*

- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation, and data systems by leveraging the Partnership Coordination and Monitoring System (PCMS) under the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to track JLIRP outputs, outcomes, and resources in real time. Also standardize tools and use the Self-Reliance Index (SRI) to guide progress measurement, complemented by capacity building for M&E officers at national and district levels. Furthermore, strengthen the regulatory frameworks to enhance reporting compliance by partners.

A key informant supported this, noting, *"Going forward, JLIRP should implement data-driven planning and monitoring with shared indicators across response plans."*

- Strengthen financing and resource mobilisation for the JLIRP by developing a financing strategy, mainstreaming JLIRP interventions into sector Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), and adopting a multi-year pooled financing model that integrates government, donor, and private sector contributions towards the humanitarian response under a unified framework. Annual donor coordination forums led by OPM and MoFPED should identify funding overlaps and new financing opportunities.

  A key informant was quoted as saying, *"JLIRP should develop a fully fledged financing strategy for the next response plan to guide resource mobilization for all pillars."*

- Enhance visibility, awareness, and localisation of the JLIRP at the district and community level by integrating structured awareness, communication, and localization strategies within the plan to ensure that all stakeholders understand the plan's objectives, implementation arrangements, and benefits.

Pillar 1: Strengthening Refugee and Host Community Social Cohesion

- Institutionalize refugee participation in district local governance systems. District Local Governments should formally bring on board refugee leaders during the district planning and budgeting processes. This includes representation of refugee leaders in Technical Planning Committees, budgeting consultative meetings, and sector working groups. District Development Plans (DDPs) must explicitly capture refugee-related priorities, leveraging existing good practice from JICA-supported districts that have already mainstreamed refugee concerns.

- Ensure refugee inclusion in programme design and implementation. As part of Uganda's commitments under the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), districts and implementing partners must systematically involve refugees in identifying, prioritizing, and co-implementing interventions that directly affect them. Localized programming should require joint refugee–host consultations during beneficiary selection and activity planning, especially for livelihood and community-based projects.

- Scale up positive social norms and cohesion activities. Government and partners should intentionally invest in structured social-norm change initiatives to reduce tensions, curb cross-border crime, and harmonize cultural practices. This includes expanding sports, cultural exchanges, dance/drama initiatives, and joint livelihood activities (e.g., joint VSLA groups). Existing models, such as Game Connect exchange visits, should be scaled across all settlements.

- Strengthen awareness and enforcement of laws and grievance mechanisms. Districts and partners should enhance community-level awareness of national

laws, refugee policies, and rights/obligations, while simultaneously strengthening formal and informal dispute resolution pathways. Strong coordination between Refugee Welfare Committees (RWCs) and District Peace and Justice Committees should be institutionalized to ensure timely, transparent, and conflict-sensitive resolution of disputes between hosts and refugees.

- Expand and maintain shared community infrastructure. The Government of Uganda should prioritize investment in common-user facilities that are accessible to both refugees and host communities, such as markets, schools, health centers, water systems, and recreation spaces. Shared infrastructure promotes interaction, reduces parallel service delivery systems, and reinforces long-term social cohesion and inclusion.

Pillar 2: Expanding Employment, Enterprise Development, and Market Linkages

- Develop inclusive and flexible financial products. The government should collaborate with financial institutions to design tailored and flexible financial products that serve both refugees and host communities. These products should accommodate varying income levels, limited collateral, and unique livelihood contexts to promote equitable access to finance.
- Establish a government–partner guarantee fund. Government and development partners should establish a pre-positioned guarantee fund specifically designed to support refugees and host communities. This should ease collateral requirements and mitigate lender risk, enhancing access to credit for vulnerable households and small enterprises.
- Implement comprehensive skills development packages. Skills training programmes should be delivered as complete and integrated packages that combine technical skills, business development, financial literacy, mentorship, and post-training follow-up. This holistic approach will enhance employability and enterprise sustainability.
- Promote full value-chain integration among implementing partners. All implementing partners within refugee-hosting districts should prioritise value-chain completeness from production to processing, marketing, and distribution. Strengthening linkages across the entire value chain will improve productivity, reduce losses, and enhance market competitiveness for both refugees and host communities.
- Strengthen and operationalise collection and aggregation centres. Government and development partners should enhance the functionality of collection and aggregation centres to reduce market fragmentation. Investment should focus on improving value addition processes, packaging, certification, and distribution systems to address persistent marketing challenges and improve producer incomes.
- Expand access to affordable finance for small enterprises in refugee hosting districts through scale-up of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) that

have proven effective in bridging financing gaps and link them to formal microfinance institutions such as BRAC, UGAFODE, and Opportunity Bank.

- Support business incubation and digital financial inclusion by developing enterprise incubation hubs, promoting value chain development, and establishing market information systems targeting refugee-hosting districts to enhance employment and income generation. In partnership with the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance (MoICT&NG) and innovation hubs, the next JLIRP could promote digital business registration and e-commerce for the largely small refugee and host entrepreneurs in a bid to eliminate trade barriers.
- Promote Private Sector engagement by creating an enabling environment through advocating for incentives such as tax relief, land access, credit guarantees, and seed grants for private businesses, especially those engaged in or interested in agri-business and service sectors in refugee-hosting districts.

Pillar 3: Enhancing Agricultural Livelihoods and Food Security

- Strengthen and expand the agricultural extension system through recruitment, retooling, and facilitation of extension workers supplemented by a blended model involving public officers, private providers, NGO facilitators, lead farmers, and digital advisory tools. This will significantly reduce the current inefficiencies in the agricultural extension system within refugee-hosting districts, especially in Kikuube, Isingiro, and Adjumani districts, where limited outreach of extension services was reported.
- Enhance regulatory enforcement by training and sensitizing input dealers, and incentivize private sector actors to establish agro-input outlets in and around settlements. This will address the challenge of poor-quality inputs and limited access to genuine agricultural inputs in the refugee-hosting districts.
- Promote group formation and scale up block farming approaches for refugees to mitigate low refugee participation in agriculture caused by limited land access.
- Implement agricultural interventions using a complete value chain approach and prioritize viable chains through settlement-specific mapping, while addressing bottlenecks in inputs, production, aggregation, processing, and marketing. This will overcome fragmented interventions and strengthen value chain performance across settlements.
- Design inclusive training models and accessible input distribution mechanisms that deliberately target women, youth, and persons with disabilities. This will increase the participation of vulnerable groups who are currently underrepresented in agricultural activities.
- Promote climate-resilient technologies such as drought-tolerant varieties, early-maturing crops, water harvesting systems, micro-irrigation kits, and conservation agriculture alongside strengthened dissemination of localized

climate information. This will help communities respond to the effects of climate change and erratic weather patterns.

- Strengthen VSLAs, link them to microfinance institutions, and promote blended financing models that support production and value addition to mitigate the challenge of limited access to credit and financial services for farmers.
- Generate regular market assessments and climate risk profiles, strengthen market linkages between producer groups and buyers, and improve feeder road access through programmes like DRDIP and UCSATP in a bid to address persistent market access challenges faced by farmers.
- Support cooperatives and producer groups with energy-efficient post-harvest technologies such as solar dryers, moisture meters, hermetic bags, and improved storage facilities to reduce losses and overcome the challenge of limited post-harvest handling and value addition capacity within refugee hosting districts. This can be piloted in districts like Kyegegwa, Isingiro, Kyegegwa and Lamwo where despite the commendable change in agricultural production, income from sales is still low.

Pillar 4: Improving Employability and Skills Development

- Intensify sensitization and awareness campaigns on vocational education and training by leveraging national events such as the International Day of Education and through sustained community outreach. This will increase public appreciation of TVET as a viable pathway to employment and self-reliance.
- Strengthen linkages between training institutions, microfinance providers, and private sector actors to facilitate apprenticeships, internship placements, enterprise development, and access to start-up capital for graduates for instance through a revolving fund for access to kits. This will enhance employability and support transitions from school to work.
- Conduct periodic comprehensive, market-based skills assessments including tracer studies of graduates to evaluate skill relevance, absorption into the labour market, and opportunities for curriculum improvement. This will ensure that training packages by stakeholders within refugee hosting districts respond to labour market demand.
- Accelerate the standardization of vocational certification and finalize implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) to ensure equitable recognition of skills acquired through both formal and non-formal learning pathways. This will promote mobility, competitiveness, and employability for all learners.
- Enhance coordination and harmonization of skills development initiatives by establishing functional multi-level working groups at national, sub-national, and

field levels. This will improve coherence, minimize duplication, and strengthen the overall skills development ecosystem.

Pillar 5: Strengthening Social Protection Systems and Resilience

- Strengthen identification and targeted support for vulnerable persons by establishing a unified vulnerability profiling and registration system across settlements and host communities, and providing tailored support such as assistive devices, psychosocial counselling, case management, and priority access to essential services. This will ensure that individuals facing multidimensional vulnerabilities are accurately identified and effectively supported by partners.

- Enhance inclusive participation in development and decision making by integrating inclusion principles across all partner programmes and strengthen representative community structures to ensure that women, youth, persons with disabilities, older persons, and other at-risk groups actively participate in planning, implementation, and leadership processes. This will further promote equitable participation and reduce exclusion from development opportunities within the refugee hosting districts.

- Expand and integrate shock-responsive social protection systems. Partners should scale up social care services, cash and in-kind safety nets, and link households to complementary services in health, education, nutrition, protection, and GBV response. This will enhance household resilience, reduce vulnerability to shocks, and support long-term social and economic stability among refugees and host communities.

- Improve accessibility, quality, and sustainability of livelihood and skills development programmes within refugee hosting districts. Partners should align vocational and life-skills training with labour market demands, provide post-training support such as start-up kits, mentorship, and market linkages and ensure that training facilities and curricula are inclusive and accessible to persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups. This will strengthen employability and promote sustainable livelihoods for vulnerable populations in the refugee and host communities.

For more information contact:

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