



Endline / FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

For

Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda – ALENU

Presented to Caritas Switzerland

By

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Table of Contents

I. LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:	4
II. Declaration of the report	1
III. Acknowledgement	1
IV. Approval statement from Caritas Switzerland	1
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:	1
2. INTRODUCTION	1
3. Purpose and objectives of the Endline Evaluation	2
4. Scope of the evaluation	2
5. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	1
6. Data Analysis	3
7. Limitations experienced	4
8. EVALUATION FINDINGS	4
8.1. Demographics	4
8.2. Overall project contribution to the outcome and impact level indicators	5
8.3. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS BY RESULT AREA:	8
8.3.1.1. RESULT 1.1: INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DIVERSIFIED FOOD	8
8.3.1.2. RESULT 1.2: INCREASED MARKET ACCESSIBILITY	10
8.3.1.3. RESULT 1.3: IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL STATUS	12
9. MONITORING EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)	6
10. GENDER SENSITIVITY	7
11. LESSONS LEARNED	7
12. RECOMMENDATIONS	7
13. CONCLUSIONS	8
APPENDICES	9

List of Tables

Table 1: Geographical Scope of The Endline Evaluation	1
Table 2: List of KIIs and FGDs conducted	2
Table 3: Sampled Respondents	2
Table 4: Household demographics	4

List of Figures

Figure 1: Poverty rate by region	6
Figure 2: Household Food Consumption Score	6
Figure 3: Households main source of Income	7

Figure 4:Construct of the HH journey to Economic empowerment	8
Figure 5: Photo Credit: By Consultant: Farmer group members weeding their group groundnut garden.	9
Figure 6:Household Access to Finance	10
Figure 7:Value chain Commodities by District	11
Figure 8: Access to market by value chain and Sex	11
Figure 9:Farmers adding value to their commodities.	11
Figure 10:Children (<10) who participated in nutrition assessment at the health facility. (Source. DHIS2)	12
Figure 11:Usage of family planning	13
Figure 12:Family planning methods commonly used.	13
Figure 13:Histogram showing child spaces interval	13
Figure 14:Teenage pregnancy cases at Households	13
Figure 15: Photo Captured by Consultant: Thresher Management Committee during an interview at Wafoyi Mungu Restaurant, Panyimur Main Market, Panyimur Town Council, Pakwach District	Error! Bookmark not defined.

I. LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS:

Abbreviations	Explanation
AA	Advanced Africa
AFARD	Agency for Accelerated Regional Development
ALENU	Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda
ANC	Antenatal Care
CACH	Caritas Switzerland
COVID19	Corona Virus Disease
DINU	Development Initiative for Northern Uganda
DLG	Departments of Local Government
EU	European Union
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization
FCS	Food Consumption Score
FDP	Family Development Plan
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGs	Farmer Groups
FO	Finance Officers
FY	Financial Year
GALs	Gender Learning Action Systems
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoU	Government of Uganda
GWED-G	Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization
HHs	Households
IGAYCF	Income Generating Activity Infant Young Child Feeding
IP	Implementing Partner
IYCF	Infant and Young Child Feeding
KII	Key Informant Interviews
LG	Local Government
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAD	Minimum Acceptable Diet
MDD	Minimum Dietary Diversity
MEAL	Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning

MOUs	Memorandum of Understanding
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
NDPII	National Development Plan II
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIRAS	NIRAS International Consulting firm
OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
PLW	Pregnant and Lactating Women
PNC	Perinatal Care
PO	Project Officer
PPS	Probability Proportional to Size
PY	Project Year
RAs	Research Assistants
SCDO	Sub-County Development Officer
SCPO	Sub County Production Officer
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Rights
TIMPs	Technologies, Innovations and Management Practices
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UGX	Uganda Shilling
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standards
UNHS	Uganda National Health Survey
USD	United States Dollar
VCs	Value Chains
VHTs	Village Health team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Association
WASH	Water Sanitation and Hygiene

II. Declaration of the report

Ultimate Choice Educational Services declares that the report titled "Endline Evaluation report for ALENU," submitted to Caritas Switzerland, is an original work conducted by their consultants and project team for the ALENU project.

Furthermore, we would like to declare that this report accurately represents the project's intervention and its outcomes. It is stated that the report includes views, opinions, and responses from the selected participants as sampled.

III. Acknowledgement

Ultimate Choice Educational Services expresses sincere appreciation for the support provided by the project team during the Endline evaluation. Special thanks are extended to Caritas Switzerland's Country Director Samuele Rizzo Otim and Dophline Akera, the Consortium Coordinator of the ALENU project, for their administrative and coordination support.

Furthermore, Ultimate Choice Educational Services recognises the efforts of its consultants, Emmanuel Omony, Moris Ekutu, Owiny Moses Filberto, and Tonny Akera for planning and carrying out all the Evaluation activities on behalf of Caritas Switzerland. Additionally, it is inevitable to applaud the dedicated team of enumerators for their diligent efforts in reaching out to targeted respondents in various districts of the exercise. The cooperation and assistance from political, technical government staff, and local staff, including community leaders, was valuable throughout the evaluation process.

The participation of farmers, adolescents, project staff, and local leaders in the evaluation inquiries is acknowledged and contributed to the evaluation's success.

IV. Approval statement from Caritas Switzerland

This evaluation report has been submitted to Caritas Switzerland to highlight the results (output, outcome, and impact) and assess the five standard criteria (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact) of the ALENU project intervention. Its purpose is to provide learning and accountability to various stakeholders. The report also documents impact stories that highlight the changes brought about by the project. Additionally, it evaluates the extent to which the ALENU project has achieved its key results, which include increased production of diversified food, increased market accessibility, and improved nutritional status.

As members of the Approval Committee, we recommend that this evaluation report be accepted as fulfilling the consultancy and donor requirements for evaluation reports.

Name: Samuele Otim Rizzo

Date: 10th/August/2023

Title: Country Director

Sign: 



Name: Akera Dophline

Date: O8th/August/2023

Title: Consortium Coordinator

Sign: 

Executive Summary

Project Background

Under the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU), a Government of Uganda program supported by the European Union (EU) and supervised by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Caritas Switzerland received a grant to implement the Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU). ALENU was implemented by a consortium consisting of four NGOs (Caritas Switzerland CACH, Advance Afrika AA, Agency for Accelerated Regional Development AFARD, and Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization GWED-G) in the six districts of Omoro, Amuru, Agago in Acholi Sub-region and Pakwach Nebbi and Zombo in West Nile Sub-region.

From the available literature, ALENU was fully aligned with the DINU Program's Objectives as well as the logical framework. With a focus on all levels (district, sub-county, and HH) and selected value chains (VCs), to strengthen the foundations for sustainable development and stability in Northern Uganda by improving agricultural production of smallholder farmers, enhancing household (HH) resilience, nutrition outcomes, and developing agricultural market systems.

ALENU ran for 40 months from January 2020 to April 2023 targeting a total of 35'932 individuals comprising of subsistence farmers and their households (35,000); Local government officials (276), Village Health Team members (400), Cultural and religious leaders / Faith-Based Medical Bureau (58); Senior Teachers (24); Private sector and public sector actors (144); local co-applicants (30). The total population of the 12 target sub-counties was estimated at 361,100 individuals who constituted the indirect beneficiaries of the action.

The terms of reference specifically presented the objectives of the ALENU with the overall objective being to consolidate stability in Northern Uganda, eradicate poverty and under-nutrition and strengthen the foundations for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development with the Strategic Objective of increasing food security, improving maternal and child nutrition, and enhancing household incomes through supporting the diversification of food production and commercial agriculture and through improving household resilience (notably to climate change) and women empowerment in six districts of Acholi and the West Nile sub-regions namely; Agago, Amuru, Omoro, Nebbi, Pakwach, and Zombo. The main livelihood enterprises of the project included Apiary, groundnuts, poultry, vegetables/ fruits, Irish potatoes, Soya, and beans.

Purpose of the Endline study:

The purpose of the Endline Evaluation was to ascertain and measure the project's results and its impact over the total project period, namely forty (40) months of the action (January 2020- April 2023), based on the five standard criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact to facilitate learning and ensure accountability to various stakeholders.

The specific objectives were to.

- ✓ Assess to what extent the project has achieved the desired project outcomes in terms of its targets in the log frame.
- ✓ Review project implementation, design, and strategy with respect to the overall project goal
- ✓ Review the MEAL plan and system that was set up and its effectiveness.
- ✓ Determine the state of the project regarding sustainability.
- ✓ Document particular success stories and lessons learned.

Summary of key findings:

Demographics

The female beneficiaries constituted a majority (58%) compared to male beneficiaries (42%) across all the six districts. The female percentage was even bigger at the district level, for example, in Amuru district, females comprised of 63% and males 37%. This finding on the demographics is consistent with the project targeting approach where 60% of the beneficiaries were female-headed households while 40% were male. The youth age bracket of 18-30 years was represented by 19%; this might be below average considering the high unemployment rates amongst this group in Uganda. However, the project was not primarily targeting youth. Child-headed households were only a paltry of 1% which could be consistent with the considerations for inclusivity of the project based on the various vulnerability criteria adopted at beneficiary targeting and selection. In terms of religion, a majority were Catholics (72%), Anglicans at 19%, Pentecostals at 8% and others at 1%. This finding is consistent with the social and religious background of Northern Uganda, given the early work of the Christian Missionaries in the region. There were more married (81%) participants than combined all the other categories (18%) – Divorced, never married but with children, Single Father, Single Mother, and Widowed. This finding indicated that the holistic family-centred approach was well chosen and targeted the right category of project participants, hence the Family Development Planning approach. There were 62% of the participants with lower and upper primary education levels which is a good indicator in terms of literacy and numeracy for sustainability of the project interventions.

Impact and Outcome level:

In terms of the overall contribution of the project to achieving the project goal and impact of DINU program, ALENU in its design specifically managed to achieve over eighty percent (80%) of its indicator targets with each indicator scoring a percentage achievement of over 90%. The Endline evaluation used the Probability Poverty Indexes measured by the indication poverty line (people living on less than \$1.90 PPP (Purchase Power Parity) a day in line with SDG 1 to assess the household progress towards poverty reduction. Findings, therefore, indicate a reduction in poverty rates from 62% during the baseline to 49% during the Endline . The reduction in poverty as indicated by the finding correlates with the ALENU efforts to empower households to graduate out of poverty through increasing production, access to financial services and market accessibility, and Improved nutritional status at household. The prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age reduced from 66% during the baseline to 29% at the Endline evaluation. The evaluation considered stunting as defined by the World Health Organization categorizing children who are stunted as those whose height is lower than average and at least two standard deviations below the WHO's child Growth Standards Median which is consistent with what was used in the baseline. The prevalence of underweight among children under five decreased from 29% at the baseline to 21% at the Endline , the prevalence of wasting among children under five decreased from 25% at the baseline to 24% at the Endline . According to WHO, undernutrition manifests in four broad forms: wasting, stunting, underweight, and micronutrient deficiencies. While there is an improvement in the key impact level indicators, it is, however, difficult to directly attribute the improvement to the ALENU project given the fact that the project was implemented within three years which may not give adequate time to achieve the high-level impact indicators. However, the targeting and the design of ALENU intervention tackled the core pillars of the economic transformation which include production, access to markets, and improving the nutritional status of the households which will see continued sustainable economic transformation at the community level thus influencing the impact level indicators.

The Minimum Acceptable Diet (MAD¹) for adults and children increased from 2.1% at baseline to 8.4% at Endline . This was attributed to diversified food production. Mothers with children aged 6–23 months who were included in the study reported that ALENU distributed diversified crop seeds and planting materials ranging from assorted vegetable seeds, staple crops to poultry alongside training support which resulted into increased food productivity. Besides, cooking lessons were conducted to increase awareness on food preparation and consumption. For example, Akwero Lucy from Ryam Cyan Ki Tic farmers group in Amuru said: *“Before ALENU, our cooking was not comparable to what they taught us; ALENU taught us, and we are now cooking very well. With the crops ALENU provided, we have different types of food we cook to feed us together with our children; you cannot compare them with other children in the community. We prepare posho, porridge with milk, ground nut pastes and greens with eggs. Sometimes we just cooked it as it is but with training from ALENU, we learned to mix different foods to make one nutritious meal.”*

The Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD²) for children aged below two (02) years increased significantly from 8.6% at the baseline to 20% at the Endline . This indicator assesses the proportion of children 6-23 months of age who have consumed at least five out of eight pre-defined food groups the previous day or night. It assesses a diet's micronutrient adequacy. The findings therefore indicate that there was an improvement in Childrens' consumption of the various food groups which ultimately leads to increase in micronutrient food adequacy among children aged 6-23 months. The formation of the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) groups and layering of interventions greatly contributed to increased dietary diversity for children under two. The IYCF groups are mostly composed of pregnant and lactating women from the farmer group households. During their meetings the IYCF groups got information on good feeding practices, the importance of good feeding, and management of Malaria.

The acceptable Household Food Consumption Score (FCS³) increased from 24% at baseline to 78% at the Endline . The FCS is calculated by inspecting how households consume food items from the different food groups during the last 7-day reference period. The Endline evaluation adopted the WFP classification which is consistent with what was used in the baseline where a score of 0-21 means poor, 21.5-35 borderline, and above 35 being acceptable. This implies that majority of households are frequently consuming the various food groups. It is, however, crucial to note that the baseline was conducted at the time the effects of COVID-19 were highest and at their peak with strict measures and restrictions to movements which significantly contributed to shortages in household basic needs.

The average monthly household income earned by the household increased from UGX 147,486 (ca. USD 40) at baseline to UGX 317,105 (ca. USD 85.7) at Endline . The main sources of income for the household are sale of agricultural products or farming as reported by 90% of the participants, which is consistent with the findings of ALENU Living income study findings conducted in August 2021 that indicated that the major source of income for the household was sale of agricultural products (at 88%).

The participation of women in decision-making increased from 69% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline . This therefore implies that the holistic approach employed by the action contributed greatly to the achievement of the project's planned results. This included targeting the household as a unit and empowering the household with multiple interventions (bundled services as reported under the family development planning approach). The development of the family development plan played a key role in enabling the household to map out workable strategies to achieve their development goals. Both the husband and wife participated in the development of the family development plan through the vision road journey approach adopted from the Gender Action Learning

¹ Minimum acceptable diet (MAD) is a composite indicator formulated from minimum dietary diversity (MDD) and minimum meal frequency (MMF), designed to measure dietary intake for breastfeeding children and MDD and MMF along with minimum milk feeding frequency (MMFF) for non-breastfeeding children. MAD as an indicator of IYCF practices was first proposed by the WHO working group on IYCF indicators in 2006, and later finalized in the WHO Global Consensus meeting on indicators of IYCF in 2007.

² Minimum dietary diversity indicator assesses the proportion of children 6-23 months of age who have consumed at least five out of eight pre-defined food groups the previous day or night. It is an indicator of a diet's micronutrient adequacy, an important dimension of its quality.

³ The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is the most used food security indicator by WFP and partners. This indicator is a composite score based on households' dietary diversity, food frequency, and relative nutritional importance of different food groups.

System (GALS). The evaluation findings indicate that 87% of the households had developed their family development plan. Despite all being trained, some of the households indicated that they were unable to develop their family development plan because they were disabled and unable to earn money while others expressed that they were illiterate. Of those who developed their family development plans, 57% reported having achieved what they proposed in their family development plans. The households that did not achieve their development plans mostly attributed their failures to variations in the weather which affected their agricultural production as they never achieved their planned output or harvest, and some had long-term plans such as paying their children school fees that were continuous beyond the project life. As part of the solution to achieve their development plans, the percentage of households with one or more members participating in income generating activities (IGA) as a group or an individual grew from 25% during the baseline to 80% at the Endline and these covered various sectors of off-farm (non-agricultural related activities) and farm businesses.

RESULT 1.1: INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DIVERSIFIED FOOD

All respondents acknowledged to have received a one-off start-up agro-input kit for commercial production and household nutrition. Of this production kit, 6 of the food crops were noted as resilient when compared at baseline which was at 2.8. The resilient food crops noted include soybeans, iron rich beans, improved groundnut (Serenut 4 / red beauty), African eggplant, and an improved Irish potato variety. These were noted as resilient because they were quick maturing, nutrient rich and palatable when consumed. Besides, even in poor weather conditions, the farmers reported that they were able to realise some good harvest. Food productivity (i.e., the efficiency with which the project translated agricultural inputs to produce final agricultural products as outputs) increased from 16.2% at baseline to 17.4% at Endline). The respondents attributed this to the increase in the number of resilient food crops distributed by ALENU despite bad weather conditions in some of the production seasons. The crops received were quick maturing, high yielding and nutritious which met their food needs. The percentage of farmers who adopted diversified food crop production increased from 59% at the baseline to 93% at the Endline , this, therefore, meant that the farmers can produce a variety of food crops at the household level which led to an increase in income, helps withstand fluctuations in commodity prices as well as provides more varied and healthful food at the household level. The adoption of production of animal products increased from 56% at baseline to 70% at the Endline . The average number of chickens reared by the households increased from an average of 5 chickens per household during the baseline to 15 chickens at the Endline evaluation.

Access of farmers to extension services increased from 16% at the baseline to 80% at the Endline evaluation, this, therefore, facilitated the adoption of the best agronomic practices at the community level. The percentage of farmers who adopted improved soil and water conservation measures increased from 19% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline , whereas the farmers who adopted agroecology practices increased from 18% at the baseline to 74% at the Endline . The role of the peer trainers in delivering extension services was largely appreciated by the community. The average acreage of diversified foods cultivated increased from 2.4 acres per household during the baseline to 3.96 acres at the Endline evaluation. This therefore implies increase in production of a variety of food crops by the farmers. Access and adoption of drought, pest and disease-tolerant crop varieties of nutritious value also increased from 40% at the baseline to 92% at the Endline . The major crops adopted include iron rich beans, soybeans, assorted vegetables such as African eggplant, onions, and tomato. The percentage change in improved livestock breeds decreased from 20% the baseline to 18% at the Endline . The improved birds distributed were kroiler chicken which many farmers reported to have died for various reasons including limited knowledge on managing improved birds, limited supply of vaccinations and drugs to resolve these challenges. The project team immediately reacted to this challenge and, for this purpose, the team trained and equipped poultry paravets to conduct door to door poultry vaccination. This was implemented as a reaction after several farmers had registered loss of birds. The percentage of household with at least one of its members doing an IGA increased from 25% during the baseline to 80% at the Endline . The increase in IGA at household level was highly attributed to increase access to financial services mainly through VSLAs. Although the project trained all the groups and enrolled them into VSLA, 87% of the participants were found to be active users of either formal or informal financial services during the last 12 months.

RESULT 1.2: INCREASED MARKET ACCESSIBILITY

The action implemented activities aimed at ensuring that the farmer groups (FG) continue to meet the current market standards. This was done through the trained Project Officers (PO) in each of the program sub counties and the marketing committees identified from the groups. The trained POs and peer-trainers reached out and trained the FGs, established and maintained a quality control system and, through ongoing coaching and mentoring, ensured that the FGs improved their practices and adhered to the market standards and requirements. The project supported 200 farmer groups with the various value chain commodities which included beans, apiary, poultry, groundnuts, Irish potatoes, onions, soybeans, and tomatoes across the six districts. From the final evaluation,

Based on the Endline evaluation, the results show that the proportion of farmers connected to Value Chain actors increased significantly from 5% at the baseline to 98% at the Endline . This improvement was attributed to the adoption of the FarmGain app and mobile phones, which enabled farmers to gather and exchange market-related information. Moreover, the training sessions provided to farmers on value chain operations and market linkages enhanced their ability to produce sustainably and maintain a stable supply, leading to improved market sustainability. Additionally, the group-level marketing committees underwent training to enable them understand market dynamics, including product price management, negotiating for better prices, and effectively managing relationships between value chain actors and farmer groups.

From the findings, 98% of the female farmers indicated that they had direct linkage to the value chain actors, compared to 97% of the male. Access to market considered included access to the local market, and direct linkage to produce dealers. The value chain commodities mostly linked with the value chain actors include Soybeans (62.5%), Groundnuts (66.2%), Poultry (41.2%), Beans (22.4%), Apiary (13.7%), and Irish potatoes (71.2%). As noted, there are more farmers engaged in the production and value addition of Irish potatoes, groundnuts and soya bean and adding value as opposed to other products. The percentage of smallholder farmers with knowledge on innovative market information technologies increased from 6% at baseline to 91% at Endline . The farmers acknowledged that they were provided with several inputs and support to improve their access to market opportunities, these included weighing scales, smart phones, trainings from the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) and a series of other trainings. Although an increase in knowledge on innovative market information by the farmers can be observed, this did not directly translate into practice and the reasons being that the market access component of the project became much stronger from midway of the project and it required more time and mentor ship to strengthen the linkages. It is however positive to note that the project set out clear strategies for the farmers to continue to create linkages and compete in the market. One of the core strategies set by the project to achieve linkages and enable the farmers compete favorably in the market was value addition which saw the percentage of farmers practicing value addition increase from 14% at the baseline to 47% at the Endline . There was also a significant increase in the percentage of farmers who sold their produce through collective marketing/bargaining from 14% at the baseline to 64% at the Endline . This implies that the farmers gain more power to negotiate for better prices with one voice and leaves the buyers with fewer or limited sources. Collective marketing also has a huge benefit of spreading cost over a larger crop volume, and other cost associated to marketing.

RESULT 1.3: IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL STATUS

The action aimed at improving the nutrition status of the households, children under 5, adolescents, and Pregnant and Lactating Women (PLWs). Through this result areas, several integrated activities and approaches were implemented to contribute to and achieve the goal of the project. This included organizing home hygiene and sanitation campaigns, supporting nutrition governance activities, couple seminars, advocacy for adequate supplies of Family Planning commodities, promoting adolescents' friendly services at schools and health centres, and supporting the integrated community outreach activities. Through the implementation of the activities highlighted

above, 75% of the indicators under this result areas were achieved with over 90% performance. The integrated approaches employed by the action played a key role in delivering results, and the formation of the IYCF groups composed of pregnant and lactating women from the farmer households. Key results from the Endline evaluation indicated that 64% of the women of the reproductive age group including pregnant and lactating women were counseled on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding compared to the 14% at baseline. The messaging and the trainings received positively influenced the key IYCF indicators. The proportion of infants breastfed within one hour of birth stood at 83% at Endline , overachieving the project set target of 70% and compared to baseline value at 36% . The proportion of children 6-23 months reached through growth promotion and monitoring achieved is 69% compared to 33% at baseline. The percentage of households that practiced the recommended WASH practices stood at 66% at Endline compared to 20% at baseline helping prevent diarrhoea and respiratory infections and household level. The action also promoted healthy reproductive behaviour, including appropriate child spacing and healthy reproductive decisions i.e., use of family planning methods, having birth plans, couple Antenatal Care (ANC) / Perinatal Care (PNC) visits, taking children for immunization by households. This resulted into positive reproductive health behaviour change from the messaging received by the households through the various channels including community sensitization through outreaches, door to door sensitization by the Village Health Teams (VHTs) at the community level and at the health facilities by the health works. This increased the demand and usage of family planning methods from 32% during the baseline to 48% at the end of the project. The main category of people (70%) using family planning methods is in the age group of 18 to 24 years old with the main category of contraceptives used by participants being hormonal injectables (38%). The percentage of households with teenage pregnancies stood at 15.3% at the Endline as opposed to 11% at baseline evaluation. Despite the COVID pandemic which affected school activities, the strategies employed, such as use of television and the formation of school clubs to sensitize the young adolescent in school, were applauded by the school administrators highlighting that it was effective in passing the critical messages of healthy living to the youth. The action positively influenced the duration of time between pregnancies (child spacing) from the baseline of 27 months to 32 months at the Endline evaluation.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

The ALENU program formed a unique partnership with its implementing partners. This was attested to by the various partners involved in the project. What stood out was the formation of the project steering committee which played a key role in making major decisions for the project. The composition of the project steering committee involved the key leadership team from all the implementing partners and the lead partner. This was highly appreciated by the implementing partners, and it made making implementation decisions seamless and as well as increased the level of involvement and ownership of the decisions agreed upon. Much as by design Caritas Switzerland (CACH) was a lead partner, in terms of coordination and implementation, on ground decisions were made jointly and this strengthened the partnerships and trust among the implementing partners. Categorically the partners also appreciated the capacity building on finance and introduction of partners to a new online financial filing system (called CARA) for management of financial transactions and document management. This saw a reduction in the time for processing payment but also increased the capacity of the finance and program team in management of finances. The partners also appreciated the leadership and capacity building and mentorship in proposal development which improved the partners lobbying capacities which saw the partners acquire new projects with support from CACH. The partnership also came with a high degree of flexibility granted to partners in terms of the operating context and decision making. In terms of a rating out of 100% = fully positive, partners rated the level of partnership and coordination on average between the lead partner and the implementing partners at about 90% good and beneficial. However, there were delays at the early stages of the project takeoff with the fund disbursement approach of tranches which has been rated at 75%, and the MEAL system for the consortium rated at 72%. The partners expressed that the MEAL function was not clearly defined in terms of the roles and contribution in the consortium, and secondly it was not adequately funded at partner level, for example there was no designated M&E staff at the partner level for the program which left a gap in terms of utilization of the set-up M&E tools and systems. The local partners were very much happy with the consortium referring to Caritas Switzerland as a “parent donor” and willing to engage in a similar partnership in the future.

EVALUATING THE PROJECT AGAINST THE DAC EVALUATION CRITERIA

RELEVANCE

The implementation of Family Development Plan (FDP) has played a vital role in coordinating agricultural activities and fostering collaboration among households and farmer groups. The project's introduction of the family development plan approach has supported households in devising their own solutions, leading to a significant increase in income-generating activities across various sectors, from 25% of the households at the baseline to 80% at Endline . This implies that 80% of the households can earn income through income generating activity therefore boosting their household earning to meet their household needs and developmental plans. The FDP approach has also transformed farming operations into purposeful businesses, where family members work together and share the benefits. Endline Evaluation findings indicate that 87% of households have developed their own plans, with 57% successfully achieving their goals. A section of 43% of households who had not achieved their plan at the time of evaluation were found to have developed long term plans i.e., construction of permanent houses, and payment of children school fees, which spanned beyond the project period hence continuing to implement their plans. This is desirable, as it shows a sustainable long-term application after the project's end.

The ALENU project trained farmer groups, improved market access for their produce, which saw an increase in the percentage of farmers producing diversified food crops from 59% at the baseline to 93.3% at the Endline for both household consumption and commercial demands. Furthermore, farmers transitioned to producing diversified animal products; the percentage increased from 56% farmers producing diversified animal products at the baseline to 70% at the Endline . As a result, average household incomes rose from UGX 147,486 (ca. USD 40) at the baseline to UGX 317,105 (ca. USD 86) at the Endline due to agriculture as the primary income source.

The project successfully enhanced the resilience of impoverished subsistence farmers by improving their access to finance and credit through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The percentage of farmers accessing financial services increased from 44% at baseline to 87% at Endline . The main financial services accessed by the farmers is savings and credit through VSLAs. The increase in access to financial services have contributed to the increase in the number of households with at least one household members running an income generating activity from 25% at the baseline to 80% at Endline , thus diversifying households' sources of income and facilitating the houses achievement of their development plans and household needs. A project officer in Omoro district commented as follows: *"In the whole of Omoro, there is no formally registered commercial bank; having VSLAs really helped the groups to be able to save and to access money and small loans from their VSLA, some of them started IGA."*

The action also established and trained the group-level marketing committees and distributed phones to the groups to facilitate access to up-to-date market information through the FarmGain app installed the phones. This greatly increased farmers' access to market information, and improved skills related to market standards.

The action effectively promoted healthy reproductive behaviors, encompassing appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions, such as the use of family planning methods, creating birth plans, attending couple Antenatal Care (ANC) / Perinatal Care (PNC) visits, and ensuring children receive immunizations. This resulted in notable positive changes in reproductive health behavior within households. E.g., the duration of time taken between pregnancies (child spacing) increased from the baseline of 27 months to 32 months at Endline . This favorable outcome signifies a reduction in unwanted births and, consequently, fewer burdens on households. The decrease in unwanted births has contributed to mitigating the escalating costs of medical care, schooling, and food consumption, thus improving food security and overall well-being within households. These positive impacts on households' well-being and sustainability demonstrate the effectiveness and importance of promoting healthy reproductive behavior through informed decision-making and family planning initiative.

EFFICIENCY

The steering committee was formed as a result of the CACH initiative, aiming to involve partners in consortium-level decision-making. The committee consists of CACH and IPs' Directors, enabling partners to actively participate in and take ownership of project decisions and actions. This inclusive approach has encouraged collaboration and consultation among project partners, fostering a cooperative environment where CACH engages without imposing decisions on IPs. The adaptable decision-making process has instilled a sense of ownership among IPs, leading to positive outcomes such as efficient budgeting, well-planned activities, and successful achievement of project milestones, as confirmed by the Endline Evaluation findings. One of the interviewees for IPs expressed that, *"As the board for the project, we have taken on the responsibility of providing technical oversight, ensuring that we strengthen the project before any potential complaints arise from Caritas Switzerland"*.

Mazars BRJ and CACH oversaw expenditures, ensured compliance, and supervised financial officers. They managed budgeting, procurement, funds, payments, accounting, and reporting. Field visits improved resource management and accountability, resulting in timely financial requests and informed activity implementation.

The program collaborated with government structures, including OPM DINU focal point persons, extension officers, VHTs, and health workers. This approach saved resources and utilized the expertise of existing government teams, minimizing the need for extensive training.

The project utilized peer trainers and project officers to support agriculture, resulting in improved farmer access to extension services. Peer trainers played a crucial role in training farmers, leading to increased food crop production by 36.3% of the targeted households and expanded land cultivation by an average increase of 1.56 acres per household. According to a government staff member, *"training and engagement of peer trainers have improved service delivery at village level."*

EFFECTIVENESS

The implementation of VSLAs and mentorship has significantly improved savings and access to credit for farmers. According to the group monitoring report, for September 2022, farmer savings increased from UGX 386,335,160 (USD 107,315.3) in the first cycle of the groups saving to UGX 428,996,800 (USD, 119,165.7) in the second cycle. VSLA groups have provided individuals with easier access to finances, enabling them to save, borrow loans, and support agricultural activities and household needs. An interviewee highlighted that *"If I look at our agricultural component, they (ALENU) looked at the various components that the farmers are involved and from that the farmers had a choice to select the enterprise of their choice looking at what is working in their locality. In terms of also the market linkages, the market was available for the various enterprises they (ALENU) selected for us."*

The ALENU project addressed the challenge of limited access to farm inputs among smallholder farmers by introducing Agro-Input savings within VSLA groups. This initiative enabled farmers to access the necessary agricultural inputs, improving productivity and overcoming constraints in traditional seed usage.

Selection and training of agroecology champions and poultry paravets from local communities enhanced farmer skills in adopting ecological practices, offering poultry vaccination services, and establishing demonstration gardens. These practices yielded positive outcomes, including increased agricultural yields and production of diversified food (crops and poultry) by farmer groups from 59% at the baseline to 93.3% at the Endline . The percentage of farmers who adopted improved sustainable and environmentally friendly farming techniques improved from 29% at the baseline to 61% at the Endline .

The implementation of Family Development Plans has promoted collaboration among households and farmer groups, resulting in increased income-generating activities. This approach has transformed farming into purposeful businesses. The initiative has significantly improved the coordination of agricultural activities and contributed to the overall success of the project.

The use of the FarmGain app and mobile phones has empowered farmers to collect and share market information. They can now access data on prices, quantities, buyers, deals, and market locations in various project districts. This

technology has improved farmers' ability to establish market connections and avoid selling their products at lower prices by providing valuable market insights.

The successful implementation of awareness-raising activities, including trainings on family planning and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), has effectively fostered healthy reproductive behaviour within communities. These efforts have encouraged appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions. Findings from the Endline evaluation revealed child spacing duration within communities increased from 27 months at baseline to 32 months at Endline. This favourable outcome signifies a reduction in unwanted births and, consequently, fewer burdens on households hence reducing the escalating costs of medical care, schooling, and food consumption, thus improving food security and overall well-being within households.

IMPACT

The project's training of agroecology champions and poultry Paravets from local communities significantly improved farmer skills, leading to an increase from 29% at baseline to a 61% adoption of sustainable farming techniques by farmers at Endline. As a result of the trainings and adoption of these practices, farmer groups increased production of diversified food crops from 59% at baseline to 93.3% at Endline, average acreage of land cultivated increased from 2.4 acres at per household at baseline to 3.96 acres at Endline. This positive changes in farming practices have had a profound impact on household nutrition. As evidenced by the evaluation findings, 78% of households were found to have achieved an acceptable FCS at Endline, indicating that they consumed a variety of food groups in the last seven days. This improvement in nutrition at the household level demonstrates the tangible benefits of the project's interventions in enhancing food security, nutrition and overall well-being in the communities.

Nutrition activities, e.g., home visits, conducting WASH assessments, supporting cooking demonstration and family planning, were implemented, and significantly benefited households. This action has seen 64% of the PLW targeted by the project counseled on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding. The messaging and the trainings were received positively and influenced the key IYCF indicators. The proportion of infants breastfed within one hour of birth rose from 70% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline. 69% of children 6-23 months were reached through growth promotion and monitoring and 66% of households at Endline practiced at least 5 recommended WASH practices as opposed to 20% at baseline.

The action made efforts to promote healthy reproductive behaviour and encourage appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions among households. Through various communication channels, households received messages aimed at increasing their awareness and understanding of these issues. As a result, there was a significant increase in the demand and use of family planning methods, from 27% at the baseline to 48% at the Endline. This increase in the demand and use of family planning methods is expected to enable families to effectively plan for the welfare of their children by having planned for and or well-spaced children.

Awareness-raising activities on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) were effective in reducing teenage pregnancies. The ALENU provided SRHR orientation to teachers and equipped schools with televisions and educational materials on life skills and the consequences of risky behaviour. Abong Sarah, a senior teacher at St. Mary's College – Lacor from Amuru District noted the following: *"This year, there was only 2 cases of teenage pregnancy reported at the school compared to the 5 cases last year"*.

SUSTAINABILITY

Existing community structures, such as peer trainers, VSLA mentors, VHT members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders, were trained and actively involved in facilitating group activities. They provided guidance, support, and services to farmer groups, including establishing demonstration gardens, finding markets, promoting behavioral change, and ensuring proper savings protocols. These structures understand their roles well e.g., Paravets supported during vaccination of the poultry, agroecology champions have continued to train and support farmers to adopt best agronomic practices. This demonstrates their ability to support farmer groups and even after the project ends.

The project has fostered a sustainable network of collaboration and engagement between farmer groups and essential stakeholders, including agro-input dealers, local markets, and extension service providers. This interconnectedness ensures that the groups can continue accessing high-quality inputs, services, and markets long after the project's conclusion. To ensure lasting transparency and accountability, the groups have implemented written bylaws and completed registration with District Commercial Offices. They maintain a proactive approach by conducting regular meetings, keeping all members well-informed and up to date. These measures contribute to the project's sustainability, as they establish a strong foundation for continued cooperation and success beyond the project's active phase. During an interview, a project officer at GWED-G mentioned that *"The cold chain system was installed in all the sub counties we were working in. Together with the local government officers, starter doses were provided to poultry supplied to farmers."*

The marketing committee, operating at the group level, remains a crucial link between farmer groups and market actors. Measures were taken to enhance the committee's capabilities in delivering business development services and training to farmer groups. These services encompass market information, market-oriented strategies, financial connections, and equipment training. Going forward, the marketing committees and trained entities will continue to serve as valuable resources for farmers at the community level.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The creation of cooperatives in Zombo and Amuru, involving several Irish potato and groundnuts-producing farmers, has played a crucial role in promoting unity, focus, and a shared sense of purpose among its members. This unity has led to a boost in Irish potato production, as well as the implementation of value addition activities which included improved technologies and equipment for production, processing, packaging, branding/labeling, storage, and quality assurance systems. The introduction of value addition has resulted in increased income generation for the farmers.
- Several farmer groups have embraced farming as a business by selecting specific crops for their enterprises. This strategic approach has led to increased production and the implementation of collective bulking and marketing practices. However, this process has brought forth various challenges, including the need for storage facilities or bulking points, reliable transportation, and the search for better markets for the farmers' products, which are needs that go beyond the project's scope and will have to be addressed in future actions.
- ALENU have built capacity, promoted value addition, systematically improved pro-poor value chains, and empowered participants economically. To sustain the gains in health, nutrition, and WASH, they need to be linked to social marketing companies dealing in human medicines/supplies, nutrition supplements, and WASH products as well to build synergies with the VSLAs for holistic development.
- The implementation of an integrated program such as ALENU requires adequate investment in the MEAL function also at the partner level to ensure continuous reflection, objective monitoring of the project activities, to efficiently track progress and to document learning. For this to be fully implemented, there were resource / capacity gaps in terms of a dedicated M&E personnel at the partner level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- To ensure sustainable production for potato chips (crisp) making, it is important to involve the members of the farmer group in producing their own Irish potato seeds, rather than purchasing them from Kabale. This approach would help reduce production costs and increase the profit margin that farmers can benefit from through their production efforts.
- To address gaps in bulking and collective marketing, it is important to strengthen the group's connections with extension workers, extension services, private sector entities such as input dealers and agricultural produce traders, as well as the Department of Local Government (DLG). These linkages should be accompanied by formal agreements, contracts, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with extension workers.
- It is crucial for farmers to identify and be satisfied with the services provided by these market players. By establishing such strong linkages, farmers can ensure timely access to inputs and services, as well as secure competitive markets for their produce.
- From the policy perspective on the agricultural sector sustainability of extension services, there is need to push for an extension structure like VHTs model at the village level.

- IYCF groups need to continue to sensitize communities on the importance of good nutrition and adequate family size to further reduce poverty. These key messages on family planning and teenage pregnancies can be integrated in other routine activities conducted by other implementing partners and government programs. On the other hand, there is need for schools supported by the project to continue utilizing the resources received such as smart televisions to educate teenagers on the dangers of early pregnancies.
- For future programming, there is a need to evaluate the M&E needs of the program both at the lead and implementing partners level and adequately budget for the MEAL function to facilitate the generation of timely and quality data to facilitate continuous learning and adaption with evidence.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings from this Endline reveal very many significant progresses by the different actions. Despite the participants reached and the geographical area covered, the need for further support is still high in the region. There is need to embark on resource mobilization to replicate these actions in other areas not reached yet.

2. INTRODUCTION

This section provides the background information on ALENU project, purpose and objectives of the Endline Project Evaluation and scope of the assignment.

Background to the project

Under the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU), a Government of Uganda programme supported by the European Union (EU) and supervised by the Office of the Prime Minister, Caritas Switzerland received a grant to implement the Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU). ALENU was implemented by a consortium consisting of four NGOs (Caritas Switzerland, Advance Afrika, Agency for Accelerated Regional Development, and Gulu Women Economic Development and Globalization) in the six districts of Omoro, Amuru, Agago in Acholi Sub region and Pakwach Nebbi and Zombo in West Nile Sub region.

From the available literature, ALENU was fully aligned with the DINU Program's Objectives as well as the logical framework. With a focus on all levels (district, sub-county and HH) and selected value chains (VCs), to strengthen the foundations for sustainable development and stability in Northern Uganda by improving agricultural production of smallholders, enhancing household (HH) resilience, nutrition outcomes, and developing agricultural market systems.

Literature review also indicated that ALENU was designed to specifically address the development challenges of Northern Uganda alluding to the fact that when compared to the rest of the country, Northern Uganda still lags in most human development indicators, with women disproportionately affected (NIRAS Scoping Study DINU, 2017).

The principal development challenges in the region (Northern Uganda) are no longer peace and recovery, but significant economic and social difficulties (Northern Uganda Regional Development Strategy 2020/2021-2034/35, 2019 (NURDS). For example, West Nile and Acholi have the highest poverty rates (34.7% and 27.2%, NURDS), higher levels of stunting and anaemia and a lower minimum dietary diversity for children under 2-years (UDHS 2016 & UBOS 2020).

The population is growing rapidly due to early marriage and childbirth and low demand for family planning. The target districts are a home to 1,388,400 people (UBOS 2019) (51% women), of whom only a minority have access to socio-economic services and 87% are dependent on subsistence farming (UBOS 2019), mainly growing staple food crops (cereals, roots/tubers, legumes/pulses) with limited intensification (e.g., small livestock diversification).

The poverty rate is 32% (21% national average, UNHS 2017) and the monthly per capita consumption of UGX53,800 (UGX 73,500 national average, UBOS 2019). The GDP per capita is USD 276, far below the middle-income status of USD1,000 aspired by the National Development Plan III (NDPII). More than 53% of households (HHs) do not generate income (FAO, 2017) and agricultural productivity is very low with high yield gaps (averaging 65% - Abi ZARDI, 2016).

In West Nile, less than 47% of the population have an acceptable food consumption score and mainly access only 3-5 types of food (FAO, 2017). 60% of the HHs eat two non-nutritious meals a day (UBOS, 2016), 48% of children are deprived of food (UBOS, 2017).

Accordingly, Caritas Switzerland, having implemented this project for the last 40 months (From January 2020 to April 2023), asked for the services of a competent consultant/firm to carry out and end of project evaluation to assess the impact this project has made in the region in view of the above challenges that the project was designed and sought to address.

ALENU was designed and ran for 40 months from January 2020 to April 2023 targeting a total of 35'932 individuals comprising of Subsistence farmers and their households (35,000); Local government officials (276), Village Health

Team members (400), Cultural and religious leaders / Faith-Based Medical Bureau (58); Senior Teachers (24); Private sector and public sector actors (144); local co-applicants (30).

The total population of the 12 target sub-counties was estimated at 361,100 individuals.

The terms of reference specifically presented the objectives of the ALENU with the overall objective being to consolidate stability in Northern Uganda, eradicate poverty and under-nutrition and strengthen the foundations for sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development with the Strategic Objective of increasing food security, improving maternal and child nutrition, and enhancing household incomes through supporting the diversification of food production and commercial agriculture and through improving household resilience (notably to climate change) and women empowerment in six districts of Acholi and the West Nile sub-regions namely; Agago, Amuru, Omoro, Nebbi, Pakwach and Zombo. The main livelihood enterprises of the project included Apiary, groundnuts, poultry, vegetables/ fruits, Irish potatoes, Soya, and beans.

To sustain the livelihood of project beneficiaries and facilitating nutritional transformation, facilitation of household income streams and supporting progression out of poverty, the project aimed at increasing production of diversified food, increasing market access, and improving the nutritional status of target households in the six districts of the action.

This final/Endline evaluation report, therefore, outlines the methodology employed to deliver this assignment as required by the terms of reference.

3. Purpose and objectives of the Endline Evaluation

The purpose of the Endline Evaluation was to ascertain and measure the project's results and its impact over the last forty (40) months of the action (January 2020- April 2023) based on the five standard criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact to facilitate learning and ensure accountability to various stakeholders.

The specific objectives were to.

- ✓ Assess to what extent the project has achieved the desired project outcomes in terms of its targets in the log frame.
- ✓ Review project implementation, design, and strategy in respect to the overall project goal
- ✓ Review the MEAL plan and system that was set up and its effectiveness.
- ✓ Determine the state of the project regarding sustainability.
- ✓ Document particular success stories and lessons learnt.

4. Scope of the evaluation

The Endline Evaluation was centred on six districts, namely, Omoro, Amuru, and Agago in the Acholi sub region, along with Pakwach, Nebbi, and Zombo from the West Nile region. The study specifically aimed at evaluating activities implemented by the Action for Livelihood Enhancement in Northern Uganda (ALENU) targeting only the project participants within the project location listed above. The project reached a total of 5,000 household and other key stakeholders as outlined in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Geographical Scope of The Endline Evaluation

SN	Category	Target population
1	Farmers and their households	5000 Households (35,000 Individuals)
2	Local Government officials	276
3	Village Health teams	400
4	Cultural and religious leaders	58
5	Senior Teachers	24
6	Private sector and public actor	144
7	DINU OPM Officials	4
8	ALENU Implementing Partners	16
9	Third Parties or other partners	2
10	EU	1

Source: Survey Population of Participants, ALENU database, 2023

5. EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Evaluation Design.

A cross-sectional study design was utilized, employing both the qualitative and the quantitative methods of data collection. The two methods were complementary and facilitated the generation of insights both deep and wide to response to answer to the evaluation questions. The participants were selected from the ALENU project database, which contained comprehensive beneficiary records spanning the entire forty (40) months implementation period. Quantitative Data collection was collected for a period of 5 days across all the targeted districts from 15th to 19th May 2023. The respondents were randomly selected and proportionately distributed across the project area of implemented whereas qualitative data collection continued to the following week due to variation in the appointments schedule with the key informants.

Population and sample.

The evaluation employed two methods of sampling for the two categories of data sets. For the quantitative data, the evaluation employed probability approach to give each beneficiary an equal chance to be selected from the population without bias, specifically a multistage sampling with proportional representation of the population was employed. This ensured that the location with larger population took up a larger sample. Whereas for qualitative data, purposive sampling was used as outlined below:

Multistage sampling: The targeted population was divided into clusters or stages. The selection of clusters was based on factors such as geographical scope and the nature of intervention received. This approach aimed to ensure homogeneity within each cluster. By utilizing multistage sampling, the evaluation team effectively managed the large and diverse population by breaking it down into smaller, more manageable groups. Within these clusters, random sampling was employed to select respondents for interviews. This random selection ensured that every individual within the cluster had an equal chance of being chosen. Consequently, this approach minimized bias during the selection process and enhanced the generalization of the findings.

Purposive sampling: In addition to the random sampling of respondents, purposive sampling was employed to select key informants for the qualitative data collection. Purposive sampling involves deliberately selecting individuals who possess specific knowledge or expertise relevant to the project. Examples of these key informants include district commercial officers, Village Health Teams (VHTs), sub-county agricultural and veterinary officers, Technical Advisors, and Executive Directors at the implementing partner level. By purposefully selecting these individuals, the evaluation team gathered valuable insights and in-depth information about the project from those with relevant expertise.

Table 2: List of KIIs and FGDs conducted.

Population	Population Category	Sample	# Interviews conducted
ALENU Partners CACH: GWED-G, AFARD, Advance Africa	3 IPs Executive Directors (GWED-G, AFARD and AA)	16	3
	Technical Advisors		3
	Project officers / Assistant		2
	ALENU Consortium Coordinator		1
Local government officials	Parish Chief	18	1
	District Community Development Officer (DCDO) 2		2
	Sub County Production Officer (SCPO)		6
	Sub-County Development Officer SCDO		1
School Teachers	Senior Women Teachers		3
Village Health Teams (VHTs)	VHTs	12	6
DINU OPM Officials District and National	Regional Project Coordinator OPM	2	1
Farmers and their households	Case stories per thematic area	3	3
FGD	Focus Group Discussion with targeted participants	12	6

Detailed sample Calculation

The Sample size for the final evaluation was computed using the Creative Research Systems sample size calculator.

Formula

$$SS = \frac{Z^2 * (p) * (1-p)}{C^2}$$

Using the 95% confidence interval

Where Z=1.96, p=0.5, c=0.05

After correction for finite population Using the formula

$$\text{new ss} = \frac{ss}{1 + \frac{ss-1}{pop}}$$

A total of 758 sampled respondents was computed and distributed proportionately across the project location implying that the project with a higher population took the highest number of sampled respondents. A systematic random sampling was therefore used to obtain the actual respondents from the Project Participants list obtained from the project.

Table 3: Sampled Respondents

District	Subcounty	Population	Sample per District	Sample per Subcounty
Agago		800	121	121
	Lokole	325		49
	Wol	475		72
Amuru		651	99	99
	Amuru	376		57
	Lamogi	275		42
Nebbi		800	121	121
	Atego	400		61
	Erussi	400		61
Omoro		1300	197	197
	Lakwana	650		99
	Odek	650		99
Pakwach		549	83	83
	Pakwach	250		38
	Panyimur	299		45
Zombo		900	137	137
	Athuma	449		68
	Kango	451		69
Total		5000	758	758

Data collection methods

The study adopted mixed methods of data collection namely, through qualitative and quantitative data as well as secondary sources. As presented in the sampling plan above, multiple sources were used to collect the Endline evaluation data. Since this study used mixed methods, several tools were used to collect data namely:

I. Quantitative tools.

- i. Household Questionnaire.

The household questionnaire was used to collect primary data on the household level for the various categories of program participants (*Refer to the data collection tools submitted along with this report*).

A two-stage probability proportional to size (PPS) cluster sampling was used to select a total of 759 (366 farmers and 392 All categories) participants to be surveyed and proportionately distributed across the 12 sub-counties of Wol, Lokole, Lakwana, Odek, Amuru, Lamogi, Pakwach, Panyimur, Atego, Erusi, Athuma and Kango. The eligible participants for the household survey included individuals of 18-65 years old engaged in the project activities. Thirty (30) Research Assistants (RAs) were selected from the community within the target districts to administer the household survey questionnaire. Prior to the data collection exercise, the Research Assistants were adequately trained for two days on data collection methods and interview techniques to gain a better understanding of the tools, the purpose of the survey, and the survey context. The tools were pre-tested for practical experiences and adjusted accordingly.

II. Qualitative tools.

- ii. Key informant interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD).

Qualitative tools were used to collect primary information through key informants' interviews and Focus group discussions with representatives of ALENU staff, program participants, and program partners including consortium partners, technical partners, GoU partners, and private sector partners.

The topical checklist was used to guide the interviews and focus group discussions. (*Refer to the data collection tools submitted along with this report*)

29 Key informant interviews were held one on one with the target respondents and typically these interviews lasted 30 minutes to one hour. 6 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were organized with five to ten persons tailored to meet the desired common criterion i.e., members of the VSLA group, farmers in the same values chain supported by the program, Village health teams (VHTs).

Ultimate Choice consultants also carried out key informants' interviews with people strategically placed and who possessed vital perspectives on the project. These included among others local government officials, ALENU implementing partners, other NGOs, and community leaders.

- iii. Case stories writing guide.

This was used to document outstanding changes in the communities brought about by the project. The case studies were conducted for individuals with outstanding achievements because of their participation in the project. *See attached to this report a documented success story and Videos from ALENU participants.*

- iv. Field Observations checklist

This was used to collect real situation data by observing the changes brought about by the project in the communities. The observation fostered an in-depth and rich understanding of the situation and behaviour of the project participants for the data triangulation to demonstrate the project achievement over the project life. *See attached to this report a video recording of the selected case stories.*

6. Data Analysis

The Endline survey evaluation utilized questionnaires that were coded into Kobo ToolBox for data collection. After cleaning and organizing the data, it was exported to Excel and subsequently imported into SPSS 26 for analysis. The

data cleaning and editing processes were conducted within SPSS 26, with some minor transformations performed in Excel. To calculate indicator values, the consultants utilized the SPSS 26. The SPSS 26 files used for both data cleaning and analysis were shared for further reference and use. Following the data treatment and analysis plan, indicator estimates were generated. These estimates were accompanied by three measures of precision: the standard error and confidence interval. These measures were employed to assess the reliability and accuracy of the indicator estimates, providing insights into the true values of the indicators. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, means, and medians were employed to describe the survey findings pertaining to the outcome indicators. These statistics helped to summarize and present the key findings in a concise and informative manner.

7. Limitations experienced.

The study findings may not be generalized among the entire population in Northern Uganda since the project targeted and only worked in 12 Sub counties out of the 6 Targeted District and reaching out to only 200 Villages in this Sub Counties.

The evaluation was not targeting the entire population based on the location of the project, the sampled participants are only the households participating in the project intervention which had limited coverage that means the evaluation findings may not represent the beneficiaries' characteristics for a given entire parish or District.

8. EVALUATION FINDINGS.

8.1. Demographics

Table 4: Household demographics

Household demographics	District:						Total
	Agago	Amuru	Omoro	Nebbi	Pakwach	Zombo	
Sex (% , n=653)							
Male	40%	37%	43%	42%	43%	44%	42%
Female	60%	63%	57%	58%	57%	56%	58%
Participants by age category (% , n=653)							
Less than 18	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%
18 – 24	8%	6%	1%	2%	2%	4%	4%
25 – 30	14%	20%	10%	18%	14%	19%	15%
31 – 35	16%	16%	14%	7%	8%	13%	13%
36 yrs. & above	63%	57%	75%	72%	74%	65%	68%
Type of Settlement (%)							
Host community	94%	98%	99%	98%	99%	100%	98%
Migrant	6%	2%	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%
Religion (% , n=653)							
Anglican	18%	21%	25%	12%	21%	12%	19%
Catholic	76%	63%	66%	83%	70%	78%	72%
Islam	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%
Pentecostal	3%	15%	8%	3%	6%	8%	8%
Other	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Marital Status (% , n=653)							
Divorced	2%	0%	2%	2%	0%	4%	2%
Married	80%	86%	80%	90%	81%	75%	81%
Never married but with children	2%	12%	1%	0%	1%	0%	2%
Single	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	7%	2%
Single Father	1%	0%	4%	0%	1%	0%	1%

Single Mother	3%	0%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Widowed	8%	1%	12%	6%	14%	12%	9%
Level of Education (% , n=653)							
A' level	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Adult literacy education	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Lower Primary (P1-P4)	24%	25%	21%	26%	39%	37%	28%
No education	22%	17%	23%	18%	24%	17%	20%
O' Level	15%	12%	14%	15%	13%	11%	13%
Tertiary/University	5%	2%	2%	3%	0%	1%	2%
Upper primary (P5-P7)	27%	41%	37%	38%	23%	34%	34%
Vocational	7%	1%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Households with people with disability (% , n=653)							
No	57%	65%	40%	61%	56%	73%	56%
Yes	43%	35%	60%	39%	44%	26%	44%

Analysis of demographics

The female beneficiaries constituted majority (58%) compared to male beneficiaries (42%) across all the six districts. The female percentage was even bigger at the district level, for example, in Amuru district, females comprised of 63% and males 37%. This finding on the demographics is consistent with the project targeting approach where 60% of the beneficiaries were female-headed households while 40% were male. The youth age bracket of 18-30 years represented 19%; this might be below average considering the high unemployment rates among this group in Uganda. However, the project was not primarily targeting youth. Child-headed households were only a paltry of 1% which could be consistent with the considerations for inclusive of the project based on the various vulnerability criteria adopted at beneficiary targeting and selection. In terms of religion, a majority were Catholics (72%), Anglicans at 19%, Pentecostals at 8% and others at 1%. This finding is consistent with the social and religious background of Northern Uganda, given the early work of the Christian Missionaries in the region. There were more married (81%) participants than combined all the other categories (18%) – Divorced, never married but with children, Single Father, Single Mother, and Widowed. This finding indicated that the holistic family centred approach was well chosen and targeted the right category of project participants, hence the Family Development Planning approach. There were 62% of the participants with lower and upper primary education levels which is a good indicator in terms of literacy and numeracy for sustainability of the project interventions.

8.2. Overall project contribution to the outcome and impact level indicators.

In line with its original design objective of specifically addressing the development challenges of Northern Uganda alluding to the fact that when compared to the rest of the country, Northern Uganda still lags in most human development indicators, with women disproportionately affected (NIRAS Scoping Study DINU, 2017), ALENU project managed to achieve over eighty percent (80%) of its indicator targets with each indicator scoring a percentage achievement of over 90%. The project aimed at contributing towards the reduction in poverty levels at the household level. From the Endline evaluation findings the intervention reduced the level of poverty from 62% during the baseline to 49% at the Endline evaluation (see figure 1). The Poverty Probability Indexes (people living on less than \$1.90 PPP [Purchase Power Parity] a day in line with the SDG 1) was used to measure the progress made by the project on the poverty reduction at household level, a similar approach used during the baseline survey. The findings however must be interpreted with care, and this may not be precisely comparable to the Poverty statistics from the UNHS, since the different methodology was used, and the sample was not a population based but only ALENU project target beneficiaries reached by the project.

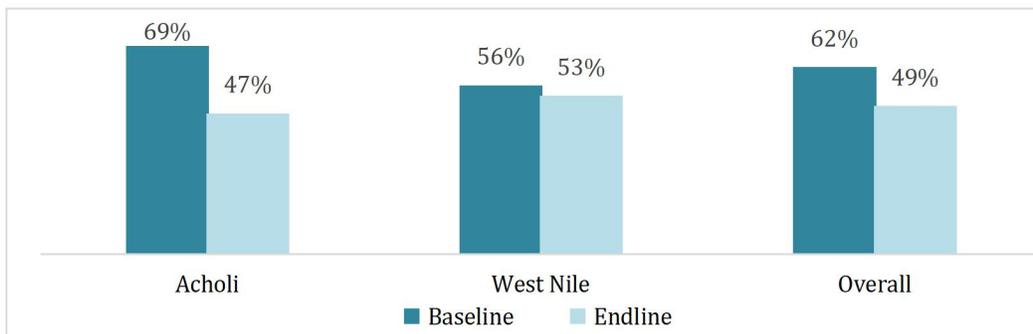


Figure 1: Poverty rate by region

The Prevalence of stunting among children under five years of age reduced from 66% during the baseline to 29% at the Endline evaluation. The evaluation considered stunting as defined by the World Health Organization categorizing children who are stunted as those whose height is lower than average and at least two standard deviations below the WHO's child Growth Standards Median which is consistent with what was used in the baseline. While the prevalence of underweight among children under five decreased from 29% at the baseline to 21% at the Endline, the prevalence of wasting among children under five decreased from 25% at the baseline to 24% at the Endline. According to WHO, Under nutrition manifests in four broad forms: wasting, stunting, underweight, and micro-nutrient deficiencies. While there is an improvement in the key impact level indicators, it is difficult to directly attribute the improvement to the ALENU project given the fact that the project was implemented when three years which may not give adequate time to achieve the high-level impact indicators. However, the targeting and the design of intervention for ALENU tackle the core pillars of the economic transformation which include production, access to markets, and improving the Nutritional status of the households which will see continued sustainable transformation at the community level.

Minimum Dietary diversity (MDD):

Notably at outcome level, the Minimum Dietary diversity (MDD) for children aged below two (02) years increased significantly from 8.6% at baseline to 20% at the Endline. This indicator assesses the proportion of children 6-23 months of age who have consumed at least five out of eight pre-defined food groups the previous day or night. It assesses a diet's micro-nutrient adequacy. The findings therefore indicate that there was an improvement in Children's consumption of the various food groups which leads to increase in micro-nutrient food adequacy among children aged 6-23 months. The formation of the Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF) groups and layering of interventions contributed to increased dietary diversity for children under two. The IYCF groups are mostly composed of pregnant and lactating women from the farmer group household. During their meetings, the IYCF groups got information on good feeding practices, the importance of good feeding and management of Malaria.

Food Consumption Score (FCS):

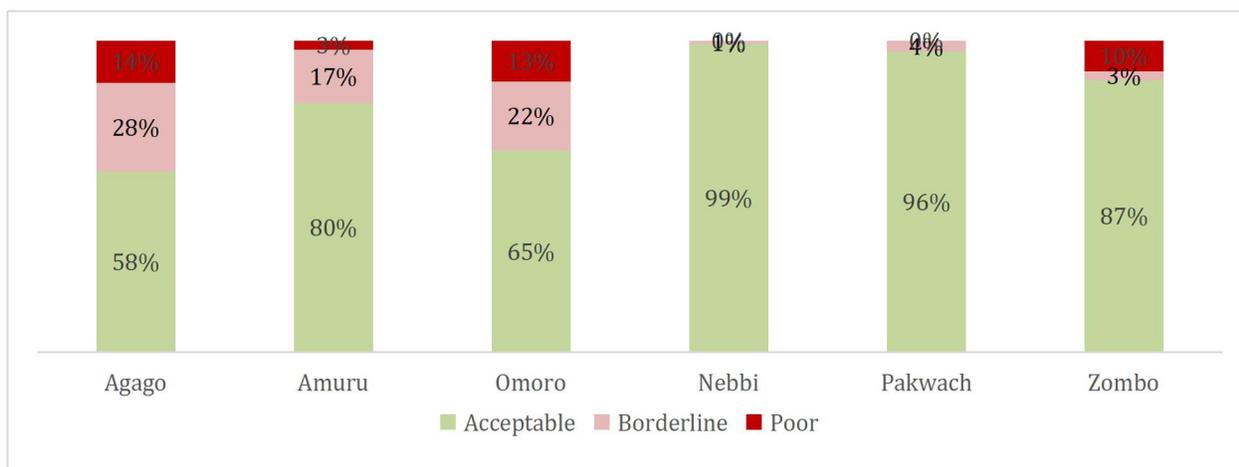


Figure 2: Household Food Consumption Score

The Food Consumption Score (FCS) is a widely used tool to assess the dietary diversity and food intake of households or individuals. It is a composite score that provides a snapshot of the quality and variety of foods consumed over a specific period, usually in the last seven days. The Endline evaluation adopted the WFP classification/thresholds which is consistent with what was used in the baseline (0-21 meaning Poor; 21.5-35 indicating the Borderline; and greater than 35 indicating the household is within the Acceptable threshold). From the evaluation findings, the household Food Consumption Score (FCS) increased from 11% at baseline to 78% at the Endline implying that majority of households are frequently consuming the various food groups and are within the acceptable FCS threshold. It is however crucial to note that the baseline was conducted at the time the effects of COVID-19 were highest and at its peak with strict measures and restrictions to movements which significantly contributed to shortages in household basic needs.

Average Household Income:

The average household income earned by the household in each month increased from UGX 147,486 (USD 40) at baseline to UGX 317,105 (USD 85.7) at Endline .

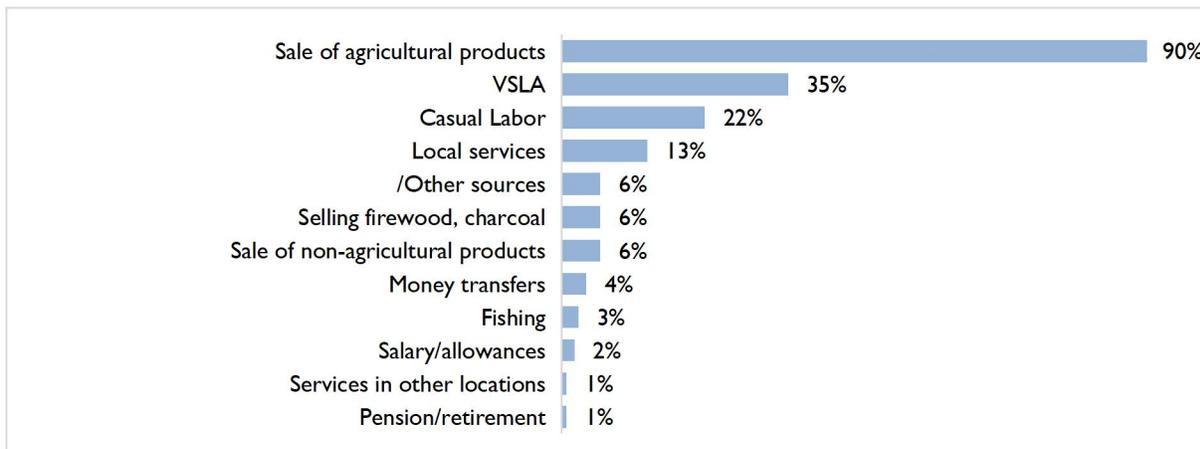


Figure 3:Households main source of Income

The study found that the main sources of income for the household is Sale of agricultural products or farming as reported by 90% of the participants, indicating and increase of 2% from 88% reported in the ALENU Living income study conducted in August 2021.

Household decision making and women participation.



Photo taken by Consultant: Female farmers of Ryem Can ki Ticin in Amuru District captured during field data collection.

Regarding women’s empowerment, the action contributed to improved participation of women in decision-making from 69% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline . The comprehensive approach employed by the action contributed to the achievement of the project’s planned results. This included targeting the household as a unit and empowering the household with multiple interventions (bundled services as reported under the family development planning approach).

The development of the family development plan played a key role in enabling the household to map out workable strategies to achieve their development goals. Both the husband and wife participated in the development of the family development plan through the vision road journey approach adopted from the Gender Action Learning System

(GALS)⁴. Through the vision road journey approach, the households reflected on their current situation and where they want to be, and they drew up plans to achieve their vision during a given period, in this case the ALENU project period of forty (40) months. From their vision the households then mapped out how they would like to achieve their vision, the core pathways Identified by the households included the development of the production and marketing plan to increase production and earn income and secondly participate in the VSLA groups to increase access to finance i.e., to be able to save and access loans.

Family Development Planning– Holistic Family Centred Approach and its Contribution to ALENU.

The evaluation findings indicate that (87%) of the households had developed their family development plan. POs guided each household to develop their Family Development Plan but some of the households indicated that they were unable to do it because they were disabled hence limiting them from engaging in active work to earn their household’s money while others expressed that they were illiterate. Of those who developed their family development plans, 57% reported having achieved what they proposed in their family development plans. The households that did not achieve their development plans mostly attributed their failures to variations in the weather which affected their agricultural production as they never achieved their planned output or harvest, and some had long-term plans such as paying their children school fees that were continuous beyond the project life. It is therefore critical to note that the family development plan approach introduced by the project was pivotal in triggering the households to realize their development needs and think of solutions themselves. As part of the solution to achieve their development plans, the percentage of households with one or more members participating in the IGA as a group or an individual grew from 25% during the baseline to 80% at the Endline and this covered various sectors in farm or off-farm businesses (non-farming activities).

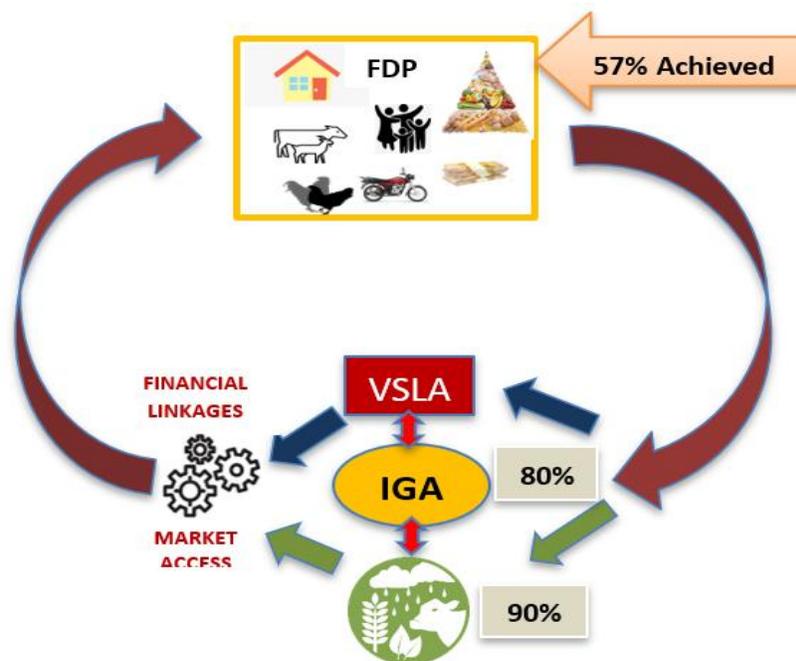


Figure 4: Construct of the HH journey to Economic empowerment

8.3. PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS BY RESULT AREA:

8.3.1.1. RESULT 1.1: INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DIVERSIFIED FOOD

The ALENU project was deliberate in its approaches; to ensure the effective adoption of the conveyed good and climate smart agricultural and livestock management practices, the action supported 600 peer-trainers (3 per FG -

⁴ Gender Action Learning System (GALS)

covering agroecology, poultry and VSLA) to develop together with their FGs seasonal Production and Marketing Plans that contained amongst others; i) clear forecasts of the areas of staple food and cash crops to be planted or the livestock units (poultry birds) to be reared; ii) the production volumes required to achieve meaningful production; and iii) the expected sales' volumes/channels and the outcome or results gained from the implementation of these production and marketing plan is the increased output, income and household assets. The yields from these plots generated income, which the FGs used to build their financial sustainability. All 5,000 farmer HHs received a one-off start-up agro-input kit for commercial production and on the other hand, to enhance household nutrition, they received inputs that included 2 hand hoes, 1 watering can, 1 spray pump, 1 tarpaulin, 2 sachets of assorted vegetable seeds, 8 kg of bio-fortified bean seeds or soybean seeds, 2 local birds with feeders and water drinkers, 4 moringa seedlings, and 6 tree/fruit seedlings to promote green villages and environmental conservation.

From the start, the action ensured the participation of the government technical experts as one way to promote sustainability and continued access to technical knowledge by the program participants. The approach of using the peer trainers which included the Agro-ecology champions, and the para-vets ensured that the community members continued to access the project services required within their reach although, in some locations, a section of the farmers did not appreciate and respected their peer trainers which resulted into low session attendance.

Overall, the percentage of farmers accessing the extension services increased from 16% at the baseline to 80% at the end of the project. This therefore facilitated the adoption of the best agronomic practices and crop diversification among the farmers. By the end of the project, 93% of the farmers adopted the production of diversified food crops, up from 59% during the baseline. On average, the acreage cultivated by the farmers increased from 2.4 acres per household during the baseline to 3.96 acres as indicated by the Endline evaluation. These results are backed by the fact that the farmers were trained on how to develop their production and marketing plans to meet their projected production needs, and this therefore meant that those who owned limited land had to hire additional land to do farming activities and meet their projected targets as per their plans although the Endline evaluation did not establish how many farmers are hiring land for cultivation.



Photo Credit: By Consultant: Farmer group members weeding their group groundnut garden.

The ALENU project also trained farmers on Technologies, Innovations, & Management Practices (TIMPs) which included Mulching, Growing of cover crops, Agroforestry, Use of organic manure, Planting in ridges, Integrated pest management, Composting, Use of farmyard manure, Practice of proper planting and spacing, Inter-cropping, Proper seed selection, Land identification, Three-line planting, Integrated pest and disease control measures, Early weeding, Timely harvesting, and Management of storage. The project, therefore, monitored the adoption of the technologies by the farmers and the Endline evaluation showed that 61% of the farmers had adopted at least four (4) of the TIMPs up from the baseline at 29%. The action was also set to monitor the adoption of at least one of the Soil and water conservation measures by the farmers and the percentage of farmers who practiced the soil and water conservation measures increased from 19% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline evaluation.

The Action also promoted engagements aimed at increased access to the input and output market by the farmers. The target set by the project was 35% and it managed to achieve 44% of farmers accessing the agro-input markets at the Endline evaluation. Access to agro-inputs is a major challenge to most farmers in Uganda and with the action addressing this challenge, this will increase in production by the farmers. With access to the output market, the project target was 80%. However, during the Endline evaluation, the action achieved 98% of the farmers accessing the output markets which showed an increase. Much as there was an increase in market access, farmers

still expressed some challenges associated to costs of transport, market dues/taxes, as pointed out by some of the groups during FGDs. This was corroborated by stakeholders during KIIs who mentioned that there were no local markets in some sub counties, long distances to nearby local markets, bureaucracy by government agencies in pricing and high dues charged in local markets.

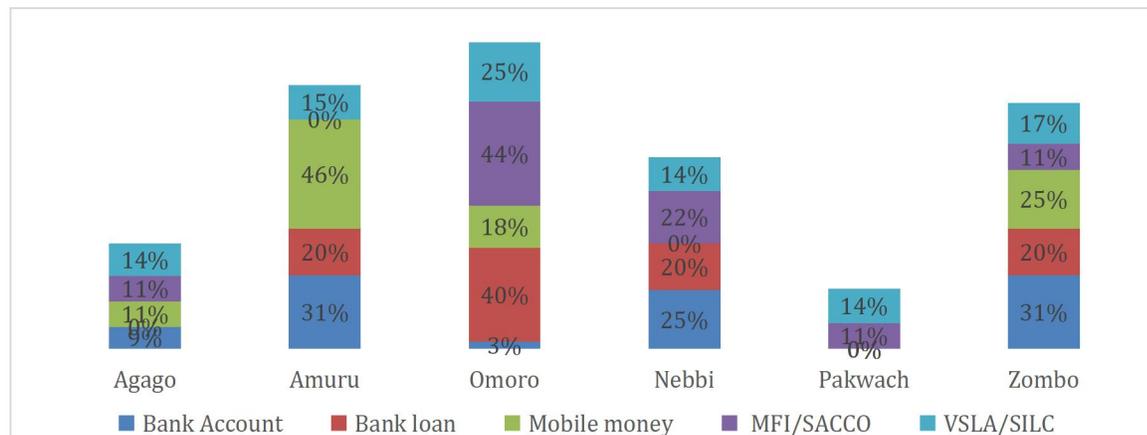


Figure 5: Household Access to Finance

On access to formal and informal financial services, the action trained all the group members on Village Savings and loans Association and the ALENU PY2 report indicated that 99.3% of the farmers were actively using formal and informal financial services. From the Endline evaluation findings, 87% of the farmers were found to be actively using formal or informal financial services.

It is therefore important to note that the Endline evaluation considered the active usage of financial services within the last 12 month this meant that if the project beneficiary was enrolled in the VSLA at the start of the project and dropped out or did not continue to save in the groups it could not be considered an active user of the financial service. The access to VSLA was most crucial to farmers since it facilitated farmers easy access to both credit and savings facilitated an increase in the number of households with IGAs.

8.3.1.2. RESULT 1.2: INCREASED MARKET ACCESSIBILITY

The action implemented activities aimed at ensuring that the farmer groups (FG) continue to meet the current market standards. This was done through the trained Program officers in each of the program sub counties and peer trainers identified from the groups. The trained POs and peer-trainers reach out and train the FGs, establish and maintain a quality control system and, through ongoing coaching and mentoring, ensure that the FGs improve their practices and adhere to the market standards and requirements.

The project supported 200 farmer groups with the various value chain commodities which included Beans, Apiary, Poultry, Groundnuts (Serenut 4/red beauty), Irish Potatoes, Onions, Soybeans, and Tomatoes across the various districts. The final evaluation findings indicate that percentage of the farmers linked to Value Chain actors stood at 98% while the baseline was at 5% showing a significant increase. The evaluation team also established that ALENU project adequately equipped the farmers with tools and knowledge including facilitating the linkages meetings, however these linkages are still weak and have not yet materialized for some groups and for the farmers to realize the benefits out of the linkages. Partners attributed this to the late integration of the marketing component which prevented groups from receiving adequate mentorship to strengthen the linkages.

From the findings, 98% of the female farmers indicated that they had directly linked to the value chain actors slightly higher than the male (97%). This is however implied given the fact that the project deliberately targeted more of females at 60% compared to males at 40%. This resonates to the fact that in Uganda an estimated 77% of

females are engaged in agricultural work compared to 67% of male 5. The value chain commodities mostly linked with the value chain actors include Soybeans (62.5%), Groundnuts (66.2%), Poultry (41.2%), Beans (22.4%), Apiary (13.7%), and Irish potatoes (71.2%). As noted, there are more farmers engaged in the production and value addition of Irish potatoes, groundnuts and soya bean and adding value as opposed to other products. Figures 6 and 7 indicate the value chain commodities and access to market by these value chains dis-aggregated by gender.

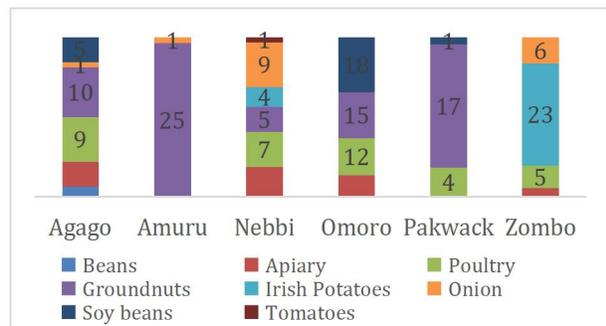


Figure 6: Value chain Commodities by District

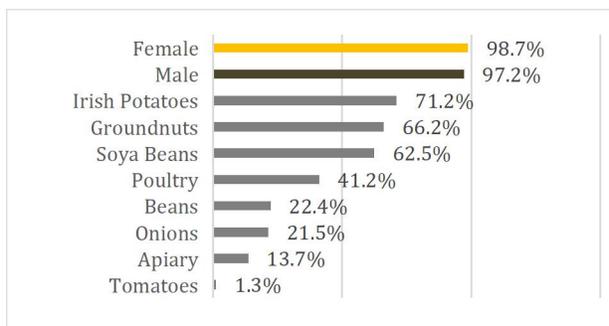


Figure 7: Access to market by value chain and Sex

Ninety-seven percent (97%) of the farmers are accessing the viable agricultural markets showing a significant increase from the baseline of 13%. The main agricultural market accessed by the farmers include the Sub County farmers' market. The increased access to market information disseminated within the farmers groups during the group sessions and through the phones provided by the project facilitated increased farmers access to market. The farmers selling their produce collectively increased from 5% during the baseline to 68% at the Endline evaluation this increase however should be interpreted with caution, given the fact that the farmers carry their activities in groups a section of the farmers could have considered even other activities they conduct together as opposed only the Bulk marketing. The action also directly targeted to empower farmers beyond being producers but also invested in adding value to the products or commodities they produce to earn better profits.

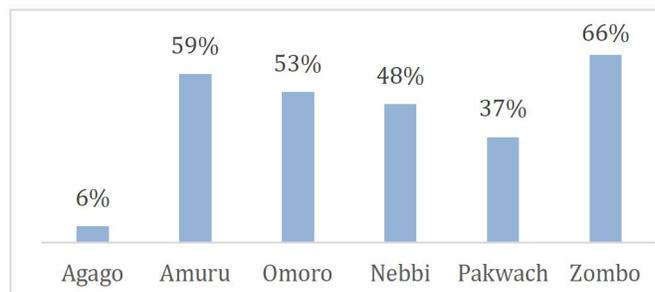


Figure 8: Farmers adding value to their commodities.

The common value-addition practices considered by the project were packaging, processing, Cooling, Drying, Extracting, Grading, branding/labeling, Sorting, and storage. This was deliberately promoted by the project through the provision of improved technologies and equipment provided to groups, the action also delivered a series of trainings on quality.

assurance systems and training to groups to ensure that the farmers can compete in the market. The percentage of farmers adding value to crop production increased from 14% during the baseline to 47% at the Endline evaluation. Most of the farmers adding value to their commodities come from Amuru (59%) and Zombo (66%). Overall, it's important to note that, the value addition was triggered by the provision of the value addition equipment to farmer groups. However, the farmers' skills in utilizing the valuable additional equipment are still limited which may affect their ability to sustainably utilize this equipment as discussed in the FGDs with some of the farmer group members.

⁵ The New ODI study 19th, May 2021

8.3.1.3. RESULT 1.3: IMPROVED NUTRITIONAL STATUS

The Action aimed at improving the nutrition status of the households, children under 5, adolescents, and PLWs. Through this result areas, several integrated activities and approaches were implemented to contribute to and achieve the goal of the project. This included organizing the home hygiene and sanitation campaigns, supporting nutrition governance activities, couple seminars, advocacy for adequate supplies of Family Planning commodities, promoting adolescents' friendly services at schools and health centers, and supporting the integrated community outreach activities. Through the implementation of the activities highlighted above, 75% of the indicators under this result areas were achieved with over 90% performance. The integrated approaches employed by the action played a key role in delivering results, and the formation of the IYCF groups composed of pregnant and lactating women from the farmer households.

Key results from the Endline evaluation indicated that 64% of the women of the reproductive age group including pregnant, and lactating women were counseled on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding out of 14% at baseline. The messaging and the training received positively influenced the key IYCF indicators. The proportion of infants breastfed within one hour of birth stood at 83% at Endline as opposed to 0% registered at baseline. While the proportion of children 6-23 months reached through growth monitoring and promotion achieved was 69% at Endline unlike 33% registered at baseline. Percentage of households that practiced the recommended WASH practices stood at 66% from 20% at the baseline.



Photo Credit Consultant: Healthy looking CUs from one of the households interviewed.

It is also critical to note that during the project implementation period the number of children under 10 years of age who received nutrition assessment at the health facilities in the Sub counties supported by the project increased consistently by about 50% from an average of 4,968 to 8,606.

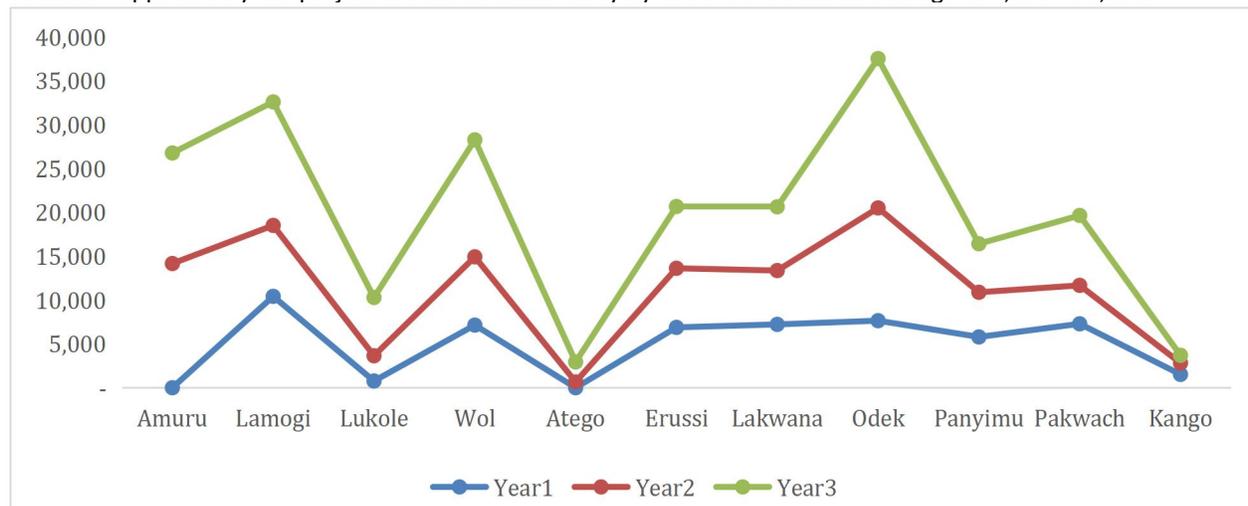


Figure 9: Children (<10) who participated in nutrition assessment at the health facility. (Source. DHIS2)

The action also promoted healthy reproductive behaviour, including appropriate child spacing and healthy reproductive decisions i.e., use of family planning methods, having birth plans, couple Antenatal Care (ANC) / Perinatal Care (PNC) visits, taking children for immunization by households. This resulted into positive reproductive health behaviour change from the messaging received by the households through the various channels including community sensitization through outreaches, door to door sensitization by the Village Health Teams (VHTs) at the

community level and at the health facilities by the health works. This increased the demand and usage of Family planning from 27% during the baseline to 48% at the end of the project. The main category of people (70%) using family planning methods is in the age group of 18 to 24 years of old with the mostly used family planning method being hormonal injectables (38%).

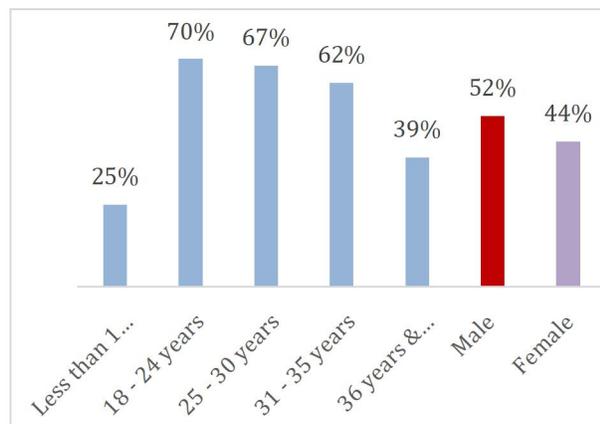


Figure 10: Usage of family planning

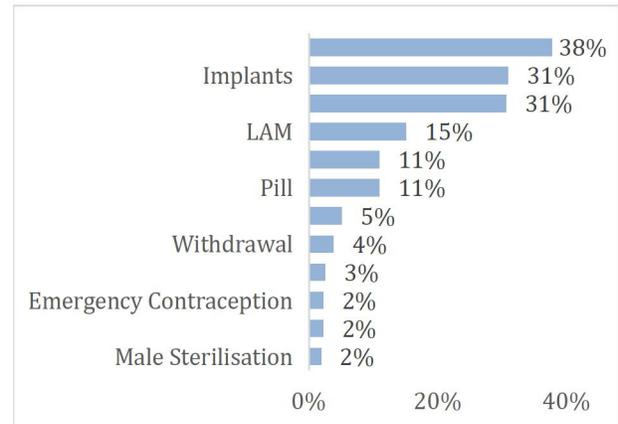
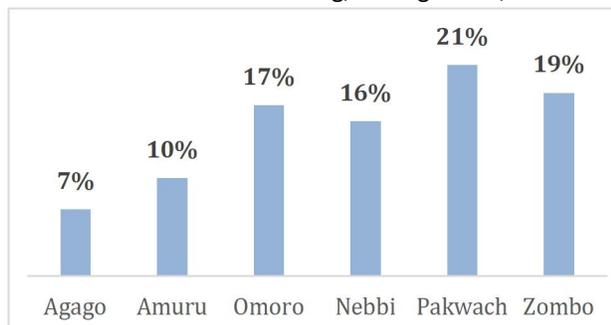


Figure 11: Family planning methods commonly used.

Despite the COVID pandemic which affected school activities, the action was able to accelerate implementation of SRHR activities in schools. Much as findings indicate that at baseline teenage pregnancy was at 11% and 15.3% at Endline . Interaction from the key informant indicate that school activities were created impact at school level in terms of reduction in the teenage pregnancy. Overall Acholi region registered an average of 11.3% during Endline evaluation compared to 16% at the baseline whereas in the West Nile region the percentage of household with teenage pregnancy cases stood at 18.6% at the Endline while the baseline value was 6% which indicating an increase instead. The Action positively influenced the percentage child spacing as indicated by the increase in the average month of child spacing interval from 27 month during the baseline to 32 months at the Endline evaluation. This finding is a positive direction by households considering the number of members in a household as opposed to the available household resources. Child spacing influences growth and well being of children in a particular household in terms of feeding, management, and medical care as well as education.



PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

The ALENU program formed a unique partnership with its implementing partners. This was attested to by the various partners involved in the project. What stood out more was the formation of the project steering committee which played a key role in making major decisions for the project. The composition of the project steering committee involved the Key leadership team from all the partners, lead partners and Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). This was a gesture by design that was highly appreciated by the Implementing partners, and it made making implementation decisions seamless and as well increased the level of involvement and ownership of the decisions agreed upon, much as by design CARITAS Switzerland was a lead partner, in terms of coordination and implementation on ground decisions were made jointly and this strengthened the partnerships and trust among the implementing partners.

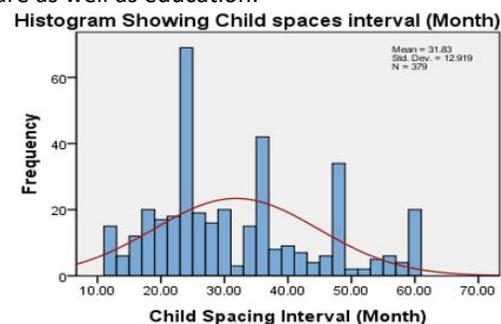


Figure 12: Teenage pregnancy cases at Households

The partners appreciated the capacity building on finance which were partners were introduced to a new online financial filing system (CARA) for management of financial transaction and documents, this saw a reduction in the time for processing payment but also increased capacity of the finance and program team in management of finances. The partners also appreciated the Leadership and capacity building and mentorships in proposal development which improved the partners lobbying capacities which saw the partners acquire new projects with support from CACH.

The partners further added that the partnership also came with a high degree of flexibility granted to partners in terms of the operating context and decision making. In terms of the rating out of 100% the coordination between the lead partner and the implementing partner was rated at about 90%. This means that implementing partners were consulted and given room to give in their thoughts before a decision is arrived at. However, there were delays at the early stages of the project takeoff with fund disbursement approach of tranches which has been rated at 75%, and not a strong MEAL system for the consortium rated at 72%. The partners expressed that the MEAL function was not clearly defined in terms of the roles and contribution in the consortium, and secondly it was not adequately funded at partner level, for example there was no designated M&E staff at the partner level for the program which left a gap in terms of utilization of the set-up M&E tools and systems. The local partners were very much happy with the consortium referring to Caritas Switzerland as a “parent donor” and willing to engage in a similar partnership in the future.

EVALUATING THE PROJECT AGAINST THE DAC EVALUATION CRITERIA

RELEVANCE

The ALENU focused on improving agricultural production, marketing, and nutrition, as these areas are crucial for food security and livelihoods. Through training and support, the program successfully increased diversified food crop production among farmers from 57% at the baseline to 93.3% at the Endline , leading to improved Minimum Dietary Diversity (MDD) for children from 8.6% at the baseline to 20% at the Endline . The percentage of Household with acceptable food consumption scores also increased from 11% at the baseline to 78% at the Endline . These positive outcomes are expected to contribute to a reduction in malnutrition within the project areas.

The implementation of Family Development Plan (FDP) has played a vital role in coordinating agricultural activities and fostering collaboration among households and farmer groups. The project's introduction of the family development plan approach has supported households in devising their own solutions, leading to a significant increase in income-generating activities across various sectors, from 25% of the households at the baseline to 80% at Endline . This implies that 80% of the households can earn income through income generating activity therefore boosting their household earning to meet their household needs and developmental plans. The FDP approach has also transformed farming operations into purposeful businesses, where family members work together and share the benefits. Endline Evaluation findings indicate that 87% of households have developed their own plans, with 57% successfully achieving their goals. A section of 43% of households who had not achieved their plan at the time of evaluation were found to have developed long term plans i.e., construction of permanent houses, and payment of children school fees, which spanned beyond the project period hence continuing to implement their plans. This is desirable, as it shows a sustainable long-term application after the project's end.

According to (FAO, Thursday, January 13, 2022) , Uganda possesses fertile agricultural land with the capacity to feed 200 million people, but only 35% of it is currently cultivated. Agriculture contributes significantly to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (24.1%) and export earnings (33% in Financial Year (FY) 2021/22). The ALENU project trained farmer groups, improved market access for their produce, and increased production from 59% at baseline to 93.3% at Endline for both household consumption and commercial demands. Furthermore, farmers transitioned to producing animal products from 56% to 70% at Endline . As a result, average household incomes rose from UGX 147,486 (USD 40) at the baseline to UGX 317,105 (USD 85.7) at Endline , due to agriculture as the primary income source.

The project successfully enhanced the resilience of impoverished subsistence farmers by improving their access to finance and credit through Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). The percentage of farmers accessing

financial services increased from 44% at baseline to 87% at Endline . The main financial services accessed by the farmers is savings and credit through VSLAs. The increase in access to financial services have contributed to the increase in the number of households with at least one household members running an income generating activity from 25% at the baseline to 80% at Endline , thus diversifying households' sources of income and facilitating the houses achievement of their development plans and household needs. A project officer in Omoro district commented as follows: *"In the whole of Omoro, there is no formally registered commercial bank; having VSLAs really helped the groups to be able to save and to access money and small loans from their VSLA, some of them started IGA."* This empowerment led to the emergence of numerous small business enterprises in the Acholi and West Nile communities which was 25% at the baseline and 80% at Endline survey.

The action also established and trained the group-level marketing committees and distributed phones to the groups to facilitate access to up-to-date market information through the FarmGain app installed on the phones. This increased farmers' access to market information, improved skills related to market standards.

The action effectively promoted healthy reproductive behaviour, encompassing appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions, such as the use of family planning methods, creating birth plans, attending couple Antenatal Care (ANC) /Perinatal Care (PNC) visits, and ensuring children receive immunizations. This resulted in notable positive changes in reproductive health behavior within households. E.g., the action registered a significant reduction in teenage pregnancies, from 27% at baseline to 15.3% at Endline . Moreover, the duration of time taken between pregnancies (child spacing) increased from the baseline of 27 months to 32 months at Endline . This favorable outcome signifies a reduction in unwanted births and, consequently, fewer burdens on households. The decrease in unwanted births has contributed to mitigating the escalating costs of medical care, schooling, and food consumption, thus improving food security and overall well-being within households. These positive impacts on households' well-being and sustainability demonstrate the effectiveness and importance of promoting healthy reproductive behavior through informed decision-making and family planning initiatives.

EFFICIENCY

Mazars BRJ and CACH oversaw and managed expenditure, ensured compliance, and supervised financial officers and accountants. They handled budgeting, procurement, funds management, payment processing, accounting, and reporting. Regular field visits improved resource management, reduced waste, and enhanced accountability. As a result of enhanced reporting and accountability, financial request and funds disbursement were done timely, hence activity implementation was informed by the approved work plan.

The establishment of a steering committee, consisting of IPs Directors, has served as a governance platform that allows IPs to assume an oversight role that should have been fulfilled by the consortium lead partner, Caritas Switzerland. As expressed by an interviewee, *"As the board for the project, we have taken on the responsibility of providing technical oversight, ensuring that we strengthen the project before any potential complaints arise from Caritas Switzerland"*. This approach has fostered a collaborative and consultative environment among project partners, with Caritas Switzerland actively engaging in the implementation process without imposing decisions on IPs. This flexibility in decision-making has created a sense of ownership among IPs and has contributed to successful outcomes, such as effective budgeting, planning activities, and other project milestones, as reflected in the Endline Evaluation results.

The staffing structure at the project level, combined with the presence of a program coordinator within Caritas Switzerland, played a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of the organization. Caritas Switzerland, as the host institution, took on the responsibility of facilitating the project and ensuring its successful implementation. The secretariat, along with the program coordinator, actively engaged with all project partners, fostering effective communication, and promoting collaboration. This staffing structure enabled efficient coordination and management of the project. The program coordinator played a significant role in overseeing the project's activities, ensuring that all partners were aligned with the project's goals and objectives, activities were implemented as planned. Well-coordinated and packaged communication and collaboration among project stakeholders contributed to a smoother implementation process.

It is also crucial to note that the program to a greater extent worked closely and hand in hand with the government structures across all the sectors, The agricultural officers at subcounty, VHTs and health workers, and

Senior women teachers who are already paid government staff and volunteers, this meant that the project ideally saved significant amount of resource which could have been used to pay more staff to implement this results areas, also using the existing government structures meant that the project worked with the team who are not absolutely new in the field and it also meant minimal resources was spent on the trainings and coaching given the fact that government had already invested resources to train the structures and the health workers who are already professionals.

The project utilized peer trainers and hired one project officer per sub-county in most locations to support agricultural activities. This change significantly increased farmer access to extension services, with 80% of farmers benefiting by the end of the project. Peer trainers played a crucial role in training farmers on good practices and technologies, resulting in a significant increase in diversified food crop production from 57% to 93.3% and expanded land for cultivation from 2.4 acres per household to 3.96 at Endline . According to the Subcounty Agricultural Officer of Amuru district local government, *“training and engagement of peer trainers have improved service delivery at village level.”*

The project to a greater extent leveraged on the existing government technical expertise and structures, looking at the establishment of the cold chain for poultry vaccination at each of the sub-county, giving extension services to community. The cold chain facilities established at the sub-county production offices increased accessibility to the paravets but also the safety of the cold chain facility was taken care of by the government. What was interesting is that as the paravets came to restock their vaccines they received more additional coaching and mentorships for about 10 to 15 minutes including how to safely use and handle the vaccines and troubleshooting any challenges they faced in the community this also strengthened the linkages between the paravets and the technical team at the sub county.

EFFECTIVENESS

Selection and training of agroecology champions and poultry paravets from local communities enhanced farmer skills in adopting ecological practices, offering poultry vaccination services, and establishing demonstration gardens. These practices yielded positive outcomes, including increased agricultural yields and production of diversified food crops from 59% at baseline to 93.3% at Endline . The percentage of farmers who adopted sustainable and environmentally friendly farming techniques amongst farmers improved from 29% at baseline to 61% at Endline .

Farmers' selection of market-oriented commodities and collective selling led to economies of scale and improved profit margins. Through bulking, marketing, and production based on estimated volumes and yields, farmers gained better bargaining power, resulting in increased profits. The project's focus on community empowerment, sustainable practices, and market linkages contributed to a significant increase in the percentage of farmers selling their produce collectively. This positive trend in diversified food production is expected to lead to increased household income, potentially reaching UGX 317,105 (USD 85.7) from the current level of UGX 147,486 (USD 40). An interviewee highlighted that *“If I look at our agricultural component, they looked at the various components that the farmers are involved and from that the farmers had a choice to select the enterprise of their choice looking at what is working in their locality. In terms also of the market linkages the market was available for the various enterprises they selected.”*

The implementation of Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) and the support provided by mentors have significantly improved savings and access to credit for investment purposes. From the farmer groups monitoring report conducted by the project in September 2022. The savings of the farmers grew from the first savings cycle UGX 386,335,160 (USD 107,315.3) to UGX 428,996,800 (USD, 119,165.7) in the second cycle. The establishment of VSLA groups has made it easier for individuals to access finances save incomes and borrow loans. The income generated through VSLAs has been utilized to support agricultural activities, acquire household assets, and address various household needs. During an interview with the traditional leaders, a comment stating, *“VSLA Savings is going on well and helping farmers pay their children at school.”* was mentioned. In areas where formal registered commercial banks are not available, VSLAs have played a crucial role in providing a saving and lending platform. Saving sessions have promoted avenues for passing important communications to other community members, and unity and cooperation between members have been enhanced.

In line with the savings, the ALENU also introduced Agro-Input savings to the farmer groups, this is a saving practice among farmers introduced within the VSLA with the main purpose of enabling the farmers to access farm inputs for agricultural activities. (UBOS, 2018) , notes that access to critical farm input remains a challenge to smallholders hence hindering productivity, the report notes that 98 percent of agricultural households reportedly use traditional seeds⁶. The move by ALENU to introduce the Agro Input saving is highly crucial and enabled farmers to access the required agro inputs to meet their anticipated production.

Training sessions have been conducted to educate and engage cultural and religious leaders, as well as members of the Catholic Medical Bureau, in promoting positive behaviour change and raising awareness on crucial topics including nutrition, sanitation, hygiene, and gender equality. These leaders have played a significant role in addressing and eliminating harmful traditional practices within their communities. Through their training, they have acquired the knowledge and skills necessary to advocate for and implement positive changes in cultural norms and practices. Their active involvement and leadership have been instrumental in fostering a supportive environment for behaviour change and creating awareness about important issues that impact the well-being and development of the community.

To support their work, the VHTs received monthly stipends (UGX 20,000) and essential equipment such as color coded Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) tapes, gumboots, umbrellas, job aids, and visibility materials from the project. Their active involvement in community outreaches has been instrumental in the success of health initiatives, particularly in promoting family planning, nutrition, sanitation, and hygiene practices. By leveraging their influence and understanding of local customs, the VHTs have effectively raised awareness and provided crucial information on maternal and child health-related practices. This collaboration between the VHTs and the community health system has resulted in better health outcomes e.g., 64% of the women of reproductive age group including pregnant, and lactating women were counseled on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding, The proportion of infants breastfed within one hour of birth in stood at 83% from the project set target of 70%, While the proportion of children 6-23 months reached through growth promotion and monitoring was 69%. 66% of households practiced the recommended WASH practices. The VHTs serve as a bridge between the community and formal healthcare services, ensuring that even remote areas receive the necessary care. Their dedication and efforts have contributed to the effective delivery of vital healthcare services at the grassroots level, making a positive impact on the overall well-being of the population.

The implementation of family development, seasonal Production, and Marketing Plans by farmer groups has played a crucial role in promoting the adoption of good agricultural and livestock management practices. These plans have provided a structured framework that incorporates clear forecasts, production volumes, and sales channels. By developing these plans, farmers can make informed decisions e.g., women's participation in decision-making increased from 69% at the baseline to 83% at the Endline . There was an effective management of agricultural activities throughout the different seasons which significantly result into increased production of diversified food crop from 57% to 93.3% farmers. Through this action market demands are easily aligned to farmer production. This approach has promoted efficiency in resource allocation and helped farmers to optimize their yields and profitability. Furthermore, the inclusion of climate-smart approaches in the Production and Marketing Plans allowed farmers to adapt to the changing environmental conditions. The implementation of practices that are more resilient to climate change, such as water conservation methods, crop diversification, and soil management techniques improved. From 29% at baseline, 61% of farmers adopted at least 4 Technologies, Innovations, & Management Practices (TIMPs). By considering pest and disease control strategies within the plans, farmers mitigated risks and minimize potential losses. These further resulted to purpose-driven agricultural farms, promoting the pooling of family labor and the sharing of rewards.

The use of the FarmGain app and mobile phones has empowered farmers to collect and share market information. They can now access data on prices, quantities, buyers, deals, and market locations in various project districts. This technology has improved farmers' ability to establish market connections and avoid selling their products at lower prices by providing valuable market insights.

⁶ UBOS Annual farmers survey 2018

The successful implementation of awareness-raising activities, including trainings on family planning and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), has effectively fostered healthy reproductive behaviors within communities. These efforts have encouraged appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions. Findings from the Endline evaluation revealed a significant decline in teenage pregnancies from 27% at baseline to 15.3% at Endline whereas, child spacing duration within communities increased from 27 months at baseline to 32 months at Endline . This favorable outcome signifies a reduction in unwanted births and, consequently, fewer burdens on households hence reducing the escalating costs of medical care, schooling, and food consumption, thus improving food security and overall well-being within households.

IMPACT

The project's training of agroecology champions and poultry paravets from local communities significantly improved farmer skills, leading to an increase from 29% at baseline to a 61% adoption of sustainable farming techniques by farmers at Endline . As a result of the trainings and adoption of these practices, farmer groups increased production of diversified food crops from 59% at baseline to 93.3% at Endline , average acreage of land cultivated increased from 2.4. acres at per household at baseline to 3.96 acres at Endline . This positive changes in farming practices have had a profound impact on household nutrition. As evidenced by the evaluation findings, 67% of households were found to have achieved an acceptable score at Endline , indicating that they consumed a variety of food groups in the last seven days. This improvement in nutrition at the household level demonstrates the tangible benefits of the project's interventions in enhancing food security and overall well-being in the communities.

Nutrition activities e.g., home visits, conducting WASH assessments, supporting the cooking demonstration and family planning were implemented and it significantly benefited households. This action has seen 64% of the Pregnant, lactating Women (PLW) counseled on optimal breastfeeding and complementary feeding. The messaging and the trainings received positively influenced the key IYCF indicators. The proportion of infants breastfed within one hour of rose from 70% to 83% 69% of children 6-23 months were reached through growth promotion and monitoring and 66% of households practice at Endline at least practiced 5 recommended WASH practices as opposed to 20% at baseline.

The action made efforts to promote healthy reproductive behaviour and encourage appropriate child spacing and informed reproductive decisions among households. Through various communication channels, households received messages aimed at increasing their awareness and understanding of these issues. As a result, there was a significant increase in the demand and use of family planning methods, rising from 27% at baseline to 48% at Endline . Majority 70% of individuals 18 to 24 years utilized injectables family planning methods. This increase in the adoption of family planning methods is expected to enable families to effectively plan for the welfare of their children by having fewer or well-spaced children.

Awareness-raising activities on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) were effective in reducing teenage pregnancies. The ALENU provided SRHR orientation to teachers and equipped schools with televisions and educational materials on life skills and the consequences of risky behaviour. Abong Sarah, a senior woman teacher at St. Mary's College – Lacor from Amuru District noted that *"This year there was an average of 2 cases of teenage pregnancy reported at the school other than the 5 cased Last year"*.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project utilized existing community-level structures to facilitate a range of group activities. These structures, such as peer-trainers, VSLA mentors, VHT members, religious leaders, and traditional leaders, underwent training and capacity building in various areas, including food production, marketing, family planning, business management, and record keeping. Due to the established trust between these structures and the farmer groups, they have continued to provide guidance and support to group members in various ways. For instance, peer trainers have taken the initiative to establish demonstration gardens and offer agroecological services to other farmers, as well as assist farmer groups in finding markets for their products. Religious and traditional leaders have played a leading role in promoting behavioral change and eradicating harmful traditional practices. VSLA mentors have ensured that savings sessions adhere strictly to meeting protocols, including the use of the constitution. These structures have demonstrated their understanding of their roles and responsibilities, and there is no doubt

that even after the project concludes, they will continue to support the groups. In an interview, a project officer highlighted, "Poultry vaccination was not widely practiced before, because it was relatively new to the farmers, but working with the Para-vets helped popularize it and also, to bring services closer to farmers."

The project has fostered a sustainable network of collaboration and engagement between farmer groups and essential stakeholders, including agro-input dealers, local markets, and extension service providers. This interconnectedness ensures that the groups can continue accessing high-quality inputs, services, and markets long after the project's conclusion. To ensure lasting transparency and accountability, the groups have implemented written bylaws and completed registration with District Commercial Offices. They maintain a proactive approach by conducting regular meetings, keeping all members well-informed and up to date. These measures contribute to the project's sustainability, as they establish a strong foundation for continued cooperation and success beyond the project's active phase. During an interview, a project officer at GWED-G mentioned that *"The cold chain system was installed in all the sub counties we were working in. Together with the local government officers, starter doses were provided to poultry supplied to farmers."*

The marketing committee, operating at the group level, remains a crucial link between farmer groups and market actors. Measures were taken to enhance the committee's capabilities in delivering business development services and training to farmer groups. These services encompass market information, market-oriented strategies, financial connections, and equipment training. Going forward, the marketing committees and trained entities will continue to serve as valuable resources for farmers at the community level.

9. MONITORING EVALUATION ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING (MEAL)

The project recognized the importance of effective Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability and Learning (MEAL) and therefore recruited a professional M&E expert to oversee and provide guidance on M&E-related matters. However, the key gap identified at IP level was the limited support in terms of the routine Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) functions due to the lack of a dedicated M&E staff for the program. Furthermore, partners did acknowledge that there was no funding in terms of M&E at partner level. This left a gap in terms of utilization of the set-up M&E tools and systems and continuous mentorship of the program staff to collect quality data including conducting of the routine Data quality audits to check for gaps.

The project however conducted Monthly and Quarterly review meetings where project teams would come together to assess their performance both in terms of financial and narrative aspects. These meetings served as a platform for sharing experiences, identifying gaps, and collectively finding solutions. The trainings on MEAL conducted by the lead consortium partner ensured that was continued documentation of project progress, continued emphasis on accountability, transparency, and continuous improvement. The Joint Monitoring activities conducted by various stakeholders helped in identifying areas of success, challenges, and areas that required improvement. This information was valuable in making informed decisions, adjusting strategies, and ensuring that the project remained on track towards its intended outcomes.

To promote transparency, accountability, and effective communication, the project implemented a feedback and response mechanism. This mechanism was designed to handle feedback and input from various project stakeholders, including beneficiaries, community members, and other relevant parties. The purpose of this mechanism was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to create a platform for stakeholders to express their opinions, concerns, and suggestions regarding the project. This allowed for their voices to be heard and taken into consideration during the decision-making process. Secondly, the mechanism ensured that timely and satisfactory responses were provided to address the feedback received. This demonstrated the project's commitment to actively engaging with stakeholders and fostering a participatory approach to implementation. By implementing a feedback and response mechanism, the project encouraged a culture of openness and collaboration. It provided an avenue for stakeholders to contribute to project improvements and participate in shaping the project's direction. The project team could gather valuable insights, identify areas of concern, and take appropriate actions to address them. This iterative process of feedback and response helped in strengthening the project's effectiveness, relevance, and impact.

10. GENDER SENSITIVITY

It is important to address the discrimination faced by women and youth in accessing economic resources, opportunities, and asset ownership. To address this disparity, a deliberate effort was made during beneficiary selection to ensure that 60% of the beneficiaries were females, while the remaining 40% were males. The Endline evaluation reported the engagement of 58% female against 42% males. This approach was implemented as an affirmative action, aiming to shift the balance in favor of women and girls over men and boys. The intention was to provide increased opportunities and support to women and girls, acknowledging the existing gender inequalities and striving for greater gender equity in accessing resources and opportunities.

11. LESSONS LEARNED

- Mindset change, starting small and experimenting with crops such as Irish potatoes in Zombo which very few people believed could do well in Northern Uganda and value chain addition like packed honey from West Nile could unlock the potentials of Northern Uganda given the fact that it is in line with the current wealth creation campaign by government of Uganda through Parish Development Model
- The financial training provided to partners by the hired firm MARZARS BRJ improved the capacity and efficiency of the partners in handling and managing cash. The capacity building led to the effective implementation of financial management system where a new document storage technology (CARA platform, a share-point application) was introduced to partners which operated online, and this increased efficiency and time spent on physically moving documents and storage.
- The setup of the steering committee further built the partner's capacity in coordination and resource mobilization and made decision-making and ownership seamless.
- The leadership and capacity building provided by CACH also strengthened the partner's capacity in resource mobilization where a new grant was already secured by both GWED-G and AFARD because of the continued good partnerships relations. With this strengthened resource mobilization capacity, the partners are confident they will continue to build on it with the aim of independently leading similar future consortia.
- As the coordination was rated at about 90% out of 100%, some few of the gaps identified overall included limited coordination meetings, especially with the district. In comparison with the other DINU programs, this was observed to be low in this partnership. The particular concern regarding low levels of coordination meetings is that it posed a risk of blame challenges if the project did not go well but also a missed opportunity for the government structures to directly address some of the questions and concerns raised by the community participants directly.
- The targeting approach put in mind while designing ALENU that involved targeting a small section of the population with integrated multisectoral programming should be a new mode of programming as opposed to spreading resources thin, where the impact and outcome may be difficult to achieve and sustained. This approach also allows for optimization of the resources in a smaller segment of the population for a greater impact.
- The approach of using the peer trainers to provide extension services at the village level was crucial in increasing access to the extension services at the village level but also increased the efficiency of delivering extension services.
- The implementation of an integrated program such as ALENU requires adequate investment in the Monitoring and evaluation function even at the partner level to ensure continuous reflection and objective monitoring of the project activities to efficiently track progress and document learning, this was quite not done well since due to the capacity gaps in terms of a dedicated M&E personnel at the partner level.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ❖ To improve market linkages, it is recommended to enhance and strengthen the collaboration between extension workers, private sector entities (such as input dealers and traders), and the Department of Local Government (DLG). This can be achieved by establishing formal and clear terms of engagement that can be referred to when needed. It is important to formalize these linkages through agreements, contracts, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with extension workers. Farmers should have the opportunity to assess and approve the services provided by these stakeholders. This type of engagement will ensure timely access to inputs and services, as well as access to competitive markets with terms and conditions that protect

the interests of farmers, buyers, and market partners, thereby avoiding potential losses and misunderstandings.

- ❖ To ensure the sustainable production and growth of Irish potatoes and potato chips-making in the Zombo cooperative, it is recommended that farmers focus on producing their own seeds rather than relying on purchasing them from Kabale district. This strategy will help reduce costs and increase profitability, leading to higher savings and income for the farmers involved.
- ❖ Advocating for the creation and institutionalization of a Paravet structure dedicated to delivering extension services at the village level, like Village Health Teams (VHTs), is crucial. This policy initiative would lead to formal recognition, capacity building, and sustained utilization of the structure by all relevant stakeholders engaged in local agricultural programming. Additionally, the Paravet structure would provide essential support to Agricultural officers, who are currently limited to the Subcounty level.
- ❖ Implementing an integrated approach that effectively combines production, market system development, and health, nutrition, and WASH interventions has proven to be valuable and replicable in sustainable development efforts, particularly in post-conflict and post-humanitarian crisis settings. The positive findings from the Endline evaluation highlight the success of the project, with over 95% of the targets being achieved and the desired outcomes realized. This serves as a testament to the effectiveness and impact of the integrated actions undertaken, paving the way for future implementation and replication in similar contexts.
- ❖ To ensure the long-term sustainability of the achievements in health, nutrition, and WASH, it is essential to forge partnerships with marketing actors and other relevant stakeholders. These partnerships will facilitate the continued provision of services and products to farmer groups, ensuring their ongoing access to vital resources. Additionally, leveraging synergies with Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) can contribute to holistic development by providing financial support and fostering economic empowerment within the community. By combining efforts and resources, the project can create a strong foundation for sustainable progress in health, nutrition, and WASH, benefiting the farmer groups and the wider community.
- ❖ The growing importance of Monitoring, Evaluation, learning, and adaptation emphasizes the need for adequate financial resources and personnel to efficiently handle M&E activities. In upcoming projects, it is essential to allocate appropriate funds for M&E, considering staffing requirements and facilitating M&E activities at both the implementing partner and lead partner levels.

13. CONCLUSIONS

The positive findings from the Endline evaluation highlight the success of the project, with over 95% of the targets being achieved and the desired outcomes realized. The conclusions drawn from this Endline evaluation indicate substantial progress achieved through various actions. However, considering the persisting high demand, it is crucial to focus on resource mobilization efforts to replicate these successful actions in areas that have not yet been reached.

APPENDICES

Current indicators performance

SN	INDICATOR	BASELINE	TARGET	ACHIEVED at Endline
IMPACT LEVEL INDICATORS				
1	OO1 Poverty rates in Acholi and West Nile sub regions	Overall, 62%	Overall, 57%	Overall, 49%
		Acholi 69%	Acholi 64%	Acholi 47%
		West Nile 56%	West Nile 51%	West Nile 53%
2	OO2a Prevalence of stunting among children under five	Overall, 66%	Overall,31.2%	Overall, 29%
		Acholi 70%	Acholi 34.6%	Acholi 28%
		West Nile 63%	West Nile 27.9%	West Nile 31%
3	OO2b Prevalence of underweight among children under five	Overall, 29%	Overall,20%	Overall, 21%
		Acholi 29%	Acholi 20%	Acholi 19%
		West Nile 30%	West Nile 20%	West Nile 30%
4	OO2c Prevalence of wasting among children under five	Overall, 25%	Overall,21%	Overall, 24%
		Acholi 22%	Acholi 21%	Acholi 23%
		West Nile 27%	West Nile 21%	West Nile 13%
OUTCOME LEVEL INDICATORS				
1	SO1.1 % increase in diversified resilient food productivity	Overall,45.3%	Overall, 52.2%	Overall, 62%
		Acholi 49.1%	Acholi 54.5%	Acholi 66.49%
		West Nile 41.6%	West Nile 50%	West Nile 58.99%
2	SO1.2 % increase in Minimum Acceptable Diet	Overall, 2.15%	overall, 32.5%	Overall, 8.4%
		Acholi 0%	Acholi 30%	Acholi 4.1%
		West Nile 4%	West Nile 35%	West Nile 10.25%
3	SO1.3 % % increase in Minimum Dietary Diversity in children (6 to 23 months)	Overall, 8.6%	overall,30%	Overall, 20%
		Acholi 5.13%	Acholi 20%	Acholi = 18.4%
		West Nile 11.11%	West Nile 40%	West Nile = 21.6%
4	SO1.4 % increase in household incomes	Overall, UGX 147,486 per month	Overall, 286,498 Ugx per month	Overall UGX 317,105 Per month
		Acholi UGX 168,698 Per month	Acholi UGX 202,437 per month	Acholi UGX 309,502 Per month
		West Nile UGX 122630 per month	West Nile UGX 370,560 Per month	West Nile UGX 327,556 Per month
5	SO1.5 % increase of the target population with acceptable Food Consumption Score (FCS)	Overall, 24%	overall,77.5%	Overall, 78%
		Acholi 20%	Acholi 70%	Acholi =67.2%
		West Nile 27%	West Nile 85%	West Nile =93.8%

6	SO1.6 % increase in incomes of SME engaged in food value chains	Overall UGX 106,129 per month	Overall,240,000Ugx per month	Overall UGX 111,299 Per month
		Acholi UGX 155,000 per month	Acholi,120000 Ugx per month	Acholi UGX 150,757 per month
		West Nile UGX 85,767 Per month	West Nile 120000 Ugx per month	West Nile UGX 88,117 per month
7	SO1.7 Improved participation of women in decision making	Overall, 69%	Overall, 80%	Overall, 83%
		Acholi, 54%	Acholi, 70%	Acholi, 80%
		West Nile 81%	West Nile 90%	West Nile, 87%
RESULT 1.1: INCREASED PRODUCTION OF DIVERSIFIED FOOD				
Outcome: 1 Increased adoption and production of diversified food crops and animal product				
1	1. No of diversified resilient food crops introduced and adopted for production	Overall, 2.8 Crops	Overall,16	Overall, 6 crops
		Acholi 2.9 crops	Acholi 8 crops	Acholi, 8 crops
		West Nile 2.5 crops	West Nile 8 crops	West Nile, 5 crops
2	2. % increase in food productivity	Overall, 16.2%	Overall,15%	Overall, 17.4%
		Acholi 0.2067	Acholi,7.5%	Acholi 0.042
		West Nile 0.225	West Nile 7.5%	West Nile 0.717
1	1. % of farmer adopting production of diversified food crops	Overall, 59%	Overall, 70%	Overall, 93%
		Acholi 62%	Acholi 70%	Acholi, 94%
		West Nile 56%	West Nile 70%	West Nile 92%
2	2. % of farmers adopting production of diversified animal products	Overall, 56%	Overall, 70%	Overall, 70%
		Acholi 61%	Acholi 70%	Acholi =72%
		West Nile 52%	West Nile 70%	West Nile =67%
3	3. % of farmers with increased acreage of diversified food crops (Added from Lira)	Overall,40%	Overall, 70%	Overall, 65%
		Acholi 42%	Acholi 70%	Acholi =49%
		West Nile 38%	West Nile 70%	West Nile =84%
4	4. Average acreage of diversified food crops	Overall, 2.4 acre	Overall,7	Overall, 3.96 acres
		Acholi 3 acres	Acholi 4	Acholi, 4.46 acres
		West Nile 1.8 acre	West Nile 3	West Nile, 3.31 acres
5	5. % of farmers adopting improved technologies (TIMPs - Technologies, Innovations, Mgt Practices) (added from lira)	Overall, 29%	Overall, 60%	Overall, 61%
		Acholi 13%	Acholi 60%	Acholi 65%
		West Nile 25%	West Nile 60%	West Nile 56%
6	6. % of targeted small holders farmers with access to extension services	Overall = 16%	Overall, 60%	Overall, 80%
		Acholi 5%	Acholi 60%	Acholi =71%
		West Nile 28%	West Nile 60%	West Nile =94%

7	7. % of targeted small holders farmers adopting soil & water conservation measures	Overall, 19%	Overall,65%	Overall, 83%
		Acholi 13%	Acholi 65%	Acholi =74%
		West Nile 25%%	West Nile 65%	West Nile =94%
OUTCOME: 1.1 Increased access to key input and output markets for women and men small-scale farmers.				
1	1. % of small-scale farmers (women and men) accessing quality agro - input markets	Overall,9.5%	Overall,70%	Overall, 44%
		Acholi 10%	Acholi 70%	Acholi =27%
		West Nile 9%	West Nile 70%	West Nile =53%
2	2. % of small -scale farmers (women and men) accessing output markets	Overall,10%	Overall,80%	Overall, 98%
		Acholi 10%	Acholi 80%	Acholi =99%
		West Nile 10%	West Nile 80%	West Nile =97%
3	3. % small holder farmers with access & adoption to drought, pest & disease tolerant crop varieties of nutritious value	Overall, 40%	Overall,60%	Overall, 92%
		Acholi 40%	Acholi 60%	Acholi =91%
		West Nile 40%	West Nile 60%	West Nile =94%
4	4. % small farmers adopting agro-ecological practices	Overall, 18%	Overall,50%	Overall, 74%
		Acholi 23%	Acholi 50%	Acholi =75%
		West Nile 13%	West Nile 50%	West Nile =73%
5	5. % change in improved livestock breeds	Overall, 20%	Overall,40%	Overall, 18%
		Acholi 20%	Acholi 40%	Acholi =19%
		West Nile 42%	West Nile 40%	West Nile =18%
6	6. No. of outlets for animal drugs & medicated feeds	Overall, 7 Veterinary outlets	Overall,7.5	Overall, 7 Veterinary outlets
		Acholi 4 Veterinary outlets	Acholi 8 Veterinary outlets	Acholi 4 Veterinary outlets
		West Nile 3 Veterinary outlets	West Nile 7 Veterinary outlets	West Nile 3 Veterinary outlets
7	7. No. of outlets for agro-input dealers	Overall, 14 Agro-Input dealers	Overall, 30	Overall, 14 Agro-Input dealers
		Acholi 4 Agro-Input dealers	Acholi 15 Agro-Input dealers	Acholi 4 Agro-Input dealers
		West Nile 10 Agro-Input dealers	West Nile 15 Agro-Input dealers	West Nile 10 Agro-Input dealers
OUTCOME :1.1 3 Increased capacities in community saving and credit schemes of farmer groups and small market operators along value chains				
1	1. % of smallholder farmers who are active users of informal and formal financial services	Overall, 44%	Overall,60%	Overall, 87%
		Acholi 36%	Acholi 60%	Acholi =81%
		West Nile 52%	West Nile 60%	West Nile =95%
2	2. % of women who participate in shared Household financial decision making	Overall,67.5%	Overall,50%	Overall, 74%
		Acholi 54%	Acholi 50%	Acholi 68%

		West Nile 81%	West Nile 50%	West Nile 85%
3	3. No. of farmers trained in business management	Overall,600	Overall, 35,000	Overall, 35,000
		Acholi 321	Acholi 19,075	Acholi 19,075
		West Nile 279	West Nile 15925	West Nile 15925
4	4. No of VSLA supported to register	Overall, 0	Overall, 200	Overall, 200
		Acholi 0	Acholi 110	Acholi 110
		Westline 0	West Nile 90	West Nile 90
5	5. No. of partnerships built between VSLA & other financial service providers	Overall,7.5	Overall,100	Overall, 65
		Acholi 7	Acholi 110	Acholi
		West Nile 8	West Nile 90	West Nile
6	6. % of targeted households with income generating activities (IGAs)	Overall, 25%	Overall, 50%	Overall, 80%
		Acholi 19%	Acholi 50%	Acholi =81%
		West Nile – 29%	West Nile 50%	West Nile =79%
Result 1.2: Increased market accessibility				
OUTCOME :2 Increased linkages among smallholder farmers, aggro-processors, and market operators				
1	1. % of farmer linked to other VC actors (disaggregation by actor types and sex)	Overall, 5%	Overall, 75%	Overall, 98%
		Acholi 4%	Acholi 75%	Acholi 99%
		West Nile 6%	West Nile 75%	West Nile 97%
2	2. % of small holder farmers with knowledge on innovative market information technologies	Overall, 6%	Overall, 80%	Overall, 91%
		Acholi 3 %	Acholi 80%	Acholi =96%
		West Nile 9%	West Nile 80%	West Nile =86%
3	3. No. of farmer groups trained	Overall, 0	Overall, 200	Overall, 200
		Acholi 0	Acholi 110	Acholi = 110
		West Nile 0	West Nile 90	West Nile = 90
4	4. No of farmers supported by the programme in adding value to their products	Overall, 0	Overall, 35,000	Overall, 35,000
		Acholi 0	Acholi 19075	Acholi 19075
		West Nile 0	West Nile 15925	West Nile 15925
5	5. No. of Business development services supported / facilitated	Overall,12	Overall,200	Overall, 18
		Acholi 5	Acholi 110	Acholi 9
		West Nile 7	West Nile 90	West Nile 9
6	6. % of small holder farmers with access to viable agricultural markets	Overall, 13%	Overall,95%	Overall, 97%
		Acholi 13%	Acholi 95%	Acholi 99%
		West Nile 25%	West Nile 95%	West Nile 94%
7		Overall, 14%	Overall,65%	Overall, 47%

	7. % of smallholder farmers who are adding value to their crop products	Acholi 20%	Acholi 65%	Acholi 43%
		West Nile 9%	West Nile 65%	West Nile 51%
8	8. % of smallholder farmers who have sold any of their produce through collective marketing/bargaining	Overall,5%	Overall,65%	Overall, 68%
		Acholi 6%	Acholi 65%	Acholi 67%
		West Nile 4%	West Nile 65%	West Nile 69%
OUTCOME :2 .1 Increased access to market opportunities and product niches				
1	1. % increase in innovative market information systems supported	Overall,6%	Overall,70%	Overall, 100%
		Acholi 3%	Acholi 70%	Acholi 100%
		West Nile 9%	West Nile 70%	West Nile 100%
2	2. No. of market opportunities identified and accessed	Overall, 18	Overall, 16	Overall, 13
		Acholi 9	Acholi 8	Acholi 8
		West Nile 9	West Nile 8	West Nile 5
3	3. No. of producer organizations formed	Overall, 0	Overall, 2	Overall, 2
		Acholi 0	Acholi 1	Acholi 1
		West Nile 0	West Nile 1	West Nile 1
4	4. No of value-addition activities facilitated	Overall, 0	Overall, 8	Overall, 7
		Acholi 0	Acholi 5	Acholi,4
		West Nile	West Nile 3	West Nile 3
5	5. No of Value chains defined and supported	Overall, 0	Overall, 12	Overall, 16
		Acholi 0	Acholi 6	Acholi 8
		West Nile 0	West Nile 6	West Nile 8
Result 1.3: Improved nutritional status.				
OUTCOME :3 Increased access and adoption of maternal and young child feeding practices, hygiene and sanitation and childcare				
1	1. Proportion of women of reproductive age (pregnant, breastfeeding & non-pregnant) counselled on optimal breast feeding and complimentary feeding practices.	Overall, 14%	Overall, 80%	Overall, 64%
		Acholi 23%	Acholi 80%	Acholi 57%
		West Nile 5%	West Nile 80%	West Nile 73%
2	2. Proportion of children 6-23 months reached through growth promotion and monitoring	Overall, 33%	Overall, 80%	Overall, 69%
		Acholi 32.2%	Acholi 80%	Acholi 67%
		West Nile 34.5%	West Nile 80%	West Nile 71%
3	3. Proportion of infants breastfeeding within one hour of birth.	Overall, 0	Overall,70%	Overall, 83%
		Acholi 0	Acholi 70%	Acholi 76%
		West Nile 0	West Nile 70%	West Nile =92%
4	4. % of HH practising	Overall, 20%	Overall,60%	Overall, 66%

	recommended WASH practices.	Acholi 7%	Acholi 60%	Acholi =69%
		West Nile 31%	West Nile 60%	West Nile =62%
5	5. % of children & women dewormed	Overall, 8%	Overall,80%	Overall, 75%
		Acholi 7%	Acholi 80%	Acholi 77%
		West Nile 9%	West Nile 80%	West Nile 73%
6	6. % of women, children & adolescents supplemented with micronutrients.	Overall, 7.95%	Overall	Overall, 72%
		Acholi 9.26%	Acholi 80%	Acholi 61%
		West Nile 6.7%	West Nile 80%	West Nile 82%
7	7. % of women, children & adolescents receiving proper Maternal, Infant, Young Child, and Adolescent Nutrition practices (exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months, timely & quality complementary feeding & min. acceptable diverse diet.)	Overall, 14%	Overall	Overall, 64%
		Acholi 23%	Acholi 60%	Acholi 57%
		West Nile 5%	West Nile 60%	West Nile 73%
1	1. % increase in the demand for family planning and SRH services (disaggregation by method) (Contraceptive prevalence rate)	Overall, 32%	Overall,40%	Overall, 48%
		Acholi 34%	Acholi 40%	Acholi 46%
		West Nile 30%	West Nile 40%	West Nile 49%
2	2. % reduction in teenage pregnancies	Overall, 11%	Overall,30%	Overall, 15%
		Acholi 16%	Acholi 30%	Acholi 13%
		West Nile 6%	West Nile 30%	West Nile 18%
3	3. % increase in use of Family planning methods	Overall, 32%	Overall,50%	Overall, 48%
		Acholi 34%	Acholi 50%	Acholi 46%
		West Nile 30%	West Nile 50%	West Nile 49%
4	4. % of children spacing among beneficiaries	Overall, 27 months	Overall,30 months	Overall, 32 months
		Acholi 27.5 months	Acholi 30 months	Acholi 32 month
		West Nile 26months	West Nile 30months	West Nile 31 month
5	5. No. of family planning initiatives in HCs and Communities	Overall, 28	Overall,40	Overall, 28
		Acholi 14	Acholi 20	Acholi =18
		West Nile 12	West Nile 20	West Nile =10