

# AAR REPORT 2022



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WITH FUNDING FROM  
AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION

**Caritas**

**BRUDER UND  
SCHWESTER  
IN NOT**



# After Action Review Report



## of Secure Livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in West Nile region, Phase 2”

WITH FUNDING FROM  
**AUSTRIAN  
DEVELOPMENT  
COOPERATION**

**Caritas** HORIZONT 3000

**BRÜDER UND  
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To God Almighty for protection and guidance, i am grateful. May Gob bless you all.

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### List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>AAR</b>	<b>After Action Review</b>
<b>ADA</b>	<b>Austrian Development Agency</b>
<b>AFARD</b>	<b>Agency For Accelerated Regional Development</b>
<b>BTVET</b>	<b>Business, Technical and Vocational Education and Training</b>
<b>KII</b>	<b>Key Informant Interviews</b>
<b>FAL</b>	<b>Functional Adult Literacy</b>
<b>FGD</b>	<b>Focus Group Discussions</b>
<b>FFS</b>	<b>Farmer Field School</b>
<b>FFSF</b>	<b>Farmer Field School Facilitators</b>
<b>HORIZONT3000</b>	<b>Austrian Organization for Development Cooperation</b>
<b>LEC</b>	<b>Local Environment Committee</b>
<b>NGO</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>
<b>OPM</b>	<b>Office of the Prime Minister</b>
<b>PO</b>	<b>Project Officers</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	<b>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</b>
<b>VSLA</b>	<b>Voluntary Savings and Loan Association</b>



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project “Secure Livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in West Nile Region-Uganda phase 2”, is a three years (2020-2022) response to livelihood and sustainable development needs of refugees and their host communities within Rhino Camp in Arua and Bidibidi Zone one settlement in Romogi Sub County in Yumbe Districts funded by Austrian Development Cooperation, Brother and Sister in Need Innsbruck and Caritas Kärnten with donor liaison, overall grant management, coordination and oversight of HORIZONT3000. The project seeks to ensure refugees and host communities within Rhino camp and Yumbe settlement areas of West Nile region, have secure livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development, through; 1) Improving the nutrition status of 1,085 targeted households in refugees and host communities (67% being female) by 2022. 2). Improving profitable and sustainable agricultural practice of 750 households (67% female headed) in refugees and host communities; 3). Increasing women’s average income from economic activities in refugees and host communities by 2022 and 4). Promoting peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared. PALM Corps and AFARD in consortium have been implementing the project in Arua and Yumbe respectively. In anticipation of the third and consolidation phase of the project. It was prudent that the performance of phase 2 of the project is examined so as to identify key issues that required leadership attention based on lessons learned so as to enable the consortium partners to adapt successful strategies and minimize pitfalls in the third phase of the project.

### Terms of reference

The review was based on the four project result areas and in order to identify key issues that required management attention based on lessons learnt, the review was guided by the following questions 1) What went well and why; 2) What did not go well and why and 3) what changes if any are necessary for a better performance in the next phase of the project.

### Methodology

The project evaluation was conducted using the After-Action Review (AAR) approach. Key participants included 1) Farmer Field School Facilitators, 2) Project staff of the implementing partners and 3) A donor representative from HORIZONT3000. Data was collected through Focus Group Discussions, Key Informant Interviews, and review of project documents.

### Key findings conclusions and recommendations

#### **Result 1: Nutrition Status of 1,125 targeted Households (67% Females) in Refugees and Host Communities Improved by 2022**

Generally, stakeholders agree that the project contributed significantly towards improving nutrition and food security in the households of beneficiaries. Annual performance assessment reports in December 2021 showed that 89.7% of the 750 households ate at least 3 meals daily compared to 73% at inception of phase 2 of the Migration project while the adoption of good nutrition practices increased from 88% at baseline to 95.7% by the reporting period. However, by July 2022, the number of households eating 3 meals a day dropped to project baseline (73.4%) suggesting instability in household food security.

The main **interventions that contributed to the improvement of household nutrition** and food security included 1) promotion of kitchen gardening and 2) training in GAP, 3) Provision of drought resistant and high yielding seeds for farmers, 4) Provision of Solar driers for food preservation and 5) training and provision of poultry keeping. **Key challenges noted included** 1) Limited access to solar driers (because they were few and long distance for some group members) as well as challenges related to management and maintenance of the solar dryers due to lack of storage space, 2) the long spell of dry season that affected an entire farming season, 3) the 50% reduction of food rations by WFP was also noted among key challenges to food security and good nutrition especially among the refugee households, 4) challenges of land access for especially refugees especially in Bidi bidi, hence dependence on alternative like poultry keeping and small business to subsidize income and food, and the 5) the general rising cost of living, which is country wide is leading to high costs of inputs and essential products hence leading some families to sell off food in exchange of other basic needs and

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6) inadequate food storage facilities at family and group level, to avail food in the project locations, especially as needed during the long dry spell.

### **Result 2: Profitable Sustainable Agriculture Practiced By 750 Households (67%) Female headed in Refugees and Host Communities**

The project has indeed achieved the goal of making farming a business enterprise and within the reporting period average income earned per FFS member increased from Ugx 140,636 at baseline to Ugx 341,373 in 2022. There was agreement that the project enabled farmers practice profitable commercial agriculture. In Yumbe for instance it was reported that FFS members planted 377 acres of cassava and sold up to 324,293 Kgs of their harvest worth UGX.235,184, 500 (approximately Euro 58000). The farmers also produced and sold eleven Metric tones (MT) of sesame worth UGX. 39,007,500 (Euro 10.000) just a few to mention. In Rhino Camp on the other hand PALM Corps supported 9 of the 10-tomato producing FFS groups to market collectively, linking them to market vendors in Arua and Yumbe. A total of 40 crates of tomatoes worth UGX 6,000,000 (Euro 1500) was sold collectively by the groups. The 10 FFS also sold 13.2 metric tons of sesame collectively worth UGX 47,270,600 (Euro 12,000) to Ag-ploutos Company and Agri-exim. The project interventions that contributed to the positive results were identified to be 1) supporting farmers to make correct selection of agricultural enterprises and providing them with start-up agro inputs 2) Agribusiness mentoring and support supervision of farmers in the fields 3) Linking farmers to potential markets to sell produce using collective marketing and 4) Facilitating knowledge exchange among farmers through exchange visits among farmers. Key constraints encountered for management attention were identified as 1) the traditional mindset of farmers especially on cassava that led to loss of produce in the gardens, 2) weaknesses in collective marketing leading to loss of potential income through lower prices, 3) limited storage capacity for produce and 4) the low level of involvement of men especially in food production.

### **Result 3: Women's Average Income from Economic Activities in Refugees and Host Communities has Increased by 2022**

It is agreed generally that the economic welfare of the beneficiaries significantly improved. The project reports indicated that the average income of the targeted households rose from UGX 140,636 at baseline in 2020 to Ugx 341,373 in June 2022. The main economic activity contributing to improved household income for both men and women however remained largely the agricultural initiatives the project promoted with some success stories from the youth skilling programme. Management attention is drawn to strengthen outcome monitoring and evaluation of the skilling Programme and VSLA groups to better quantify the extent of their contribution towards livelihood enhancement of beneficiaries notwithstanding the success stories reported and the impact of COVID-19 on businesses.

### **Result 4: Peaceful Settlement for Refugees and Host Communities Where Natural Resources are Conserved, Shared and Promoted**

The project enhanced peaceful co-existence and sharing of natural resources between the refugees and host community as envisaged in the project design. The key factors that contributed to this improvement included the 1) The community dialogues held with emphasis on addressing bush burning, land disputes and issues of stray animals, 2) mixed grouping and farming approach did bring about peaceful co-existence and cooperation among host and refugee communities, although this was not foreseen as a strategy to achieve this result, 2) informal land agreements were more effective and 3) planting trees for the nationals as a benefit for providing land for refugees for farming worked, leading to establishment of visible tree woodlots especially in Yumbe. Aspects of the project implementation that were not well embraced included 1) promotion of formal agreements for land with nationals as per recommendation of OPM 2) poor community attitudes towards briquettes 3) Social harm to beneficiaries as a result of other projects of the consortium partners which offered better perceived benefits within the same location of the Migration II project.



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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings and recommendations of the After-Action Review carried out on the Migration project implemented by AFARD and PALM Corps, with funding from the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC), Bruder und Schwester in Not – Diözese Innsbruck and Caritas Kärnten through HORIZONT3000. The study was undertaken in the month of August and September 2022, with a primary objective to document successes and failures of the project and to help the consortium partners adapt successful strategies and avoid pitfalls in the future projects and activities.

### 1.1 Organization Overview

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) and PALM Corps are local non-denominational NGOs implementing humanitarian and development projects in the West Nile sub region, Uganda. The two organizations (in consortium) have been implementing a three-year project dubbed Secure Livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in the West Nile region, Uganda (Migration, Phase 2). Prior to that, both organisations implemented phase one of this project from September 2017 to November 2019 titled “Secure livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in West Nile Region, Uganda.

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is a local, not-for-profit, non-denominational, non-governmental organization (NGO) formed in July 2000 by professionals of West Nile. AFARD has knowledge and experience in working with refugees and host communities in West Nile Region. Formed primarily to operate in West Nile region given the negative effects of political instability and marginalization that characterizes the West Nile region in Uganda. AFARD has for the last 18 years implemented various livelihood projects in the host communities. AFARD has on-going projects in both refugee settlements and host communities. Over the years AFARD has earned an excellent reputation as a leading NGO in rural development in West Nile Region Together, these give AFARD credible access to the planned target groups.

PALM Corps is registered as a local NGO operating in West Nile and Northern Uganda. The organization was registered in 2014 as a company limited by guarantee (not for profit) arising from an increased need for a local organization in the West Nile region to partner with development partners to address development challenges in the region. The mission of PALM Corps is to transform livelihood practices, attitudes, values of rural communities and promote peaceful co-existence with the environment. The organization has formed and worked with farmer organizations, the private sector, local councils and leaders. As indigenous organization with a good track record, PALM Corps enjoys trust of the community. The staff are people from the region so there are less cultural and language barriers, making it easier to work with the communities.

HORIZONT3000 is an Austrian non-government development cooperation organization supporting disadvantaged people in the Global South to develop in a sustainable and humane way. At the behest of grassroots Catholic development cooperation organisations and with the support of the Austrian development agency, HORIZONT3000 has specialized in the implementation of programmes and projects and the deployment of technical assistance personnel and is a key partner of the Austrian Development Agency since 2001 and currently implements two “Framework Programme”, namely the “Rahmen Programm 1980/2019-2022” and the Technical Adviser Programme. Since the early 1990s, HORIZONT3000 operates a regional office based in Kampala/Uganda. The cooperation between the 3 partner organizations started way back in 2016 when developing the first phase of the current project.

### 1.2 Project Overview

Uganda is currently a host to an estimated 1,425,040 refugees from neighbouring countries and other parts of Africa. About 762,450 (53.5%) of the refugees mainly from South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) are settled in West Nile sub-region, Northern Uganda with 232,718 in Yumbe and 186,921 in Arua. The continuous refugee influx has increasingly exerted pressure on social, economic and environmental services and resources of the hosting districts and communities. Though Uganda’s refugee response policy allows integration and engagement of refugees in productive economic activities including employment, farming and businesses, the refugees face a number of limitations to engage in self-sustaining productive economic activities. Several humanitarian and development organization are supporting

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UNHCR and government of Uganda's efforts to address some of the limitations such as access to education, skills for employment, agriculture and food security, water for consumption and production among others.

Secure Livelihoods for South Sudanese Refugees and Host Communities in West Nile Region-Uganda phase 2, is a three years (2020-2022) response to livelihood and sustainable development needs of refugees and their host communities within Rhino Camp in Arua and Bidibidi Zone one settlement in Romogi Sub County in Yumbe Districts. PALM Corps and AFARD implemented the project in Arua and Yumbe respectively with funding from Austrian Development Cooperation, Brother and Sister in Need Innsbruck and Caritas Kärnten with donor liaison, overall grant management, coordination, and oversight of HORIZONT3000. The project seeks to ensure refugees and host communities within Rhino camp and Yumbe settlement areas of West Nile region, have secure livelihoods and contribute to sustainable development, through; 1. Improving the nutrition status of 1,085 targeted households in refugees and host communities (67% being female) by 2022. 2. Improving profitable and sustainable agricultural practice of 750 households (67% female headed) in refugees and host communities; 3. Increasing women's average income from economic activities in refugees and host communities by 2022 4. Promoting peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved and shared.

### **1.3 Project Purpose**

The project aimed to secure livelihoods of Refugees and host communities within Rhino camp and Bidibidi resettlement areas so as to contribute to sustainable development, in West Nile Region, Uganda.

### **1.4 Project Result Areas**

The expected project results included: (i) Nutrition status of 1,125 targeted households (67% females) in refugees and host communities improved by 2022; (ii) Profitable sustainable agriculture practiced by 750 households (67% female headed) in refugees and host communities; (iii) Women's average income from economic activities in refugees and host communities has increased by 2022; and (iv) Peaceful settlements for refugees and host communities where natural resources are conserved, shared and promoted.

## **2. SCOPE OF THE AFTER-ACTION REVIEW**

The AAR focused on the second Phase of the Migration project that has been implemented from January 2020 to December 2022. Three categories of stakeholders identified as key participants in the review. These included 1) the Project staff, 2) Farmer Field School Facilitators and 3) A donor representative i.e., the Project Focal point person at HORIZONT3000 Regional Office East Africa. Each result area of the project was explored guided by the following specific questions 1) What went well and why; 2) What did not go well and why, with a particular focus on the specific project context so as to generate concrete information to validate the project strategy and make recommendations for improvements and adjustment when developing the next phase of the project.

## **3. RATIONALE FOR THE AFTER-ACTION REVIEW**

AAR is a participatory project appraisal methodology that seeks to generate actionable recommendations based on lessons learnt in an activity from those who participated in the implementation. It places emphasis on learning as a team so as to improve future performance through an open and honest group reflection on successes and failures. The After-Action Review of the Migration II project aimed to identify key issues that required leadership attention based on lessons learned so as to enable the consortium partners to adapt successful strategies and minimize pitfalls in future projects. In view of the anticipated consolidation phase of the Migration Project, an AAR was commissioned to examine the strategies and performance of the concluding phase II of the Migration project so as to generate concrete actionable recommendations based on lessons learnt so as to improve the design of the consolidation phase of the Project.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

The project evaluation was conducted using the After-Action Review (AAR) approach. AAR is a participatory project appraisal methodology that places emphasis on learning as a team so as to improve future performance through open

and honest group reflection on successes and failures in a particular activity. The approach fundamentally is different from other approaches of project evaluation in that it does not grade success or failure but rather provides a learning opportunity for a team to reflect on a project, activity, event, or task so that they can do better the next time.

The views of the project stakeholders were explored to assess the performance of the project. Key project stakeholders identified during the inception included 1) Farmer Field School Facilitators 2) Project staff of the implementing partners and 3) A donor representative from HORIZONT3000. Through Focus Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews, each result area of the project was explored guided by the following specific questions 1) What went well and why; 2) What did not go well and why, with a particular focus on the specific project context so as to generate concrete information to validate the project strategy and make recommendations for improvements and adjustment when developing the next phase of the project

The following are the stakeholders reached during the data collection that was conducted from 15<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

<b>Stakeholder Category</b>	<b>Target/location</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<b>Project Staff</b>	Project/Field staff of Palm Corps in Arua	One FGD conducted with 5 staff (1 female, 4male)
	Project/Field staff of AFARD in Yumbe	One FGD conducted with 4 staff (3 female, 1 male)
	Executive Director AFARD	Key informant Interview
	Executive Director Palm Corps	Key informant interview
<b>Farmer Field School Facilitators (FFSF)</b>	Rhino Camp, Siripi, Palm Field office	One FGD conducted with 5 FFSF, all male
	Yumbe, AFARD OFFICE	One FGD conducted with 6 FFSF, (2 female, 4 male)
<b>Donor Representative</b>	Programme Manager HORIZONT3000 Regional Office, East Africa	Key informant interview

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## 5. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

### 5.1 Findings on Result 1: Nutrition Status of 1,125 targeted Households (67% Females) in Refugees and Host Communities Improved by 2022

#### Overview of the Project Plan

In order to address the challenges of food and nutrition insecurity – low production, limited and seasonal diet diversification - the project sought to continue to support both refugee and host communities organized into Farmer Field Schools (FFSs) with high yielding and drought resistant seeds and local poultry with technical skills training by retrained Farmer Field Schools Facilitators (FFSFs) in local seed saving technology, climate smart agricultural practices, kitchen gardening and safe nutrition. In addition, the project sought to increase the adoption of good agronomic and poultry management practices to increase yields of the selected crops/poultry to enable the targeted households to eat three meals daily and diversify their foods by eating green vegetables and livestock products (eggs and meat) all year round.

#### What worked well and why

Generally, stakeholders agree that the project contributed significantly towards improving nutrition and food security in the households of beneficiaries. Annual performance assessment in December 2021 showed that 89.7% of the 750 households ate at least 3 meals daily compared to 73% at inception of phase 2 of the Migration project while the adoption of good nutrition practices increased from 88% at baseline to 95.7% by the reporting period. However, by July 2022, the number of households eating 3 meals a day dropped to project baseline (73.4%) suggesting instability in household food security. However, the following project interventions are believed to be the major contributors to the positive results.

1. **Establishment of Farmer Field School learning sites:** The project partners adopted five (5) good agronomic practices namely: 1) Early land opening, 2) Correct spacing 3) Integrated pest and disease management, 4) post-harvest handling and 5) Soil and water conservation (mulching, Intercropping with cover crops, and contours) and in 2020, four (4) FFSFs (all males) underwent a 5-day residential refresher training on FFS methodology to enable them to support FFS to develop weekly work plans; set up demonstration or learning sites; and conduct training on adoption of good agricultural practices. A follow up on the training showed that the FFSFs were using the knowledge to practice Climate smart agriculture through adoption of better technologies of kitchen gardening, mulching the gardens and organizing their FFSs to get their produce ready for collective sales
2. **Provision of Agro-inputs:** AFARD and Palm Corps procured and distributed agro-inputs to 750 households for both cash and food purposes in the first and last year of the project implementation (packets of pumpkin seeds, 250 hoes and handles, 30 sacks Watermelon (50g Sukari F1), 500 bags of cassava NARO CAS 1, 70tins of Onion red creole (50g), 50 tins of Tomato Rio Grande (50g), 50 tins of Egg plant Long purple (50g), 20 Tins of cabbage Copenhagen, 500kg of Sorghum (Serena short), 1000kg of Sesame 2), to mention but a few. in 2021, PALM Corps provided assorted inputs to support the 10 tomato learning sites.
3. **Promoting kitchen gardening:** Both the project staff and FFSFs agree that the concept of kitchen gardening that the project introduced and promoted made a significant contribution in improving nutrition status and diets for the families. Kitchen gardening is aimed at ensuring that households could supplement their diet, have regular meals, and also eat nutrition rich foods. According to the project staff, *Refugees were getting reduced food rations, we wanted to guide them in extension services- to enable early planting (key focus on climate smart agriculture) and also protect the crop garden. FFS were provided with seeds (like collards, tomatoes and eggplants) for kitchen gardening to enhance food security and nutrition. Strengthening food security was a critical consideration for the partners.* Training on kitchen gardening was provided as well as follow up support provided by FFSF and field staff leading to good adoption of kitchen gardening. Households were encouraged to grow local vegetable varieties such dodo, malakwang, akeyo, ijiribi which are easily propagated. It came in handy especially for refugees who have continued to receive reduced food rations from WFP and meals that do not constitute balanced diet/full

nutrition as narrated by a participant from FFSF Focus group discussion..... In my group, 71 out of 125 *have their own kitchen gardens; Nutrition has improved. We refugees get food from WFP, but there are no beans, no cow peas and so the kitchen garden has been very helpful; Members have understood the importance of a kitchen garden now given the economic situation and the reduced food rations from WFP.* The kitchen gardens have become a source of income for families as well, another participant further remarked.

4. **Distribution of solar dryers:** As part of efforts to improve food preparation and preservation, PALM Corps and AFARD distributed 65 solar dryers (54 in Yumbe and 11 in Rhino camp). As a result, adoption of better food preparation and preservation practices increased from 88% at baseline to 95.7% at the end of the year 2021. Annual performance assessment findings indicated higher scores of meal frequency (89.7%) compared to 73% at baseline. *In the second phase we looked at the different categories of the people living in the homes, like the lactating mothers, we saw that preservation of the vegetables was a challenge, using direct sunlight, and so we procured and distributed solar dryers to group heads for utilization by FFS for drying the vegetables. Another participant alluding to the same view also had this to say.....“In the second phase we concentrated so much on how they preserve these vegetables to cater for the dry seasons. We see that it is helping them, they have started drying these vegetables (AFARD Staff).* In order to further improve food security, households were advised to dry up vegetables in order to have them available during the dry seasons, but also during bumper harvest. This was made possible by distribution and use of solar dryers that preserved vegetables within a short time. *Food preservation using the solar dryers is effective as it takes a lesser time to dry, between 15 mins to 30 minutes. The food is hygienic and can be stored for a long time. e.g tomatoes are sliced and dried and stored, affirms a staff of AFARD.*
5. **Promotion of poultry keeping:** The introduction of poultry greatly supplemented income and food for the families especially the refugees who received the birds. PALM Corps and AFARD procured and distributed 1,978 birds to 550 FFS members in 2021 and in the year 2022, AFARD further introduced poultry farming as an alternative IGA especially in village 11 in Bidibidi refugee settlement specifically targeting refugees due to limited access to land for commercial farming. Families are using the eggs to supplement dietary requirements as well as multiplying the birds for income. Beneficiaries were trained on poultry keeping and management. They were given birds to keep both local and improved breeds, groups chose paravets who were trained and equipped with the necessary kits to provide extension services to group members such as vaccination for the birds and training members on programmed hatching technologies etc. M&E data as of June 2022 showed that beneficiaries had multiplied the birds (4,439 live birds) and earned over Ugx 16 million (Euro 4000) from the sales of 637 birds and 541 eggs. *We are seeing villages where we exclusively focused on poultry production like village 11 in Bidibidi doing very well in poultry keeping. Refugees in Village 11 had a specific challenge of accessing farmland due to distance, but also seasonal streams would render movement impossible. “So, we exclusively focused on poultry, they are doing much better in terms of income” (Staff, AFARD).*

### What did not work well and why

1. **Failure of collective seed banking:** .....,“We were hoping that the farmers would harvest some seeds out of the vegetables and bank it together kept by the group treasurer for the next season, but this did not go well. I think seed banking is sustainable if enforced and so I would like this to continue in the consolidation phase. This would reduce the dependence syndrome to the programme.
2. **Solar driers were few and poorly maintained:** Several challenges were expressed with solar driers e.g. ....,solar dryers were quite expensive and so we had to give each group about 3 solar dryers and the challenge therefore is the distance for the group members carrying their vegetables to the drying point says (AFARD Staff). ..... most of the solar dryers are left exposed in the sun and getting destroyed by the weather conditions, says another AFARD Staff. The dryers are bulky and cannot be stored in the house. *Some of the drying paper materials would need replacement. Yet additional difficulties were expressed over access to the solar driers affirmed a FFSF in Rhino Camp.....the*



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solar dryers are with the group chairpersons who seem to personalise them; hence some members are not effectively utilizing the solar dryers. These are only a few of the views documented.

3. **Inadequate male involvement in food production** leading to overburdening of women (context vs project design 67% females) .....*to me what did not work- is gender mainstreaming in the area of food production- in Yumbe food is left in the hands of women affirms AFARD Staff.....But in some households, food production has largely been left for women, while men look at garden work only when it has a cash benefit, states another staff.* On average there are 7-10 persons per household and so the burden is overwhelming for women and so there is need to address this issue on gender and food in the next phase.

4. **Human resource gap** .....Internally we did not have anyone who was a nutritionist, we had to work with the district to give us a nutritionist to train/demonstrate how to cook vegetables in the groups. While AFARD hired services of the nutrition expert, Palm Corps utilized staff from its other project. It came out also clearly that in Palm side, the staffing was not adequate especially affecting activities under result 4, given that Palm has only two field staff.

5. **Poultry keeping:** Some gaps in communicating benefits to host and refugee communities caused some implicit harm. This was particularly in the areas of poultry training and distribution. Some FFSF expressed that whereas they were trained as paravets and in poultry keeping some group members did not receive poultry and there was no explicit communication given and so it was difficult for them to explain to the groups members as no reasons were given to them by Project Officers. We however established from the project team that poultry were given to refugees, which was due to the challenge of access to land while host communities benefited from tree seedlings. The project partners logic of distributing poultry to the refugees was absolutely logical, except for the communication mishap to some FFSF and FFS.

6. **In adequate budget to support Monitoring and evaluation and exchange learning visits:** Peer-to-peer learning among FFS was enhanced through experience sharing, learning from the demonstration gardens/farmer fields gardens/group gardens and exchange visits. *“Most of the things we do with our own hands when farmers see us doing the things, it makes them see us as farmers and helps them to adopt”* (Staff, Palm Corps). *“Although we wanted very much to do these activities (exchange visits), the budget was limited, even follow up budget for monitoring was not sufficient to follow up farmers on kitchen gardens.* It was also mentioned that the M& E support function did not have adequate budgetary allocation to enable it to fully function. Moving forward adequate resources need be allocated towards strengthening peer-to peer learning and monitoring support. Other factors cited included the 1) Changes in food policy of WFP: It was reported that WFP has reduced food ration by 50% and replaced it with cash handouts. This however affected food security in the household in that the COVID and subsequently Russia/Ukraine induced inflation rates in the country have caused prices of commodities including food items to rise. Households can hardly afford to buy enough food items with the little cash received from WFP 2) Drought: The food insecurity was further escalated by the prolonged dry spell up to early July 2022 which destroyed most of the first season crops hence less vegetables for home consumption and 3) Inflation: Amidst the increasing inflation rates in the country, prices of commodities including food items rose, so households hardly afford to buy enough food items with the little cash received from WFP

## Conclusion

We conclude that the project contributed significantly to improving nutrition and food security of the households, however, food security in the long-term remains vulnerable given prolonged droughts due to climate change, inadequate food storage capacity at household levels and most especially the high cost of living due to inflationary tendencies in the country that eats up on the family resources.

The main interventions that contributed to the improvement of household nutrition and food security included 1) promotion of kitchen gardening and 2) training in GAP, 3) Provision of drought resistant and high yielding seeds for farmers, 4) Provision of Solar driers for food preservation and 5) training and provision of poultry keeping.

Key challenges noted included 1) Limited access to solar driers (because they were few and long distance for some group members) as well as challenges related to management and maintenance of the solar dryers due to lack of storage space,



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2) the long spell of dry season that affected entire farming seasons, 3) the 50% reduction of food rations by WFP was also noted among key challenges to food security and good nutrition especially among the refugee households, 4) challenges of land access for refugees especially in Bidibidi, hence dependence on alternative like poultry keeping and small business to subsidize income and food, and the 5) the general rising cost of living, which is country wide is leading to high costs of inputs and basic needs hence leading some families to sell off food in exchange of other basic needs and 6) inadequate food storage facilities at family and group level, to avail food in the project locations, especially as needed in the long dry spell.

## **5.2 Findings on Result 2: Profitable Sustainable Agriculture Practiced By 750 Households (67%) Female headed in Refugees and Host Communities**

### **Overview of the Project Plan**

Low agricultural yield was identified as a critical driver of low household income and low purchasing power for both food and other basic needs required for a dignified life. The project planned to address this problem through supporting profitable agribusinesses of the targeted refugee and host community households. Strategic crops were identified for adoption after provision of technical trainings. Other interventions included piloting targeted value addition under farming as a business to enable households to access premium markets. With adequate start-up agro-inputs, business mentoring and market linkages, it was envisaged that the project beneficiaries would then adopt good agricultural and agribusiness management practices to improve their collective marketing sales volume and profits. In the ultimate end this would lead to improved monthly income, savings, and ownership of productive assets.

### **What worked well and why**

From several accounts there was agreement that the project enabled farmers practice profitable commercial agriculture. In Yumbe for instance it was reported that FFS members planted 377 acres of cassava and sold up to 324,293 Kgs of their harvest worth UGX. 235,184,500 (approx Euro 63,926). The farmers also produced and sold eleven Metric tonnes (MT) of sesame worth UGX. 39,007,500 (Euro 10,603). In Yumbe, the 3 groups who did onions harvested 5,400 kgs and sold each kg at UGX. 5000 (total income estimated at Ugx 27,000,000 (Euro 7,339). PALM Corps supported 9 of the 10 tomato producing FFS groups to market collectively, linked them to market vendors in Arua and Yumbe to mention but a few. A total of 40 crates of tomatoes worth UGX 6,000,000 (Euro 1631) was sold collectively by the groups. The 10 FFS also sold 13.2 metric tons of sesame collectively worth UGX 47,270,600 (Euro 12,846) to Ag-ploutos Company and Agri-exim. In Bidi bidi, AFARD also made some significant contributions, during this phase, a farmer cooperative was established with a membership of 112 farmers by the time of this study. The cooperative is registered with the district authorities as well as at National Level. Farmers are now joint bulking and marketing cassava through the cooperative as it has a structure. Members of the cooperative have accumulated Ugx 9 million income value (Approx Euro 2,446). POs linked the Cooperative to better buyers for both their cassava chips and flour through which farmers sold more than 55.5 MT of cassava chips to buyers in Yumbe Town Council worth Ugx 41 million (Euro 11,144). Furthermore, FFS member in Yumbe sold 324,293kgs worth UGX.235,184,500. The farmers also produced and sold 11MT of sesame worth UGX. 39,007,500. Additionally, 22 farmers in Yumbe, produced and sold 340 heads of watermelon worth Ugx 1,550,000. Bidibidi United Cooperative grinding mill generated Ugx 3,200,000 from grinding. Some farmers especially from village 11 who undertook poultry farming both for food security and as an IGA, thereby are benefiting significantly from the poultry. The project has indeed achieved the goal of making farming a business enterprise and within the reporting period average income earned per FFS member increased from Ugx 140,636 at baseline to Ugx 341,373 in 2022. A refugee participant in FGD said, *"agri-business experience has made me known outside and I was able to open a different enterprise because of what I am doing currently"* (Rhino Camp).

The following project interventions are believed to be the major contributors to the positive results that were achieved.

1. **Market oriented enterprise selection:** In 2020, project staff supported FFS members to undertake cost benefit analysis to inform their priority crops. They promoted uptake of strategic enterprises like Cassava, sesame, tomatoes and watermelon. In Yumbe, the strategic crop promoted was cassava (with emphasis on value addition), onions, sesame and watermelon. In Rhino camp, the strategic crops were cassava, watermelon, sesame and tomatoes. 12 FFSs members prioritized cassava production while 3 FFS from host communities chose onions, and 25 individual farmers (04 refugee, 08 FFSs) individual farmers from 08 FFSs. In 2021, 377 acres of cassava was planted compared to 277 acres planted in 2020.

*For AFARD in Yumbe onion was targeted as strategic crop and cassava was for food security, but now migrated into a strategic crop. Farmers get income from the sale of cassava cuttings, sale of cassava itself and now through value addition they catch better prices from the cassava flow affirms a Staff of AFARD.*

*In Rhino Camp, we are seeing refugees producing more simsim than host communities. On average each household produced up to 200kg of simsim. Refugees are posting better yields and harvest than host communities (Staff, Palm Corps, Arua)*

2. **Supporting farmers with start-up agro-inputs:** Start up-agro inputs were provided to FFS members as follows: 1,016 bags of cassava cuttings, 30 bags of watermelon seedlings and 140 onion seedlings. With these inputs provided, the groups planted 225 acres of cassava, 8 acres of watermelon, 22 acres of onions, 257.1 acres of simsim, and 181.475 acres of sorghum. In Yumbe, AFARD brokered 66 deals between FFS members and input suppliers. In 2021, PALM corps procured 1,000Kgs of sesame II seeds from OMIA Agribusiness and distributed to the 250 farmers with each farmer getting 4kgs.
3. **Agribusiness mentoring and coaching:** Business coaching was provided to groups in order to enable diversification of their livelihood improvement strategies. For example, farmers now realise tomatoes is a better strategic and income crop compared to sesame. *Many farmers are turning to tomatoes which brings income much quicker than cassava or sesame (Staff, Palm Corps). Because of the dry spell, I had to open up a salon in the dry season and use the money to buy agro inputs (States one FFSF in Rhino Camp).* At both PALM Corps and AFARD, project officers conducted 20 sessions of Agribusiness mentorship and coaching targeting the 34 registered members of Bidibidi cassava producer cooperative and the 5(2 refugee) value addition machine beneficiaries (ground nut and simsim paste grinding machines), and 1 machine for turning hibiscus into powder, under phase one, to help them grow their enterprises. In Yumbe, through the coaching and mentorship visits, the 5 beneficiaries of the grinding machines have together made UGX. 3,100,000 and bought 5 goats and 2 sheep. The refugees made UGX, 240,000 while the cooperative is functional, they have collected UGX.580,000 from membership and shares, and plan to use the money for buying and selling produce.
4. **Close supervision and field support to farmers:** The POs continued to support the farmers through training on CSA practices (early land opening, correct spacing, soil and water conservation, integrated pest and disease management and post-harvest handling) to maximize yields. The Pos also conducted 2 refresher training sessions for watermelon farmers whose crop did not perform to the expectation due to poor adoption of CSA practices in watermelon production. In 2022, POs conducted 10 training sessions on the agronomy of the tomato value chain; as a result, four (04) FFS groups planted 2.5 acres of tomatoes as a commercial enterprise.
5. **Market linkages:** In 2020, AFARD and PALM Corps profiled different market actors. Both partners supported FFS though linkages to markets. In Rhino camp, Palm managed to deal with companies like Africot that buys simsim and export to India, Agroexim and Agroplotus as strategic buyers were we linked farmers. Through these linkages farmers were able to negotiate for better prices. *I remember in 2020 we managed to let farmers sell at a price which was higher by about 500sh per killo compared to the the price available in the local market. Farmers were connected on phone and agreed on market prices and so earned better income (Staff, Palm Corps).* Furthermore, Palm mobilized farmers on the day of sale. Farmers trusted Palm to the extent that they allowed the agri-business companies to take their produce on credit. *“One unique experience we had was that because of Palm Farmers could allow you to weigh and pay later (Palm Staff, Arua) this view was affirmed further during the validation meeting held on 9th September 2022, where FFSF mentioned how helpful Palm was in providing market linkages..*

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6. **Farmer exchange visits for learning and sharing:** In the year 2021, PALM Corps conducted an exchange learning visit for four (04) FFSF, 17 FFS group representatives to vegetable sites of PALM Corps' sister project at Ariwa, Ocea, and Yelulu to Budru to facilitate learning on the agronomy, management and marketing of tomatoes. Meanwhile, AFARD collaborated with the District Commercial Officer to prepare farmer groups for the formation and registration of cooperatives
  7. **Cooperative marketing:** In Yumbe the emphasis was on strengthening the capacity of the cooperatives members to increase production and collectively market their cassava produce, as a result farmers planted 293 acres of cassava. In Rhino camp, POs conducted 10 training sessions on the agronomy of the tomato value chain as a result, four (04) FFS groups planted 2.5 acres of tomatoes as a commercial enterprise. Through PALM Corps sister project (EUTF) the farmers were provided with weekly market information on various produce to inform their marketing decisions. Additionally, 30 marketing committee members from the 10 farmer field schools were trained prior to the marketing to organise their FFS members for collective marketing. In 2022, both AFARD and PALM Corps continued to create market linkages for the farmers. In Yumbe, farmers through the cooperative were linked to cassava chip buyers in Yumbe town council through which they collectively sold 55,590 Kgs of cassava chips through their Cooperative at a better price of UGX.1000 as opposed to prevailing market price of UGX 700. In Rhino camp, PALM Corps supported 9 out of 10 tomato-producing FFS groups with market linkages to vendors in Arua and Yumbe to market tomatoes collectively. A total of 40 crates worth UGX 6,000,000 was sold collectively by the groups. The 10 FFS also sold 13.2 metric tons of sesame collectively worth UGX 47,270,600 to Ag-ploutos Company and Agri-exim. Within the reporting period average income earned per FFS member increased from Ugx 140,636 at baseline to Ugx 440,014 in 2021. PALM Corps further linked farmers who did not market their sesame in the 2021 season to an off taker. Over 3.6 tons of sesame was marketed worth over Ugx 12,929,000. *"The cooperative has worked well as groups are now marketing through the cooperatives. We see individuals taking their cassava to the stores for collective marketing at the cooperative, hence getting better prices. E.g Cassava of late goes for Ugx 2200 per kilogram. The cooperative gets some money from the group marketing. We expect the cooperative to get much more money as more farmers market through it"*. (AFARD Staff, Yumbe). Other factors that contributed to the project results included 1) building synergies with other sister projects such as PALM Corps 'AYUDA' which created platforms for vendors to interact with the farmers while in AFARD, internally the project still maintained a close working relationship with AFARDs other projects (WENAGIC) especially in terms of PO cross-skilling in cooperative development and CEDIL to develop and strengthen a producer cooperative for cassava production 2) The lock down turned out to be a blessing to Farmers as they benefited from more presence of technical project staff.....Covid blocked all of us at Siripi so we had better time of supporting the farmers (Staff, Arua)

### What did not work well and why

1. **Loss of produce especially cassava in the gardens.** Participants noted that farmers experienced challenges with cassava rotting in the field. Cassava is a major crop for food security and was as well being promoted as a commercial crop by the project. Two major factors were established to be influencing the cassava rotting in the field and these included 1) the species of the cassava which is short maturing and secondly the mindset of the farmers as alluded to by a KI during one of the interviews..... *The rotting is common to all new varieties, for after nine months, someone should be able to uproot it [cassava] but our farmers were still tied into this thinking that cassava should stay for two years and so I think this is still an attitude problem than a problem caused by the rotting itself because we were telling them after one year to harvest all the cassava, although cassava is a staple food for the Lugbara,, in the project we were looking at it as cash crop and so we advised them to keep a few stalk or buy cassava cuttings from others.* A similar view was as well expressed by another participant.... The district advised the farmers not to keep the cassava for more than 10 months to avoid the rotting.
2. **Challenges of storage:** In Rhino Camp, one FFSF mentioned that he had to sell off his cassava at a give away price due to lack of storage facility since the cassava have to be harvested within a maximum of 10 months of maturity

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to avoid rotting in the garden. Some of the FFSF have become produce buyers themselves, having understood the challenges farmers face in marketing e.g inadequate markets for their produce as well as low prices during bumper harvest. Two FFSFs (one female, and one male) opened up stores and positioned themselves as agents for produce buyers in Yumbe. In Rhino Camp, some of the FFSF also became produce buyers, storing food and selling it during periods of need. The main challenge noted was of inadequate storage facility to enable adequate storage and sales over longer period, especially during the drought seasons.

3. **Inadequate male involvement in Food production:** It was noted that in the area of food production, there was limited male involvement as men only focused on cash crops and left the burden of food production to the women. The disproportionate burden of food production for feeding the family alienates women from effectively participating and benefitting from agribusiness enterprises promoted by the project.
4. **Limited value addition.** Some farmers are not adding value to their produce, hence not able to get fair price for instance it was reported that the chipping machines broke down ..... Some chipping machines broke down before they could be fully utilized (AFARD Staff). Other participants also indicated that farmers preferred fermented cassava due to the sweet taste from the chipped cassava that is not generally palatable to them. .... the cassava chippers were not very much used because farmers reported the quality of cassava chips wasn't that good especially the taste which they claimed most people didn't like it (the cassava bread is sweet). Farmers therefore preferred the traditional fermentation instead of the direct cutting and drying.
5. **Loopholes in collective marketing:** It was noted that the number of people who participated in collective marketing dropped and this could have affected the bargaining power of the Farmers so as to maximize benefits. It was also noted as huge challenge that the sesame buyers often did not buy all the produce from the farmers, leaving them with a lot of sesame and leading to drop in prices. For instance, it was reported a group of 138 farmers who harvested 35.8 MT of sesame only sold 13.2MT collectively to companies who bought sesame for a short time within the festive season. Thereafter there was a significant drop in prices from Ugx 3,900 to Ugx 3,400, as a result (Report, 2022). It was also noted that some marketing committees lacked confidence to effectively negotiate better prices with buyers, hence the need to strengthen the marketing committees especially in Rhino Camp, while in Yumbe, collective marketing through the established Cooperative should be strengthened with the farmers taking lead in the market negotiations.

## Conclusion

From the views of project stakeholders as noted above, we conclude that the project enabled the communities embrace and practice profitable Agriculture. The following were agreed to be **key project interventions that contributed** to the positive results achieved. These include 1) supporting farmers to make correct selection of agricultural enterprises and providing them with start-up agro inputs 2) Agribusiness mentoring and coaching and close supervision and field support 3) Linking farmers to potential markets to sell produce using collective marketing and 4) Facilitating knowledge exchange among farmers through exchange visits among farmers. **Key constraints encountered** included the 1) traditional mindset of farmers especially on cassava that led to loss of produce in the gardens, 2) weaknesses in collective marketing leading to lost income through lower prices, 3) limited storage capacity for produce and safe storage and the low level of involvement of men especially in food production that places burdens on women to provide food and affects their participation in income generating activities, given they are also burdened by other gender responsibilities and finally, 4) another challenge noted was high reproductive rates among refugee communities that reduces the income due to increasing family expenses.

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### 5.3 Findings on Result 3: Women's Average Income from Economic Activities in Refugees and Host Communities has Increased by 2022

#### Overview of the Project Plan

Livelihood diversification is a critical resilience strategy for poor households as it permits income smoothing. The project planned to support this strategy through a) promoting VSLA for income generating activities; b) apprenticeship skilling of youth in locally marketable trades identified by a labour market scan that offer decent employment opportunities; and c) provision of adequate start-up kits, business mentoring and market linkages. These supports were expected to trigger women, youth and girls to start microenterprises and adopt good business management practices that in turn would increase women's time spent on productive work, increase their sales volume and profits and ultimately monthly income, savings, and ownership of productive assets and hence giving women more social and economic status in their families and communities.

#### What worked well and why

It is agreed generally that the project contributed to improvement of the economic welfare of the beneficiaries. The project reports indicate that the average income of the targeted male/female headed households rose from UGX 140,636 at baseline in 2020 to Ugx 341,373 in June 2022. The main economic activity contributing to improved household income for both men and women however remained sale of produce. Some youths however were reported to have established businesses that enhanced their livelihoods.....*After the trainings we gave start up kits to the youth, here at Palm we even paid some basic rent for the youth, e.g for 3 months, we ensured that the youth had a place to start their business e.g saloon business. After the 3 months had elapsed, we found that the youth were able to pay their rent on their own. Some constructed their own structures for business (Staff, Palm Corps).*

Among the training Programmes, the saloon business was most recommended for the females while building and mechanics were recommended for the male youth. *What we also saw is that there are some trades in which the youth were making more money, like saloon was getting more money than tailoring. Construction and mechanics for boys.....For the boys those who were doing mechanics and constructions were getting better money. The boys in construction and mechanics were getting more money (PALM Staff).*

The Post Covid business package was another positive contributor to the economic livelihood of the youths following the Covid lock down that affected nearly all businesses .....*At a certain time COVID-19 hit our business, we had 6 barber saloons and others for hair dressing, which closed. It was noted that COVID-19 significantly impacted on the business of women and youth. It is said that through the entire lock down, business like saloon remained closed and the youth did not earn income. Consequently, Palm Corps and AFARD, sought permission from HORIZONT3000 to provided business rejuvenation packages. When we did assessment in the middle of last year, we saw that it was real that income had gone down and stock had depleted, so we identified 15 youth who needed some business resuscitation packages, 6 of them needed only some soft skill and 9 needed restocking and so we had a budget line to restock, provide additional skilling support to enable these youth bounce back.*

Women average income from economic activities from refugee and host communities has increased. Some testimonies to this are as follows: a beneficiary testified for having been able to sleep on a mattress for the first time and put on sandals. More so, women are now the bread winners in their families.

Some youth trained in various trades have functional businesses. ....*After the trainings we gave start up kits to the youth, here at Palm we even paid some basic rent for the youth, e.g for 3 months, we ensured that the youth had a place to start their business e.g saloon business. After the 3 months had elapsed, we find that the youth were able to pay their rent on their own. Some constructed their own structures for business says a staff of Palm Corps.*

VSLA seems to go well for many groups and bonds members together. One staff from AFARD had this to say *"at the beginning, the groups did not like the idea of VSLA as most of them had been involved in VSLA, but when they realized the importance of saving for using for buying farm inputs and for timely land preparations, they were able to adopt it and*



*right now they are doing well". Some selected groups have better adoption which is up to 100% the basic savings from other groups are very good.*

The following project interventions are believed to be the major contributors to the positive results that were achieved.

As regards to Income generating activities (IGA's), the partners encouraged beneficiaries to engage in saving for a purpose. *"we wanted to have 85% of the household have productive assets like Land, livestock, motorcycles", This was to be achieved by engaging both spouses of beneficiaries to have a home development plan for example, saving in order to purchase iron sheets for home improvement and by encouraging the uptake of loans in VSLA's to invest in businesses to raise family incomes* (Views from staff AFARD). FFS were encouraged to save for particular purpose, e.g in order to acquire assets, buy roofing materials etc, through family visioning families have ventured into loans. Loan uptakes have gone up- a number of women have gone into different petty business e.g baking, selling clothing and food items. *The focus on the project for IGA was more for upscaling these as well as offering business coaching...to diversify whatever they had, e.g rearing poultry, picking money from vsla for business startup.* Monitoring was done to check performance of FFS with regards to savings. *"When we measure at half year and end of year, we see very minimum variations in the saving, ranging from 35,000 shillings monthly. When you go back and understand what is your star value, agro-inputs and social fund, they put between 8000 to 12,000. Social value about 2000 a week" (Staff, Palm, Arua).*

Business coaching was provided to FFS in order to enable diversification of their livelihoods for example, in Rhino camp, farmers realised that cassava which was one of the main cash and food crop takes too long in the garden and now are turning their attention to tomatoes which brings income much quicker than cassava.

Covid 19 pandemic- in spite of the challenges posed by the pandemic the Project responded by offering business rejuvenation packages to boost businesses that had collapsed but had potentials to progress. Some youths were taken for skill upgrade to enhance their productivity. Among the businesses that didn't survive the covid pandemic included bakery and saloon as fighting and ownership of group assets disintegrated these businesses

### **What did not work well and why?**

1. **Regarding the youth skilling the following were issues of concern** a) **Duplication:** that many Partners were supporting the Youth skilling programme and also targeting apparently the same youths.

A participant for instance had this to say..... *The youth have continued to enrol on similar skilling program by other agencies who also provide start up kits. As soon as trainings are completed, the kits are sold off and they are difficult to find. And this is becoming a culture among the youth especially among the refugee's youth. Yet also participants expressed that returns on investment were low especially tailoring and phone repairs ..... There are some trades which we would not take on due to the low income like tailoring and phone repair.*

b) **That after trainings the youths sell off the startup kits** and how they use the proceeds is not well known. Some testimonies from respondents of FGD in Rhino Camp and Yumbe about challenge observed under the youth skilling programme

- *Saloon group- trained youth groups within the settlement – training went on well, facilitation okay, but as soon as start up kits were given, they spent two months, one person took half of the kits sold off and escaped to Yeyi...*
- *some of this youth take the training for fun, as part time, they know that at the end they will receive start up kits"*
- *One lady is doing well in village 12 she was trained under tailoring. In tailoring 5 trained. And in the second year 2 where trained, in total 4/7 doing well.*
- *In village 11, 5 girls were taken for tailoring training, one conceived, one got married in South Sudan, 3, .. others sold off the start up kits.*
- *When another NGO comes, they enrol for another courses...3/5 are doing something and are in saving group.*
- *A group- trained on agro-forestry, nurse beds, in the first year, did very well, in the second year they were expecting to be given seeds, shared the money among them selves and nothing*



*remained in the account. In this phase two were called and expected to do something, they cleared the nurse bed but did not plant anything.*

- 5 girls taken for training for tailoring, one got married but has sawing machines the rest got married far away... no updates
- youth selected for carpentry, given inputs, once they saw that free things are over, they relaxed, but the other 2 did something, bought timber and doing something until now. 2/5 doing well. the two are working in the sub-county and town centres.

c) that most beneficiaries are difficult to find for follow up to assess how they are translating knowledge into livelihood enhancement

*"We trained the youth in the various vocational skills but as we talk right now, most of this youth are not traceable. You can't reach most of these youth. Especially like for the girls, many got married and you cannot trace them. For the refugees some decided to return to South Sudan and some of them have changed their settlements e.g you find someone is now staying say in Adjumani, so it is very hard for us to reach them. And so, it is difficult to do mentorship to be provided or to guide them. So, for me to a greater extent it has not worked well for me, although there are some individuals who are still there and run some businesses and are making some money remarked one staff from AFARD). There is a general consensus from both Palm Corps and AFARD staff and FFSF that indeed it is difficult to follow up the youth and establish what they are doing. The views expressed by this staff is only one of similar other views expressed and unanimously affirmed by other participants even at the validation meeting.*

d) **Some trades seem to be saturated/gets little income.** Tailoring seems saturated, of those youth who have trained only few are said to be utilizing the skill acquired. *" some trades which we would not take on due to the low income like tailoring and phone repair"*

2. **Voluntary savings and Loan Associations:** Various accounts of participants point to a number of challenges the schemes were facing that included a) **failure to return loans in time** .... *Our worry has been when groups start saving there is high uptake of loans. Some groups share out the money within one to two months but members take long to return the money says Palm Corps Staff. b) Security of money is not guaranteed.....One group called Amatualu had a challenge. The group was to share out 20 million Uganda shillings. The group members agreed that it was risky to keep 20 million in the box with one member. And so they decided to distribute the money among trusted members of the group to keep the money for a particular period. I remember one person almost failed to return the money. On the day of sharing out the group money, this one person brought an excuse but the group refused to share until the person brought the money back. This definitely is a challenge and we have been thinking of linking the groups to financial institution so as to safeguard their money. c) Conflicting religious ideologies.....*Participants were concerned that Muslim members of VSLAs especially in Yumbe on account of their religious teaching and beliefs have problems with the idea of charging interests on loans and are not willing to pay interests on loans. This has caused problems in the groups and an area for dialogue and discussion. It is feared that the Farming groups could disintegrate if the VSLAs are not strengthened..... *What keeps the groups is the VSLA, and so when this will dissolve, I think the groups will dissolve (Project staff, Palm) d) Duplication of initiatives:* The project staff were concerned that some Partners were putting money into the groups as revolving funds and hence distorting the savings culture. *-In Ocea we had another bad experience, this group was doing well in savings until another partner (NGO) came in. This NGO put some money into the saving box as a revolving fund. And when people picked this money, they also picked the initial savings, challenge came in returning the money back. And so for me revolving money brings problems in the group as members see it as free money and don't see the need to bring it back. But when it is their own saving, members respond and bring back the money (Staff, Palm Corp).* There were similar experiences about disruptive/duplications from interventions of other NGOs especially in village 11, Bidibidi, Yumbe district that has distorted the group VSLA. Accounts of how other NGOs brought in revolving funds or some cash or IGA like sale of second clothes disrupted the group VSLA and made it difficult for group leaders to ensure commitment and participation of members.

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3. **High illiteracy among beneficiaries** has been a major challenge affecting businesses especially in record keeping as well as the VSLA. *This was an oversight because the main focus was on food security and income generation ignoring the element of literacy remarks staff of Palm Corps.* In other words the program did not foresee need to support FSF in adult literacy, which is seemingly important for strengthening business management and VSLA components.
  4. Similarly, among the youth, many businesses were killed in the households because the family would demand for the proceeds of the business for provided support to the business. *“for example; a bakery business will require family support in terms of labour and sometimes family resources like wood fuel and utensils”* remarks FFSF, Rhino camp.
  5. More so, some female spouses who have been empowered tend to demand authority over their spouses who may be less economically stable than them. This can be a vice for domestic violence and or deprivation of the participation in group activities by the other spouse. Therefore, there is need to bring beneficiary spouses on board by discussing the vision of the business/project and the role of the spouses in ensuring the success of the project so that they can support each other. Also reported are many case of young girls getting married and thereby putting aside the training acquired as some parents have kept the start-up kits.

## Conclusion

While the project on the overall contributed towards improvement of the economic welfare of beneficiaries, the greatest contribution came from Agricultural initiatives that the project promoted. The contribution of the skilling Programmes and VSLA groups needs to be further evaluated to better quantify the extent of their contribution towards livelihood enhancement of beneficiaries notwithstanding the success stories reported and the overall impact of COVID on businesses. There seems to be a high duplication of youth skilling intervention and hence potentially wastage of resources. Many NGOs seem to be providing Youth trainings and in so doing creating in the youth the desire to attend multiple courses for certificates sake or for acquiring start-up kits which are sold off almost immediately. Ultimately, the acquired knowledge and skills are not put into practice, thereby risking degeneration/ skills remains undeveloped/underdeveloped to make a meaningful livelihood contribution as originally visualized by the project.

## 5.4 Findings on Result 4: Peaceful Settlement for Refugees and Host Communities Where Natural Resources are Conserved, Shared and Promoted

### Overview of the Project Plan

To reduce the alarming rate of environmental degradation, the project planned to procure quick maturing tree seedlings from the youth who graduated in tree nursery management and distribute to targeted households for planting both on field borders or woodlots. In addition, training of trainers was to be conducted in construction of energy saving stoves so that households effectively use their firewood and briquettes. With improved cooking technology and reduce wood fuel use, the refugee settlements and their buffer zones would be replenished once again. Campaign against bush burning were to be championed by the Local Environment Committee (LECs) and sensitive conflict issues related to land, bush burning and stray animals during dry seasons were to be addressed through community dialogue meetings. These interventions once carried out would lead to increased access to wood fuel within easy reach for women and girls thereby reducing their time spent traveling long distances to fetch firewood and reducing the practice of bush burning that trigger social tensions between refugees and host communities.

### What worked well and why

Stakeholders agree that the project promoted good refugee/host community relationships while promoting sharing and conservation of natural resources.

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There is **significant improvement on tree survival rates** due to the approach of refilling the land. Through partnership with UNHCR, partners received free tree seedlings which were used to refill the dried-up trees. Tree survival rates were better where a mixed cropping was applied i.e. where crops were grown in the same plots alongside the trees. This also worked well where tree seedlings were given to interested individuals. It can be safe to say that the project made significant contributions in greening the environment as beneficiaries planted trees, the FFSF stood as role models in planting trees in big numbers, demonstrating to group members through their own action.

The **energy saving** stoves have really benefited the people. It really saves energy and brings about health benefits. Food is cooked quickly and in the short time. What worked well is the energy saving champions demonstrated use of the energy saving stoves through utilizing it themselves. Some on their own modified the stoves to construct charcoal stoves. There was significant progress made, FFSF reporting high uptake rates though varying. One FFSF in Yumbe states in one group he supervisors over 88% of group members acquired and use energy saving stoves. In another group the rate stands at 96%.

*For us refugees, the introduction of energy saving stoves was a great welcome. Those who are beneficiaries 96% have energy saving stoves, both beneficiaries and non-refugees, OPM, world hunger are constructing energy saving stoves free of charge. Challenge is of payment of facilities (FFSF, Yumbe).*

For one FFSF who supervises two groups, 16/25, and 18/25 have energy saving stoves. Another FFSF who supervises two groups reports that all members of his group have energy saving stoves. The other group 15/25 have energy saving stoves. Another female FFSF reports that 19/25 and one other group has all its members having energy saving stoves. The other female FFSF have the following 17/25, 10/25, 14/25 and another male FFSF reports that 79/125 have acquired energy saving stoves.

Generally, good progress has been made in rolling out construction and use of energy saving stoves making significant contribution to environmental conservation/protection, through saving energy consumption (wood fuel).

**The key approaches/interventions that worked well were identified as follows:**

1. **Dialogue meetings were held facilitated by LECs.** The **community dialogues** were held with emphasis on addressing bush burning and stray animals and this is said to have been successful in addressing challenges of bush burning and stray animal. Some FFSF went to demonstrate the use of energy saving stoves in these community meetings. Posters were printed out addressing bush burning. These meetings were attended by beneficiaries from both host and refugees, attended by officials from OPM, AFARD, and district officials.

*Many issues of stray animals through community dialogue have reduced. Of late you really see there is cassava which is our main food security item for the national households". Testifies an FFSF in Yumbe.*

Another FFSF in Yumbe agreed with this statement,

*stating that, "Issues of stray animals has really come down, in the first phase there was a lot of destruction of casava stalks but in the second phase this has come down. The community have realized that the stalks are also a source of income and can be used to sell to the neighbour.*

The LECs carried out environmental assessment and moved among communities in market areas and schools to sensitize community members about environmental conservation. "One of the discussions focused on how communities would co-exist in sharing natural resources and replant depleted areas. Tree woodlots were planted by the LECs. "We have planted so many trees through the LECs and through the beneficiaries" (Staff AFARD).

2. **The approach of providing tree seedlings to beneficiaries who wanted to plant trees worked**, better survival rates..... *In the first phase, we thought everybody would appreciate tree planting, and so we gave tree seedlings to everybody but the willingness to plant trees was not in every body, that is why when we came to phase two, we are strategically promoting tree planting with those few who are interested in tree planting and we see there were very good survival rates (Staff, AFARD). Among the refugees the mind set is that trees take a very long time in maturing and so fruit trees were given to target refugees. We moved from phase one 50% survival rate to over 80% survival rate (Staff, Palm Corps). Fruit tree seedlings were much appreciated and had better survival rates.*
3. **The project approach, tree plantation in exchange for farming land for refugees worked very well:** The staff also noted that the project devised an innovative approach of land negotiation with the host communities whereby the landlords

were asked to provide land for refugees to plant crops while trees are planted for them and taken care of by refugees. This was reported to have hugely succeeded in enhancing access to land for farming for the refugees. *..... we used those trees as bait for getting land for the refugees. There were landlords who had land and would ask "you want me to give land to the refugees, what am I going to benefit, and this person is not a beneficiary of the project. so we tactically lured them by saying, if you gave these people one acre of land per person (i.e 50 acres), we can mobilise these 50 people to open for you like 1-2 acres of your land and we will give you seedlings and they will plant it for you. So that this landlord also sees that I am also benefiting directly, I will have my trees"* (Staff, AFARD). Woodlots are said to be visible in Bidibidi thanks to this approach of negotiating or land for tree planting with land Lords. Palm replicated this approach in its other projects in Parolina and its said to work successfully as well.

4. **Training provided to selected persons on construction of energy saving stoves contributed to enabling majority of the beneficiaries to acquire and utilize energy saving stoves:** FFSF were informed in a meeting held in September 2021 that some members of the groups would be trained as energy saving stove champions. Some of the FFSF were subsequently trained as energy saving stoves champions. They carried out construction of energy saving stoves to their group members at a fee of Ugx 5000, while group members were to contribute materials for the stove construction like sand. The FFS clearly understood the reason behind the construction and provision of energy saving stoves. *The reason why we were to introduce energy saving stoves was due to challenge of getting wood fuel. Also, energy saving stoves would reduce fuel wood consumption as well as provide a clean cooking environment for mothers and children who spend quite some time in the kitchen*" Affirmed by FFSF from Yumbe.

Following the training provided energy saving stove champions, FFSF held meetings with FFS to sensitize them about the benefit of having energy saving cook stoves, and what was expected of them. *"we rolled out construction of energy saving stoves to group members at a fee, said one FFSF from Bidibidi. Households were to provide the materials like sand and also make a contribution of Ugx 5000* (FFSF, Yumbe). There is significant uptake of energy saving stoves by FFS. Beneficiaries seem to have welcomed very much the idea of construction and utilization of energy saving stoves, given the impressive records shared by FFSFs when asked to present statistics. One FFSF in village 11 places uptake of energy saving stove at 96% for both beneficiaries and non-refugees. This success is partly attributed to the work of other agencies and OPM who have been constructing/distributing energy saving stoves free of charge to especially refugees (women headed households). This meant that energy saving champions would therefore not benefit significantly from charging for their labour as free energy saving stoves were availed by the other agencies and OPM in similar project villages.

5. We have a group of youth who were trained on agro-forestry to raise tree nurse beds, then AFARD goes and buys these tree seedlings from them and supply to beneficiaries. *Right now if we had transport we could go and see the land where trees were planted in zone 1. The trees have grown and visible, in two years or three the landlord can harvest the trees, (says FFSF, Yumbe).* White tick trees were planted on an 6 acres of land. Each beneficiary was given to plant tree seedlings in their home and this worked well.

#### **What did not work well and why**

1. **Formal land agreements** did not seem to receive the required approval of host communities, rather informal land arrangements were preferred: The host communities are suspicious with formal agreements associating it with attempts to grab their land..... *OPM wanted host communities to enter into land agreements, but this did not work* (Staff, Palm Corps). The informal agreements have proved more fruitful in negotiating land access for refugees. This is a similar position held by project staff and FFSF from Yumbe.
2. **Tree seedlings:** Type of seedlings distributed vs farmers interests. Fruit tree seedlings were not supplied as priority, although this was highly anticipated by farmers. Many FFS (especially host communities) are said to have not received fruit tree seedlings, which they would have preferred receiving. Another issue that came up was the **timing of distributing tree seedlings**. There was a general consensus from the FFSF that trees distributed this year (2022) died largely attributed to the timing of the seedlings given i.e in June/July which turned out to be a dry period, attributed to climate change (this period should have been ideally a rainy season). *In my village because the areas is rocky, most of the tree seedlings supplied died* (FFSF, Yumbe).

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3. **Measuring the occurrence of annual bush fires in the communities –was really difficult to measure!** It is to be assessed more qualitatively than quantitatively. This indicator was dropped and not to be reported on.
  4. **Gender challenges:** On environmental protection, tree planting initiatives were undertaken however, it faced numeral challenges especially as regards to gender issues. *For instance, if a beneficiary woman received tree seedlings, getting the consent of the spouse was very key that guaranteed the success of this initiative,* (PALM staff) because women were considered never to own land and this would be made even difficult in situations where the man had more than one wife. Therefore, family cohesion and group cohesion should be key in the next phase.
  5. **Community environmental action plans did not work out-** in the documents it's considered too ambitious. *We were to upscale natural resource among institution, but we were not able to do that due to Corona virus. Because schools were closed due to COVID-19 we could not do it, but this time we could have done it but there is no money* (Staff, AFARD).
  6. **Energy saving stoves challenges;** FFSF mentioned that it was a challenge convincing group members to acquire energy saving stoves. Members were to provide the needed materials like water, sand and Ugx 5000 towards the construction of the energy saving stoves, but some group members were not willing to provide the cash and materials, thinking the FFSF are paid by the project, thus placing a burden on some stove champions to provide materials themselves as they have to report on work done. Some NGOs constructed free energy saving stoves to beneficiaries and so it made it difficult for the stove champions to charge for the stove construction.
  7. **Poor attitude towards Briquette –** *we used the approach of energy saving champions where we thought we would train a few people to showcase use and upscale knowledge to other beneficiaries, we gave them burners and other things, but I think because briquettes materials are obtained from the rubbish pits, people don't like it. Actually, every other partner that has tried briquette making has failed, its only DCA that is succeed because they do work for cash. They buy briquettes and put in a kiosk and someone is managing this kiosk so that is how they are succeeding.*
  8. **In adequate funds allocated to this result area-** *this result area had the least money under the projects, yet the plans were too big, for instance, we wanted to set parish woodlots, this required transportation for tree seedlings, etc. there are few things that the LECs did, they planted woodlots at Elanga, and we gave them small stipend for planting* (Staff, AFARD). The project had to rely largely on getting tree seedlings from UNHCR and NFA.
  9. **Other similar projects causing discontent in the community.....**Participants reported that PALM and AFARD were implementing similar projects possibly with other groups but providing better packages to beneficiaries compared to the Migration project and hence causing discontent among beneficiaries.
  10. **Human Resource and financial resource gap:** Project staff from both AFARD and Palm Corps noted that they lacked a specialist to address issues related to conflict resolution and environmental specialist.

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that the project made some contribution to enhance peaceful co-existence and sharing of natural resources between the refugees and host community as envisaged in the project design. The key factors that contributed to this improvement included the mixed grouping and farming approach, informal land agreements and planting trees for the nationals as a benefit for providing land for refugees for farming were found to have worked. The idea of commercial woodlots is good, and it works. The idea of intercropping tree planting with crops improves tree survival rates and should be encouraged. Aspects of the project implementation that were not well embraced included 1) promotion of formal agreements for land with nationals 2) poor community attitudes towards briquettes 3) other projects that offered better benefits to fellow beneficiaries within the same geographical location among others.



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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### General recommendations

1. Strengthen follow up of farmers, experience sharing and learning in the context of the project... *Although we wanted very much to do these activities, the budget is limited, even follow up budget is not sufficient to follow up farmers on kitchen garden (Staff, Palm Corps).*
2. Staff placement at Siripi helped bring technical services better and should be continued. There was close follow up support given to FFSF and FFS. The demonstration gardens in Sirip, provides hands-on learning opportunity and demonstrates to FFS members knowledge and experience of the project staff. This facility provides a good learning opportunity for research and development, currently being piloted is solutions to soil quality challenges through vermicomposting. *In Siripi the kitchen gardens are visible, we also try to practice most of the training for key leaders/facilitators. Most of the things we do with our own hands when farmers see us doing the things, it makes them see us as farmers and helps them to adopt (Staff, Palm Corps).*
3. Strengthen monitoring and evaluation especially towards VSLA, agribusiness as well as follow up of farmers and provide exchange learning opportunities. *Although we wanted very much to do these activities, the budget is limited, even the follow up budget is not sufficient to follow up farmers on kitchen gardens (FGD Participant, Arua).* This is just one of many views expressed by project staff of both organizations regarding monitoring and evaluation budget and the need to provide exchange learning visits.
4. Continue to engage UNHCR/OPM through Inter Agency Coordination meetings to minimize duplication of VSLA programme among project beneficiaries
5. Strengthen the project performance monitoring function with a focus on results-based monitoring followed by quarterly review meetings based on M&E findings.
6. Need for partners to reflect, ensure and monitor application of the DO NO HARM approach in various projects within similar contexts and strengthen community engagements.
7. Train selected and active Paravets to operate services on a business model, and adequately equip them with startup kits and business skills to run a self-sustaining paravet business.

### Specific recommendations for result 1: Nutrition Status of 1,125 targeted Households (67% Females) in Refugees and Host Communities Improved by 2022

1. **Nutrition education.....**-*But we would like to have an exhibition so that different groups cook and evaluators come and judge and identify the winner. The judgment should start from the processes (preparation of the food to the cooking and presentation) so that the groups will be able to learn from the whole process. Training on nutrition is what we planned and did well, but in the next phase if we could put into a little competition on food gala will make the beneficiaries understand better. Exhibition, and evaluators to see who did best!- the judgment starts on the process (Staff, AFARD), but similar views in support to this statement were expressed by Palm Staff and FFSF during the validation meeting. This was a thought affirmed by FFSFs and staff during the validation meeting. They believe this would help improve on nutrition knowledge and bring about better food preparation, more consumption of vegetables and healthy families.*
2. **Poultry keeping support should continue** but with a business component for sustaining this beyond the next project phase. *“we are seeing villages where we exclusively focused on poultry production like village 11 in Bidibidi, where the households are in the centre of the settlement and walking out to get land from the host communities is a problem, so we exclusively focused on poultry, they are doing much better in terms of income. And once income is improved, the ability to purchase food in the market also improves, asserts a staff of AFARD. In addition, paravets who are motivated and have proven to do good work should be supported through refresher training, required kits, business training and linkages to the district and sub-county veterinary personnel, so as strengthen extension service*



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provision and access to required inputs. Linkages provided by the Pos to the paravets were found helpful. Some of the paravets on their own, established informal relationships and linkages with health facilities to keep safe the vaccines. There are new vaccines like 'kukustar' which can be kept at room temperature, this provides solution to the challenge of vaccines expiring before being fully utilized.

3. **Vegetable gardening should continue** as it complements food and nutrition for the families and given the reduction in food ratio, these have guaranteed food security and nutrition for families that took farming seriously.
4. **The project could continue to work with mini-groups/ block farming approach** in the consolidation phase, given that Group members seem not to want to work in the bigger groups (farmer field schools) following the small group/mini group approach used during COVID-19 pandemic. It will require taking specific strategies to keep members together like the VSLA, Functional Adult Literacy etc otherwise group members seem to have reached levels of saturation, not seeing what else to learn from the group approach as they feel they have learned farming skills and do not see the need for further training beyond the five years.

*Now transitioning the mini-groups to main group, majority of the farmers don't want to work in the bigger group, they want seedlings to be given to each member of the group because people have learnt individually. And so, we see allowing them to work in a block setting would solve this problem of working as an individual but in a group garden. For instance, each person would have about two rows of tomatoes, within the block. Spraying would be done together, any inputs needed would still work (Staff, Palm, Arua).*

This issue was discussed in the validation meeting and there was general consensus that the FFS approach may no longer be relevant in the next phase, rather the mini group/block farming approach.

5. **Solar dryers:** *For the next phase, we still want to think around how best to utilize the solar dryers, perhaps see more use in the area of value addition. We will also go back and check on how the solar dryers are being kept and discuss how best they can be kept and utilized (Staff, Palm Corps).* The monitoring should focus on getting the learnings, and stories around the solar drying so as to improve reprogramming. We recommend the need to review operation and use of the solar dryers given the challenges enlisted such as inadequate care for the solar dryers, limited use by some FFS members due to long distance of travel and seeming ownership by group chairpersons. Facilitate discussions around the solar dryer use and management question to establish facts and devise some solutions. Some suggestions however are as follows: look into maintenance and management issues. Provide refresher training for users of the solar dryers to obtain maximum use and benefits. Assess possibility of remodeling/modification of solar dryers to address the challenges of bulkiness and storage, as well as of wear and tare of some critical materials e.g improve the quality of the sheet. Work with trained youth e.g Carpentry and joinery/mechanics to remodify solar dryers for appropriate and sustainable use.
6. **The project should strengthen advocacy for male involvement in food production:** Inadequate male involvement in food production leading to overburdening of women (context vs project design 67% females). *"To me what did not work- is gender mainstreaming in the area of food production- in Yumbe food production is left in the hands of women (Staff, AFARD). When we were graduating from phase one, we said in food security there is no problem. Then in phase two we thought of doing a few things to ensure we sustain food. But in some households, food production has largely been left for women, while men look at garden work only when it has a cash benefit, on average there are 7-10 persons per household and so the burden is overwhelming for women and so there is need to address this issue on gender and food.*
7. **Strengthen advocacy and dialogue:** The reduction of food ratio by WFP is resulting into more pressure among the refugees to get more land so that they increase their acreage. *With inflation, the money that WFP is giving is not adequate to buy household needs. So you see that everybody is hungry to get land, and yet OPM has failed to guarantee access to land and so there is a very strong need to continuously dialogue with landlords for land access for refugees (Staff, AFARD).* This dialogue is crucial for landlords have started to realise when they give out land to refugees, refugees are making more money than them. And so, they have become very tricky, they want their

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land back after two years, when the land is still at the prime to produce. So having the landlord and refugees to have continuous dialogue will help to reduce this kind of manipulation and also sustain access to land.

8. **Support establishment of food storage facilities;** lack of food stores was considered a significant factor affecting food security for the FFS members. Some testimonies from FFSFs during the data collection and during the validation meeting attest to the need to have secure and safe food stores/granaries to enable preservation, availability and provision of food especially during bumper harvest and needed in the dry seasons. They contend that having food stores enables them extend service to the refugees and rural communities in times of need.

### **Specific recommendations for result 2: Profitable Sustainable Agriculture Practiced By 750 Households (67%) Female headed in Refugees and Host Communities**

1. Value addition especially for cassava should be deliberately monitored and supported for cassava with considerations for distribution of the new species of disease resistant cassava.
2. Mindset change targeting farmers on cassava and promoting sequential planting as many farmers is necessary as farmers still have the old mind set of leaving cassava to stay beyond the recommended months in the field, leading to cassava rotting.
3. In order to promote tomatoes, main emphasis should be on irrigation support for consistent production including during dry periods
4. Strengthen Marketing Committees specifically building their business skills to better negotiate with produce buyers and also to sensitize the farmers on the benefits of collective marketing
5. Train selected and active Paravets to operate services on a business model, and adequately equip them with start up kits and business skills to run a self sustaining paravet business

### **Specific recommendations for result 3: Women's Average Income from Economic Activities in Refugees and Host Communities has Increased by 2022**

1. Conduct alumni tracer study on the youth skilling programme at the start of the next project phase to establish clearly where are the youth who were trained by the project and what is the linkage between the skilling programme and their current livelihood. The studies should seek to examine factors contributing to success of the youth who have succeeded in the business. It would be recommended to exchange lessons with other agencies on their experiences with youth skilling program, as well as establish what additional support is required to operationalize the skills acquired and support youth who have demonstrated resilience and business acumen with potential to employ other people. We recommend therefore the need to rethinking the intervention with deeper reflection based on lessons learnt/best practice examples from systematized experiences.
2. Following a tracer study, the project needs to prioritize DIT certification of the trained youth to enable them use their qualifications for their future career progress.
3. Engage VSLA groups on the issue of disagreements on interest and any other charges on account of religious beliefs, if possible, benchmark with other organisations on how they are addressing these challenges.
4. Facilitate linkages of VSLA groups to financial institutions to improve security of member savings and sustainability of mentorship and capacity building of the groups beyond the project
5. Consider providing start-up kits to youths as groups with clear business plans rather than immediately after completing the training.
6. Train selected and active Paravets to operate services on a business model, and adequately equip them with startup kits and business skills to run a self-sustaining paravet business

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#### Specific recommendations for result 4: Peaceful Settlement for Refugees and Host Communities Where Natural Resources are Conserved, Shared Promoted

1. Engage communities who have offered land to refugees in order to build their confidence and trust on land matters. Since informal land agreements are working, this should be promoted as its highly preferred and working to achieve the intended goal..... *what worked was more understanding between host and refugees and entering into informal agreements (FFSF, Rhino Camp). We see refugees still able to feed themselves, we emphasized vegetable gardening (kitchen gardens) this helped a lot (Staff, Palm Corps).*
2. Mixed farming approach, where tree planting is integrated with crop farming offers better survival rates and should be promoted
3. Need for location mapping, to provide tree seedlings that are proven to grow in the given location, i.e need to examine the local context and also seek advice from the established structures on what would work best: FFSF also mentioned the need to carefully select tree seedlings to match the location. *“white tick does well in rocky areas, even Nsambya tree in rocky place can survive”.. Euculaptus should be grown during rainy seasons. Pine trees were preferred but were not given. The trees also need thorough weeding and the land to be well dug before planting...information was not given earlier, need to prepare hole for 2 months earlier.*
4. There is need to provide more fruit trees, as this is highly preferred and would improve tree survival rates. This should be given from the start of the program as those who received have already enjoyed the benefits. There is need to harmonized distribution of the fruit trees as both refugees and host required the fruit tree seedlings. “some do no harm” consideration.
5. Mixed group approaches-engaging refugees and host communities in joint activities promotes mutual understanding, group solidarity, peaceful co-existence and should be promoted.
6. The energy saving stoves are a good idea and the graduate trainees could be upgraded with business management skills training given to enable them to sustain the business
7. Harmonize benefits and target groups of similar projects with the Migration project using the Do No Harm principles of development aid
8. Equip the FFS Facilitators with skills for Alternative Dispute Resolution
9. Strengthen advocacy and peace building initiatives with host communities for sustainable access to land for refugees as the inflation and reduction of food ratio by WFP is resulting into more pressure among the refugees to get land for farming..... *the money that WFP is giving is not adequate to buy household needs. So you see that everybody is hungry to get land, and yet OPM has failed to guarantee access to land and so there is a very strong need to continuously dialogue with landlords for land access for refugees. This dialogue is crucial for land lords have started to realise when they give out land to refugees, refugees are making more money than them. And so they have become very tricky, they want their land back after two years, when the land is still at its prime time to produce. So having the landlord and refugees to have continuous dialogue will help to reduce this kind of manipulation and also sustain access to land.*

## ANNEX 1: PERSONS INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED

### KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

No.	Date	Name	Sex	Designation	Organization
	15.08.2022	Matenga Ivan	M	Monitoring & Evaluation Manager	Palm Corps
	15.08.2022	Juliana Modo	F	Livelihood Officer	Palm Corps
	15.08.2022	Ongwech Sunday	M	Business Development Officer	Palm Corps
	15.08.2022	Henry Acadribo	M	Programme Manager	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Safi Alli	M	Centre Manager	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Hakim Michael	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Joseph Ramba	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Inziku Tom	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Amin John Francis	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	Palm Corps
	16.08.2022	Acema Robert	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	Palm Corps
	17.08.2022	Bayo Richard	M	Livelihood Officer	AFARD
	17.08.2022	Gatrude Ocokoru	F	Business Development Officer	AFARD
	17.08.2022	Limio Flavia Vuni	F	Livelihood Officer	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Taban Zubair	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Ajuma Stanley	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Ayikoru Samiria	F	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Wani Julius	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Maliko Rauda	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	18.08.2022	Moses Ayume	M	Farmer Field School Facilitator	AFARD
	24.08.2022	Dr. Lakwo Alfred	M	Executive Director	AFARD
	25.08.2022	Mr. Solomon Mbubi	M	Director Programme/Deputy Director	HORIZONT3000
	26.08.2022	Dr. Anyanzo Abbey Thomas	M	Executive Director	Palm Corps

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## **ANNEX 2: LIST OF REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

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