

# A Feasibility Study of Cash Transfer Programmes in Karamoja

(Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Napak)



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Analysis Conducted by:

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the fact that various interventions have been implemented in Karamoja to address food insecurity, most of the population remains food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity, calling for innovations in food security programming. The assessment reached over 1,100 households and primarily sought to assess the food security status of WFP beneficiaries and key aspects of market functionality with the view to inform potential cash/voucher programming in Karamoja.

The assessment was carried out in four (4) districts of Karamoja and nine (9) sub-counties: Kaabong (Lolelia sub-county), Kotido (Kotido, Panyangara, Rengen and Nakapelimoru sub-counties), Moroto (Katiquekile sub-county) and Napak (Ngoleriet, Lopei and Lokopo sub-counties).

### Main findings

#### 1. Protection and Gender

Findings suggest the security situation is conducive for implementation of cash/voucher programmes. Furthermore, there is indication that women are not marginalized, and of their involvement in decision making that could facilitate good intra-household distribution.

- The decision on what to do with the food assistance received is made by women in 76% of households; jointly by men and women in 21%; and by men alone in only 3%. Women also occupy key leadership positions in Food Management Committees (FMC);
- About 97% of the beneficiaries who went to the FDP did not encounter any safety problems
- About 55% of respondents were aware of the selection method used for cash/food beneficiaries. However, respondents in Napak and Moroto had the least knowledge about this process (48 and 49% respectively).

#### 2. Asset ownership and income

There is indication of low incomes among households and inability to accumulate assets probably due to chronic assets depletion as a coping mechanism.

- Livestock ownership is very low among households with more than half (57%) owning no livestock; the most commonly owned assets were: hoe (90%), panga (58%) and axe (51%);
- Community assets are equally low with communities having a maximum of 6 (of 17) enumerated assets; the most frequently cited asset required was storage facilities (79%);
- However, at least 63% of households have a household member earning an income but with disparities in districts e.g. Napak at 35.8%.

### **3. Households' dependence on markets**

Trading in local staples suggests that markets exist in the region; providing cash/vouchers to beneficiaries is therefore a feasible option. Furthermore, households typically spend their incomes on food and therefore providing cash/vouchers is unlikely to compromise food consumption in households.

- Most purchased commodities from the market among households were found to be Sorghum (42%), beans (17%), maize grain (14%) and maize flour (10%);
- Market purchases and own production were the most common sources of food consumed in the 7 days preceding the survey;
- There is relatively good monthly expenditure in markets; households had spent an average of UgX.10000 on food in the 7 days preceding the survey;
- Distance to markets does not seem to be a major issue for households; about 98% of households reported going to the market at least once a week.

### **4. Food consumption**

The recent harvest has contributed to improved food consumption scores among the population. However, this is expected to be short lived with an early start of the lean season due to poor harvests. Consequently urgent measures are needed to protect the vulnerable from hunger such as through cash transfers to enable them access food through markets.

- A relatively high percentage (47%) of respondents registered acceptable Food Consumption Scores (FCS); nonetheless, the remaining 53% remain either food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity (40% borderline and 13% poor FCS).

### **5. Shocks and coping**

Livelihoods rebuilding initiatives are recommended to help communities/households rebuild their productive assets base and strengthen their resilience

- All households suffered at least one shock in the 30 days preceding the survey, the most common being weather related shocks (e.g. floods, heavy rains, drought, landslides) among 34% and high food prices (13%);
- Application of food consumption coping strategies was low, consistent with the relatively high food consumption scores observed, attributable to the harvest season;
- However, application of livelihoods coping strategies is still high, also evident with the low level of ownership of productive assets.

## Key findings at district level

### 1. Kaabong

Households in Kaabong depend heavily on markets with 100% of households found to have gone to the market at least once in the 7 days preceding the survey.

- District had the highest percentage of households owning more than 3 assets (84%) and with 56% of households owning some livestock; District also had second highest percentage of households (76%) with at least one income earner;
- Kaabong is the only district with food crop production/sales mentioned as a significant income source, after firewood/charcoal sales;
- District had second highest percentage (44%) of households with acceptable FCS (while 40% had borderline and 15% poor FCS);
- The highest percentage of households (56%) that borrowed money as a coping strategy was observed, suggesting current levels of food consumption may be short lived as households become indebted.

### 2. Moroto

Findings suggest significant constraints in access to food in the district as weather related shocks have diminished ability to produce own food, while the fact that there are few households with income earners means households have no income with which to buy food. Households are therefore highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

- Most affected by weather related shocks (e.g. floods, heavy rains, drought, landslides), reported by 48% of households;
- District had highest percentage of households adopting food consumption coping strategies (39%), and the highest proportion of households that adopted any livelihood coping strategies;
- Majority (53%) of households had borderline FCS (only 30% acceptable and 17% poor FCS);
- Low percentage of households with at least one income earner; some dependence on remittances mentioned in addition to firewood/charcoal sales.

### 3. Napak

Like Moroto, weather-related shocks in Napak have affected own food production and, simultaneously, low percentage of households with members earning an income affects their ability to purchase food. Consequently availability and access to food are affected, predisposing households to food insecurity.

- Second most affected by weather related shocks, reported by 42% of households; also highest mention of high food prices as a shock by 19% of households;
- District had second highest percentage of households adopting food consumption coping strategies at 35%;
- Lowest percentage of households with at least one income earner (36%); more households dependent on remittances as an income source;
- District had second lowest percentage (41%) of households with acceptable FCS (with 41% having borderline and 18% poor FCS).

#### **4. Kotido**

Households in Kotido seem relatively better off in terms of availability and access to food

- Highest percentage of respondents that did not adopt food consumption coping strategies and also highest percentage of households with acceptable FCS;
- Second highest percentage of households with more than 3 assets (83%) and about 91% of households reported having at least one income earner (highest among districts);
- District had the highest percentage of households reporting agricultural wage labour as a significant income source, next to firewood/charcoal sales.

#### **Key findings for Extremely Vulnerable Households (EVHs)**

With respect to feasibility for cash interventions, there were no major differences between EVH and non-EVHs in the region;

- About 62% of EVH reported presence of at least one income earner in the household;
- About 73% were within 10km to the nearest market (29% within 5km), and 97% had gone to the market at least once in the 7 days preceding the survey, suggesting dependence on markets;
- EVHs spent on average 20% less on food (UgX. 7,000) in the 7 days before the survey;
- A good percentage (44%) of households had acceptable FCS while 41% had borderline and 15% acceptable FCS

#### **Relevance of Cash/voucher interventions**

Markets exist in the survey areas, and majority of households depend on them for livelihoods (as sellers) and as a complementary source of food (buyers). However, food access through markets is constrained for a good percentage of the population due to limited incomes/livelihood options and fluctuating food prices.



Despite the fact that market access to food is important for the population's food security, there are limited employment/income earning opportunities for households. Emigration of household members has been adopted by some households as a mechanism to sustain access to food through remittances, and a good percentage of households have employed coping strategies such as borrowing to access food.

## **Recommendations**

### **1. Cash/Voucher programming**

Given conducive security, generally low asset ownership, prevalent application of livelihood coping strategies and demonstrated dependence on markets, it is recommended to implement conditional cash transfers and/or vouchers to beneficiaries in the region, such as through cash for work programmes. Such programming could be aligned along the following objectives;

- To facilitate market access to food among the income and asset poor vulnerable to shocks;
- To provide employment to beneficiaries through cash-for-work programmes;
- To facilitate rebuilding of household and community assets to strengthen resilience;
- To stimulate markets in the region.

Analysis shows that beneficiaries in Napak and Moroto districts are worse off with the lowest food consumption scores, high percentage adopting food consumption coping strategies, and low percentage of households with at least one income earner. It is therefore recommended that any cash intervention start in these districts given the existence of markets.

However, it is recommended that a more detailed assessment of markets and market forces be conducted in the near future which could further inform any potential cash transfer pilot.

While there is good security in the region, some level of security enforcement is recommended at the FDPs to counter the few reported safety incidents and also act as a preventive measure in case cash transfers are initiated.

### **2. Operational aspects of WFP assistance**

On average, about 55% of respondents were aware of the selection method used for cash/food beneficiaries. However, respondents in Napak and Moroto had the least knowledge about this process (48 and 49% respectively). It is recommended that WFP and partners scale up communication and sensitization activities in the near future.

A higher than average percentage (70%) of respondents did not know where or how to contact WFP, OPM, or partners. This was higher in Napak (72%), Kotido (74%) and Moroto (80%) but lowest in Kaabong (53%). Accordingly urgent communication is needed to educate beneficiaries on selection process and the feedback / complaint mechanisms in place.

At district level, the percentage of beneficiaries that received the correct amount of food was highest in Kaabong at 93% but lowest in Moroto at 71%. Respective sub-offices need to conduct sensitization of beneficiaries to ensure beneficiaries are aware of their entitlements.

Respondents reported that the food received lasted an average of 15 days with the longest reported in Moroto (19 days) and the shortest in Kaabong (12 days). Among EVHs, the food was reported to last 12 days. This is a short period considering that the food distribution cycle in Karamoja is 1.5 months. The concerned Sub office should find out more about utilization patterns of food received and recommend appropriate responses to this issue.

Approximately 62% of EVHs had at least one income earner. This contravenes the criteria for selection of EVHs and necessitates a review exercise to streamline targeting of beneficiaries.

### **3. Asset ownership and income levels**

A combination of low household asset ownership with low level of community assets indicates the vulnerability of populations in these communities. A possible solution could be Cash For Work programmes which could; help build community assets strengthening resilience, and create employment for the youth in the region.

Furthermore, assets such as fishponds, contour terraces, water harvesting and irrigation canals were completely absent in all communities. Kaabong was the district with least functioning community assets. It is therefore recommended that interventions related to increasing community assets first target this district.

When asked which assets they would like to have in their communities, the most commonly mentioned assets were related to community storage. Given that WFP has just successfully completed a pilot household storage project, it is recommended that this project look into introducing a similar intervention in Karamoja – at both household and community levels.

Overall, at least 63% of households had a household member earning an income. At district level, there were more households with an income earner in Kotido (91%) and Kaabong (76%), while they were fewer in Moroto (52%) and Napak (36%). Therefore, any future planned cash transfer should necessarily begin with Napak and Moroto.

## BACKGROUND

### Food security in Karamoja

Karamoja's food security has perennially been affected by prolonged insecurity, unpredictable climatic conditions, plant and animal diseases, poor sanitation and hygiene. This, and the fact that there are generally low levels of capital (human, financial, physical and natural) among the population, has resulted in some of the poorest food security indicators relative to other regions in the country e.g. the highest prevalence of acute malnutrition, and high levels of poverty.

Through its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), the World Food Programme has provided food assistance to the most vulnerable especially during the lean season. Food for assets programmes to support resilience strengthening have also been implemented. Nonetheless, the population in Karamoja remains vulnerable to food insecurity due to recurrent shocks and limited ability to withstand their impact among the people. The dynamic nature of this situation calls for actors to be more innovative in providing solutions to address food insecurity.

The current study seeks to further understand the context of the population in Karamoja with special focus on the feasibility of cash/voucher transfers<sup>1</sup> to the poor and vulnerable. A number of contextual factors are thought to be determinants for the success of cash programmes including the existence and functionality of markets, prevailing security situation, and gender related aspects in the households/community among others.

WFP has a wealth of experience in successful implementation of cash transfer programmes. In Uganda, cash transfers have been piloted in refugee settlements and the initial results from this pilot have been extremely encouraging.<sup>1</sup>

### Innovations in monitoring and evaluation of food/cash assistance programmes

World Food Programme (WFP) has secured funds to Country Offices with the overall objective to strengthen outcome measurement and reporting at country level and as such improve the efficiency of the M & E system. Aside from enhancing M&E, e.g. through baseline and impact assessments, the project will facilitate inclusion of new outcome indicators in particular in relation to resilience programming and cross-cutting issues.

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<sup>1</sup> Cash transfers involve the provision of money to individuals or households, either as emergency relief intended to meet their basic needs for food and non-food items, or services, or to buy assets essential for the recovery of their livelihoods. Vouchers provide access to pre-defined commodities or services and can be exchanged in designated shops or in fairs and markets. The vouchers may be denominated either in cash, commodity or service value.

Using the secured funds, Open Data Kit (ODK) technology which is a tablet based technology has been employed by the Uganda Country Office to pilot the implementation of a Food Security and Outcome Monitoring system using tablet-based data collection technology. The project intends to develop the capacities in the country office to conduct and use this technology regularly in order to have a more efficient data collection system that saves time and money.

The current assessment in Karamoja was therefore conducted using the ODK tablet based technology by the Uganda country office to provide a baseline for the proposed cash & voucher programmes.

### **Objectives of the Assessment**

The objective of the assessment was to provide baseline information for the planned cash assistance programmes in the Karamoja sub region. Key information areas include the food security status of beneficiaries, markets, mechanism of provision of assistance and protection of beneficiaries.

#### ***Specific Objectives:***

1. To assess food security status of beneficiaries receiving food in Karamoja;
2. To assess the enabling environment (e.g. security, gender relations) for cash transfer programmes
3. To assess the status of markets, prices and household dependence on markets with regard to planned cash assistance programmes

## METHODOLOGY

### Scope of the assessment

Geographic: The assessment was carried out in four (4) districts of Karamoja and nine (9) sub-counties: Kaabong (Lolelia sub-county), Kotido (Kotido, Panyangara, Rengen and Nakapelimoru sub-counties), Moroto (Katikekile sub-county) and Napak (Ngoleriet, Lopei and Lokopo sub-counties).

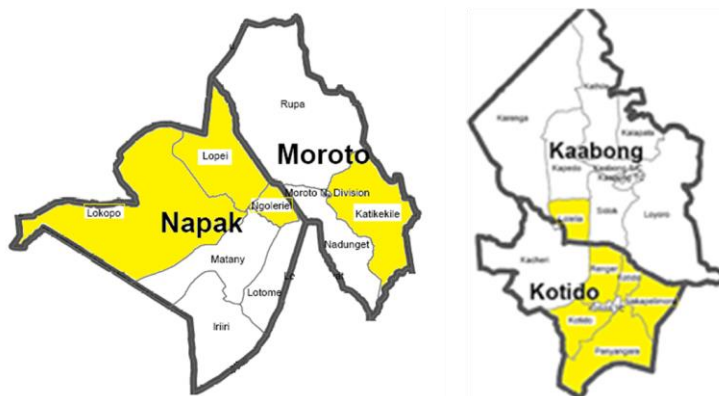


Figure 1: Geographical scope

Time-Frame: Data collection took place between 15 – 29<sup>th</sup> October 2014.

### Study design and sampling procedures

The assessment employed a multi stage cluster sampling methodology involving purposive sampling to ensure inclusion of adequate sample size for NUSAF beneficiaries. The food log books from the most recent distribution obtained from the sub offices provided the sampling frame. The assessment was planned to generate district level estimates and, to achieve this, a sampling scheme of 30 clusters with a confidence interval of 95% was calculated. The sample at sub-county level was selected with Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) and at the second stage, households which were the ultimate sampling units were selected using a Simple Random Sample (SRS). After data cleaning, total number of household surveys used for analysis was 1,166 as shown in Table 1.

District	Type Trial/Control	No. surveys
Kaabong	Beneficiary	189
	Non-Beneficiary	81
Moroto	Beneficiary	139
	Non-Beneficiary	53
Napak	Beneficiary	292
	Non-Beneficiary	93
Kotido	Beneficiary	232
	Non-Beneficiary	87
Karamoja	Total	1,166

Table 1: Number of households for the assessment by district

## **Data collection techniques and tools**

The data collection was done by a team of 40 enumerators led by WFP staff acting as Team Leaders. All efforts were made to engage locally based enumerators who could communicate directly with the respondents. Each team of five enumerators had a team leader, so there were 9 team leaders overall distributed as; Kaabong (2), Kotido (3), Moroto & Napak (4).

Tablet based (Open data Kit) technology was employed for quantitative and qualitative data collection. Responses were entered into the tablets and transmitted to a central server. Data analysis for quantitative data was conducted in SPSS while for qualitative analysis, excel was used to code responses, derive themes and make assessment of key points.

## **Data quality control**

Enumerators were trained to probe the respondents until they were satisfied with the veracity of the responses given before they were recorded in the questionnaire. The first check of the questionnaires was therefore done by enumerators in the field, followed by a second check done by the team leaders and finally by the Regional Supervisor. Inconsistencies encountered were re-explained and discussed in morning briefings prior to data collection of the next day. Where possible, these inconsistencies were corrected and, where necessary, a revisit to the respondent was made by the enumerator.

# FINDINGS

## Household demography

Nearly three-quarters (71%) of the households visited reported the gender of the primary care giver as female. There were spatial differences in this statistic; Kotido district had the highest percentage (84%) of female primary caregivers while Moroto had the lowest at 59% (Figure 2). The proportion of female primary caregivers was even higher among EVH<sup>2</sup> households.

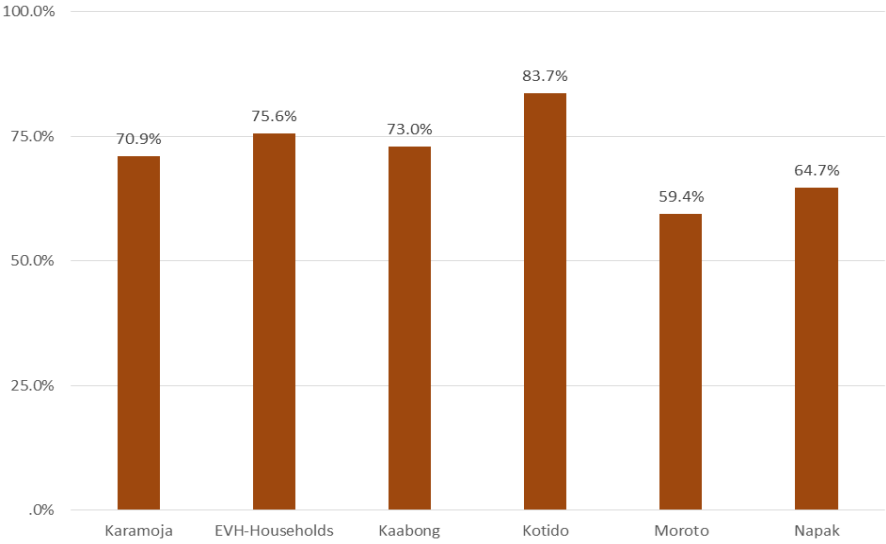


Figure 2: Proportion of female primary care givers

The average household size in Karamoja was 7, with fairly equal proportions of men and women per household. This included an average of 2 people for each of the age groups (<5, 5-17, and 18-60) and, on average, one person per household aged above 60.

## Education

A high proportion (88%) of respondents in the region had never been to school. There was little variation across the four districts; a sizeable proportion (average 10%) of respondents indicated that they had been to school but didn't complete primary school, the highest of this (17%) in Kaabong. Across the region, a negligible percentage (less than 2%) of respondents reported having completed higher levels of education. Expectedly, EVH households were worse off;

<sup>2</sup> EVH (Extremely Vulnerable Households) are classified on the basis of not having an able bodied person in the household. They are often worse off on welfare indicators due to their inability to cope, their lack of resilience to recurrent shocks and labor capacity. Almost half (45%) of households reached in the survey were EVH, with similar proportions at district level.

percentages of EVH household heads that have never been to school were generally higher at all levels (region, district).

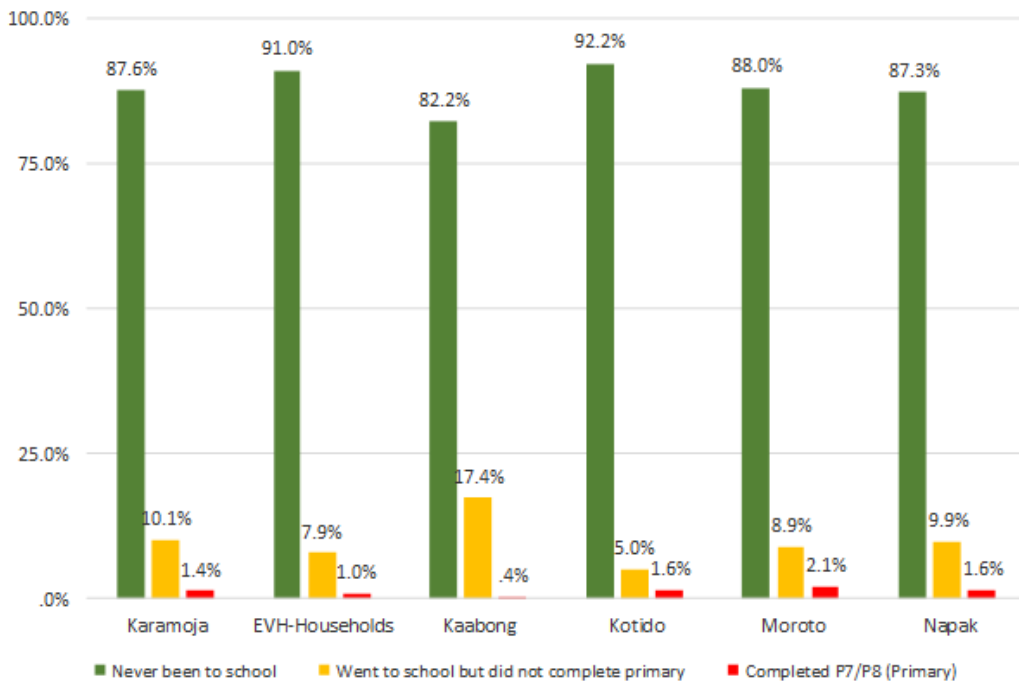


Figure 3: Level of formal/informal education among household heads

### Participation in WFP food assistance

Approximately 73% of respondents interviewed were beneficiaries of WFP programmes. The proportion was fairly the same across the districts. The most commonly cited reason for not benefitting from WFP programmes among non-beneficiary households was that they had not yet been registered (71%).

In the majority of households (about 75%), food transfers were received by an adult female on behalf of the household, with little variation across the districts. This is most likely related to the finding that majority of the households have female primary caregivers.

About 86% of the respondents had not received any other form of assistance from WFP (90% among EVH households) indicating that food distribution is currently the main form of support to beneficiaries in the Karamoja region. Eight percent (8%) of the respondents reported being part of WFP's school meals programme and 5% reported receiving assistance thru MCHN programmes.



### **Cost to beneficiaries**

When asked about waiting times at the food distribution points, the average waiting period was found to be 4 hours, the shortest being reported in Kaabong (3 hours) and the longest in Kotido (5 hours). A similar assessment in refugee areas compared food vs. cash beneficiaries and found that food distribution takes a notably longer time than cash with an average of a two-hour wait among cash beneficiaries, and going up to less than 1 hour in some settlements. It is expected that introducing cash transfers in the Karamoja region will also translate into time savings for beneficiaries and free up time for other activities.

The majority of respondents (about 90%) did not have to pay to transport their food back home from the distribution site. For the remaining 10%, cash payments for food transport averaged about UgX. 1,600.

### **Beneficiary knowledge and awareness**

On average, about 55% of respondents were aware of the selection method used for cash/food beneficiaries. However, respondents in Napak and Moroto had the least knowledge about this process (48 and 49% respectively).

Relatively more respondents (65%) had been told what they were entitled to in food distribution, the highest of which (82%) was in Kaabong, and the lowest (46%) in Kotido. A higher than average percentage (70%) of respondents did not know where or how to contact WFP, OPM, or partners. This was higher in Napak (72%), Kotido (74%) and Moroto (80%) but lowest in Kaabong (53%).

Overall, EVH households were more informed on the method of selection of beneficiaries and on where to contact WFP than the average for Karamoja (see Figure 4).

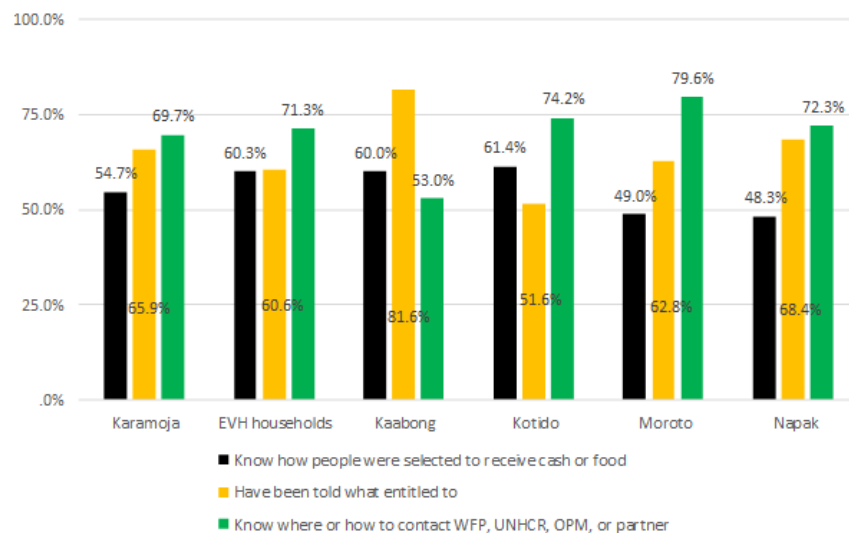


Figure 4: Beneficiary knowledge and awareness

### ***Food rations and duration***

At least 80% of respondents reported that they had received the correct amount of food during the distribution. At district level, the percentage of those that received the correct amount of food was highest in Kaabong at 93% but lowest in Moroto at 71%. Among EVH households, a lower proportion (76%) reported having received the correct amount.

Beneficiaries utilized almost all of the food commodities they received for consumption at home with little variation among districts and whether or not they were EVHs. Indeed, the majority of respondents, 74% on average (and 100% among EVH households) also reported that they did not sell their food to buy alternative food except in Kotido.

In general, the practice of selling food to meet other purposes (medication, education, to meet other household needs or to save) was not wide spread in the region. Amounts paid for milling (per Kg) averaged UgX 400, with the highest of UgX 600 found in Kotido.

Respondents reported that the food received lasted an average of 15 days with the longest reported in Moroto (19 days) and the shortest in Kaabong (12 days). Among EVH households, the food was reported to last 12 days. This is a short period considering that the food distribution cycle in Karamoja is 1.5 months.

Findings from a similar assessment in 3 refugee settlements (Adjumani, Rhino and Kiryandongo) suggested that, whereas the average number of days food lasted among refugees was much higher (about 21 days) – probably due to generally higher ration size – the average number of days cash lasted was even higher (about 24 days). This suggests inherent advantages of cash vis-à-vis food distribution to the beneficiaries.

### **Security, protection and gender issues related to WFP assistance**

Of the households reached, it was found that on average, one person per household had gone to a WFP Final Distribution Point (FDP). About 97% of those who went to the FDP did not encounter any safety problems. Majority of those that reported safety problems experienced them at the FDP and, in rare cases, while going from the WFP FDP and while moving with cash to/from/in markets. Overall, this indicates a generally good level of security in the region that is conducive for cash transfers. Should this modality however be used, some level of security enforcement is recommended at the FDPs to counter the few reported incidents and also act as a preventive measure.

### ***Role of women in the households***

For the majority of households in the region (76%), the decision on what to do with the assistance received is made by women while in 21% of the cases, this is done jointly with men and women; in all cases, men being responsible for decision making was reported in only 3% of

the households (Figure 5). At district level, the highest level of women decision making is found in Kotido at 95%. On the other hand, the highest proportion of joint decision making in households was observed in Moroto and Napak at 30% and 32% respectively. This trend was the same among EVH households.

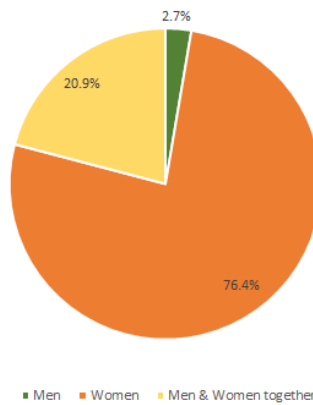


Figure 5: Decision making on food utilization in Karamoja

### ***Role of women in the communities***

Leaders and members of food management committees (FMC)<sup>3</sup> were interviewed to establish the roles played by men and women in day to day affairs. Interviews with a total of 56 FMC members revealed that whereas there were generally few women chairpersons except for Moroto, most leadership positions in the FMCs (Deputy Chairperson, Treasurer, and secretary) were held by women (Figure 6).

It is clear that women hold decision making responsibilities within the household across the 4 districts under study which would ensure appropriate use of cash given and equitable intra-household distribution of the cash or other proceeds.

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<sup>3</sup> Food management committees are often formed to manage food assistance related issues in the communities. There are management committees in all the districts, with an average of 3 groups per district.

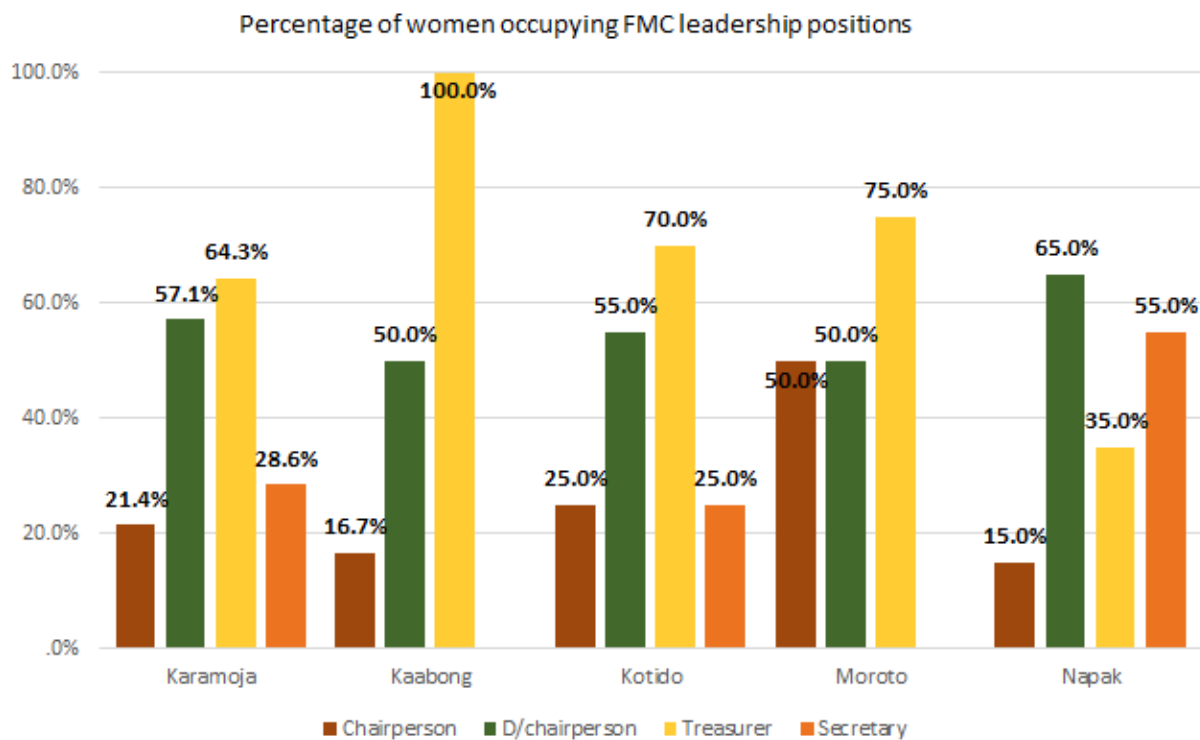


Figure 6: Percentage of women occupying FMC leadership positions

## Food access<sup>4</sup>

### **Household Asset ownership**

The survey enumerated specific assets owned at household level including ownership of a radio, axe, hoe, panga, plough, water tank, seed store, and food store. A Household Asset Score (HAS)<sup>5</sup> was calculated as the sum of assets owned.

Overall, the majority of households (45%) owned 3 to 4 assets while 25% owned more than 4 assets. Only about 26% owned 1-2 assets and 4% had no assets. At district level, Kotido and Kaabong had the highest percentage of households owning more than 4 assets (42% and 34% respectively); effectively over 80% owned more than 3 assets. Among EVH households, asset ownership was lower; there were fewer EVH households with ownership of more than 3 assets (Figure 7). Across the region, the most commonly owned assets were the hoe (90%), panga (58%) and axe (51%).

<sup>4</sup> Food availability in the Karamoja region was not a focus in this assessment. A more detailed Food Security and Nutrition assessment was conducted in June 2014 and another is planned in December 2014.

<sup>5</sup> The HAS Measures the increase in functioning assets that enable households to be more resilient, or less negatively impacted by shocks. Such "resiliency based assets" would either be owned by the household, or shared with other smaller groups of households living within the community.

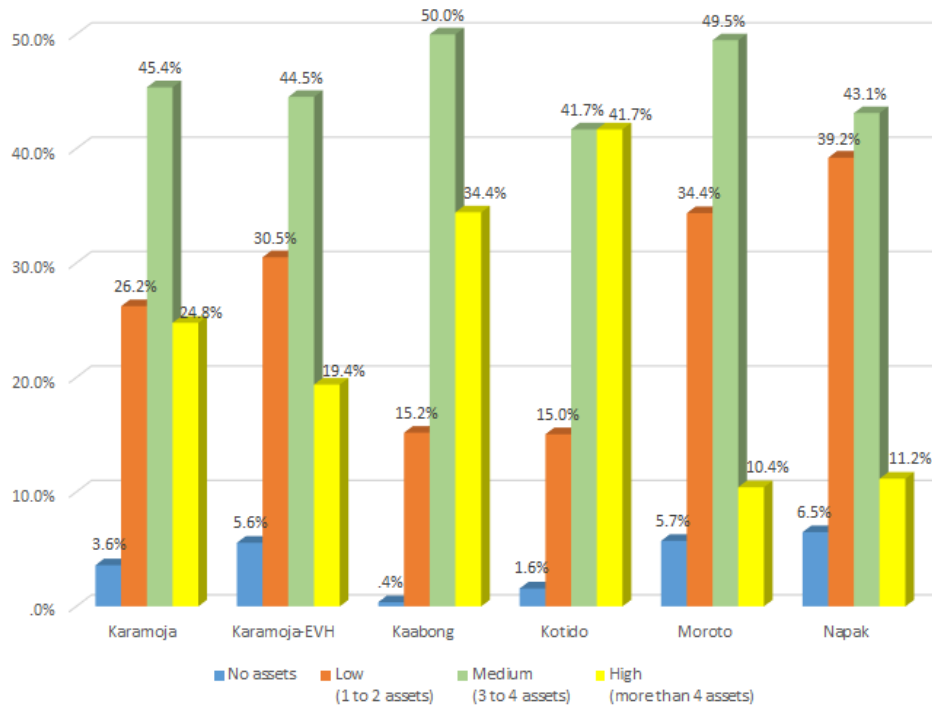


Figure 7: Household Asset Ownership

Similarly, total livestock units (TLU) were calculated per household based on ownership of poultry, goats/sheep/pigs, bulls, donkeys and cows. Across Karamoja, more than half (57%) of the households did not own livestock while about 42% had 0.5-1TLU (Figure 8). Across the board, livestock holding was generally low and mostly included ownership of poultry (37%) and goats/sheep/pigs (33%).

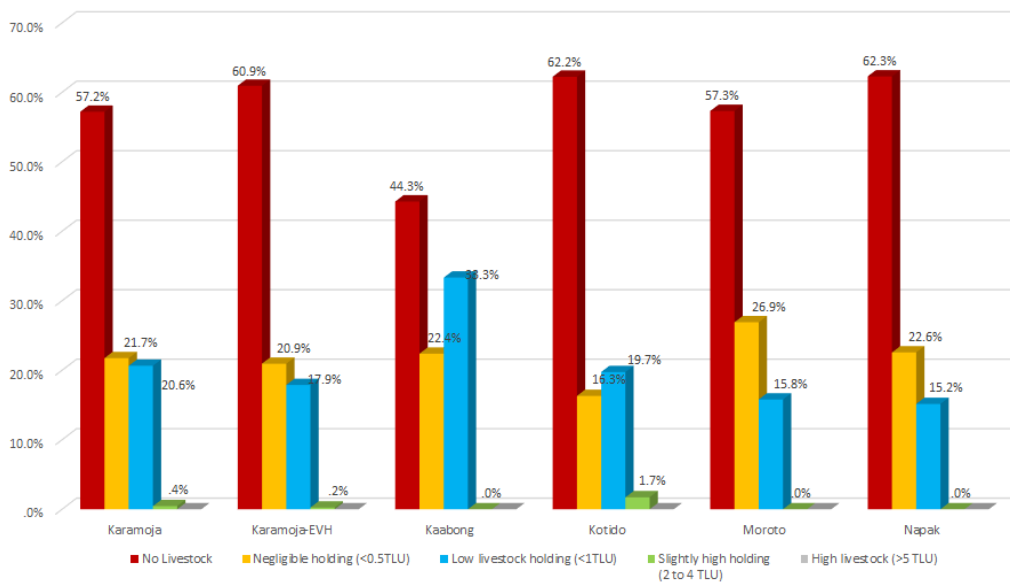


Figure 8: Livestock ownership among households

The level and profile of assets owned among households is to some extent a representation or proxy indicator of low income among households (therefore inability to accumulate assets), and of chronic assets depletion as a coping mechanism. In the context, conditional cash transfers could be an effective option as this could support households rebuild their asset base and therefore strengthen resilience.

### ***Community assets***

A total of 65 community leaders were asked about the assets present in their communities and whether or not they were functional. A total of 17 assets were enumerated including roads, bridges, water infrastructure (e.g. wells, water harvesting, dams), farming infrastructure etc. A community asset score (CAS)<sup>6</sup> was calculated as a sum of the total assets that were mentioned as present and functional in the community.

Overall, community assets were very low in all the areas with the maximum value of the CAS found at 6 (of the ideal 17). The most commonly mentioned assets were the presence of a road (75%), woodlots (46%), water catchment (32%), latrine (31%), Dam (23%) and irrigation ponds (19%). On the other hand, assets such as fishponds, contour terraces, water harvesting and irrigation canals were completely absent in all communities.

There were some notable differences in community assets at district level: Kotido had the highest number of irrigation ponds (47%), while Kaabong had none; Community latrines mostly mentioned in Napak (58%) but less in Kaabong and Kotido (<15%); and community storage was only mentioned as present in Kotido.

When asked which assets they would like to have in their communities, the most commonly mentioned assets were as shown in the Figure 9 below. The most required asset across all four districts of Karamoja are assets related to community storage.

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<sup>6</sup> The CAS measures the number of functioning assets that enable a community, and the households living within it, to be more resilient, or less negatively impacted by shocks.

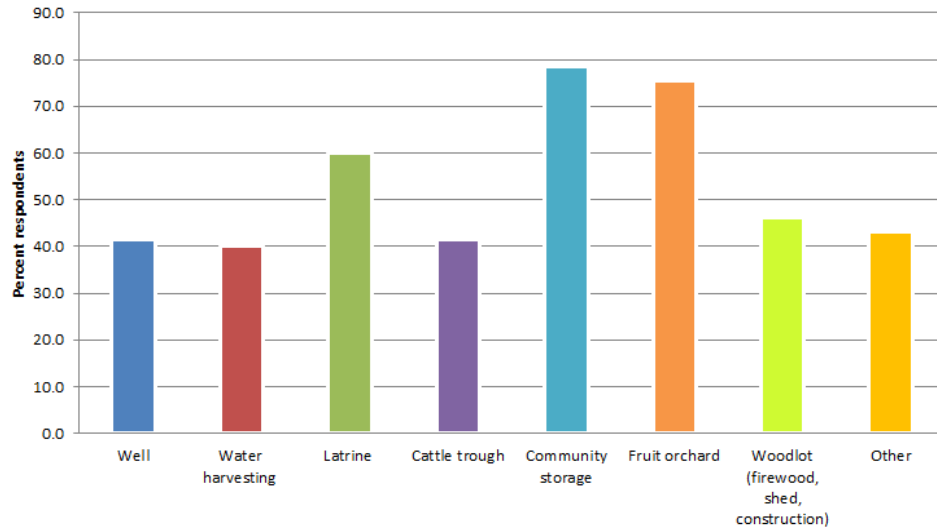


Figure 9: Desirable community assets, mentioned by at least 40% of respondents.

A combination of low household asset ownership with low level of community assets further indicates the vulnerability of populations in these communities. A possible solution could be Cash for work programmes which could serve a two pronged purpose; helping build these community assets therefore strengthening resilience, and creating employment for the youth in the region.

### ***Effective market demand among households***

#### **1. Dependence on markets**

##### **Food purchases**

Respondents were asked about the main commodities purchased from the market. Across the region, the most commonly purchased food commodity, reported among 42% of respondents was Sorghum, followed by beans (17%), maize grain (14%), and maize flour (10%) which combined give 83%. This trend was the same among EVH households. In Kaabong however, Maize grain and maize flour took precedence over sorghum which was common among only 17% of households (Figure 10).

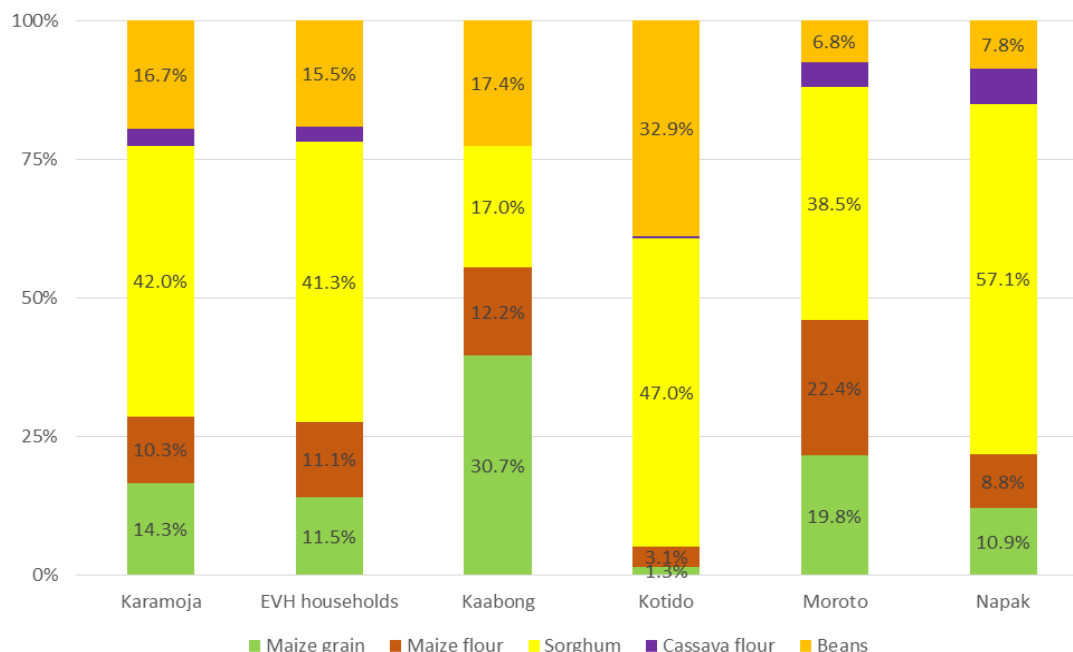


Figure 10: Main commodities purchased from the market

Overall, beans were the second most purchased food commodity among respondents (39%), the rest being Sorghum, maize grain/maize flour and vegetable oil. Here too, the EVH households showed a trend similar to the average. In Kaabong though, more households reported purchase of greens/vegetables in addition to the aforementioned commodities (10% compared to the average of 4.5%), a level that is also reflected among EVH households in Kaabong (12%).

### Main sources of food consumed in 7 days before the survey

In the region, the predominant sources of food consumed in the 7 days preceding the survey were found to be own production and market purchase with cash or credit (Figure 11). Commodity groups mainly sourced through:

- Own production were eggs (80%), nuts (57%) and green and orange leafy vegetables (45 and 44% respectively).
- Market purchases were very important for Sugar (92%), meat (86%), vegetable oil (72%), roots/tubers (61%), organ meats (54%) and pulses (53%).
- Food aid was an important source of cereals, pulses and vegetable oil for 44%, 21% and 20% of the respondents respectively.
- Gathering was a source of vegetables and fruits.



It is noteworthy that borrowing food was also mentioned as a source of food in some cases, most especially for nuts (9%), orange vegetables (9%), and roots/tubers (8.1%).

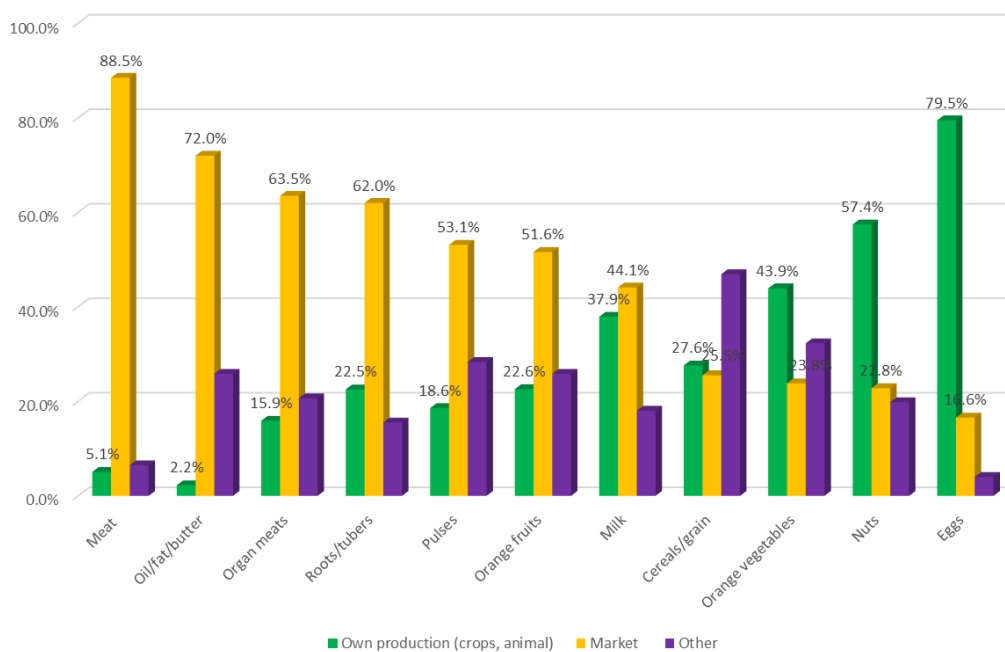


Figure 11: Main sources of food consumed in the 7 days preceding the survey

The fact that there is trading in local staples and other food items suggests that the existing markets are fully functional, which is an important factor for any planned cash interventions.

According to WFP Uganda’s monthly market monitor, prices for beans have been relatively low in 2014 compared to 2013, albeit fluctuating. On the other hand, price data also shows that nominal prices in 2014 have been higher for Sorghum and Maize in Karamoja while the labor wage rates (nominal) have been lower. This might suggest increasing difficulties in ability to buy these important staples; underlining a need for complementary incomes to maintain appropriate levels of consumption such as through cash for work programmes or cash transfers in lieu of food.

### Number of times households went to the market

Findings show that 98% of respondents had gone to the market at least once in the 7 days preceding the survey. The same trend is observed at district level and among EVH households (Figure 12). This is clear illustration that households depend on markets for food across the region; and are able to easily access the same.

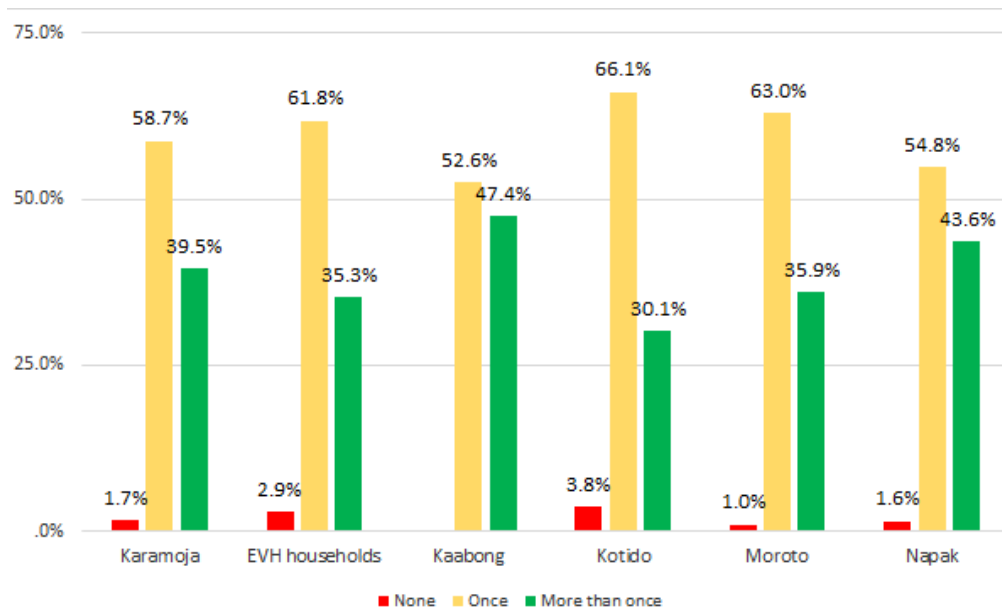


Figure 12: Number of times households went to buy food from the market in 7 days preceding the survey

## 2. Distance to the nearest market

About 29% of respondents were located within 5Km to the nearest market while the majority (47%) were within 5-10Km. Another 23% of respondents were within 10-30Km of the nearest market and only 3% reported distances greater than 30Km.

Households in Napak were closer to the markets (44% reported less than 5Km distance to the market, and 43% between 5-10Km away), while longer distances were reported in Kaabong (62% between 5-10Km and 33% falling within 10-30Km from the markets).

While long distances to markets would constrain ability to access markets, previous findings indicate that distance to markets is not a key issue in the context considering that most households went to the market at least once in the seven days preceding the survey.

## 3. Household purchasing power

### Household food expenditure

Respondents were asked to state how much money they had spent on food in the previous seven days. Results indicate an average weekly food expenditure of Shs. 10,000 in the region. At district level, expenditures were slightly higher than average in Kaabong and Moroto (average Shs. 12,000 and Shs. 11,800 respectively), and slightly lower than average in Kotido and Napak (average Shs. 8,500 and Shs. 9,200 respectively).

EVH households spent about 20% lower than other households on food, averaging Shs. 7000. This trend was almost the same when the comparison was made at district level.

The survey did not establish the total income per household and therefore, the share of food expenditure on total income could not be established. However, previous studies have established that food was the primary expenditure among 90% of households (FSNA, 2014). Nevertheless, the data shows relatively good expenditure by households in markets and suggests the importance of food purchases to the population.

### Household income earners

Overall, at least 63% of households had a household member earning an income. At district level, there were more households with an income earner in Kotido (91%) and Kaabong (76%), while they were fewer in Moroto (52%) and Napak (36%). The trend was the same among EVH households with 62% of households having an income earner (Figure 13).

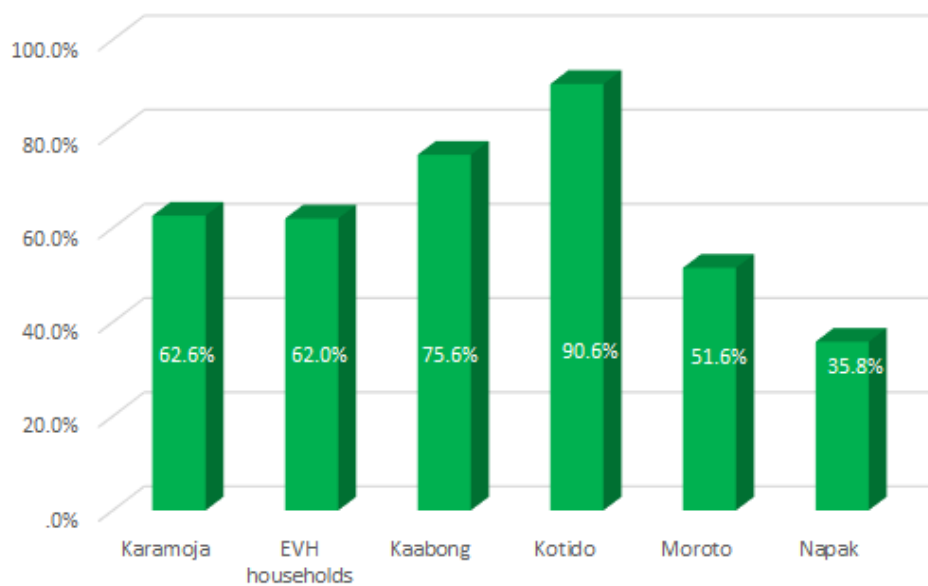


Figure 13: Percentage of households with at least one income earner

### Main income sources

Overall in the Karamoja, the sale of firewood/charcoal was the most important income source among 35% of households followed by food crop production/sales among 12% of households (Figure 14). In addition to these, brewing and agricultural wage labour were cited among the second most important sources of income for households, while gifts/begging were mentioned among the third most important income sources.

In Kaabong, there were more households that cited food crop production/sales (25%) as the most important income sources; while dependence on firewood sales was highest in Kotido at 41%.

Remittances were relatively more important income sources among EVH households. This suggests limited employment opportunities and migratory behavior among EVH households in response to the need to provide income for households.

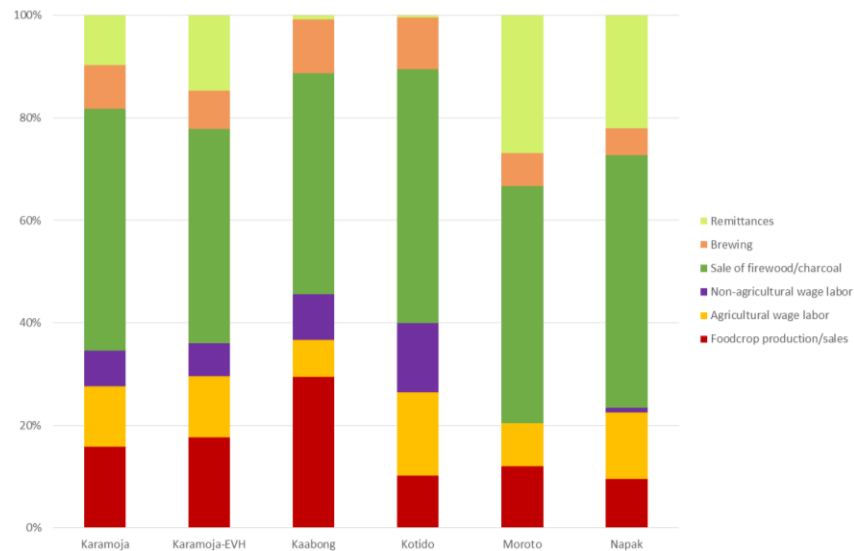


Figure 14: Main income sources

These income sources are not only a reflection of poor human capital indicators (e.g. low education) but also highlight households' dependence on natural resources and food aid. Indeed, the HAS shows very low ownership of assets among households with hoes, axes and pangas as the most common – tools that are relevant for the income sources e.g. sale of firewood.

The above findings are an illustration of the importance of markets to household food security. Despite the fact that the survey was conducted during harvest season, it is seen that markets play a complementary role, enabling access to protein and iron rich foods meat and pulses.

It is also evident that the population in Karamoja has, overall, low human capital (poor education & health) and low financial capital (high level of income poverty). In this context, alternative employment opportunities, cash-for-work and/or other conditional cash transfers for the unemployed and vulnerable can be a viable option, especially given the gains seen from the pilot cash intervention in refugee settlements (see WFP Analysis on Food & Cash Interventions in Select Refugee Settlements, November, 2014)

## Food Utilization (Food Consumption Score - FCS)

Information was collected on the dietary diversity of the household with respondents being asked to list the number of days a particular food item was consumed by the household in the seven days prior to the interview. Thus a '0' for fruits would indicate that a household did not consume any fruit in the previous seven days while a '4' would indicate consumption four days out of seven etc. The mean food consumption score for a seven day period for the sample was then calculated and Food Consumption Groups were formulated.

A significant proportion (47%) of households in Karamoja had an acceptable food consumption score; some 39% of them had borderline FCS, and another 14% had poor FCS (**Figure 15**).

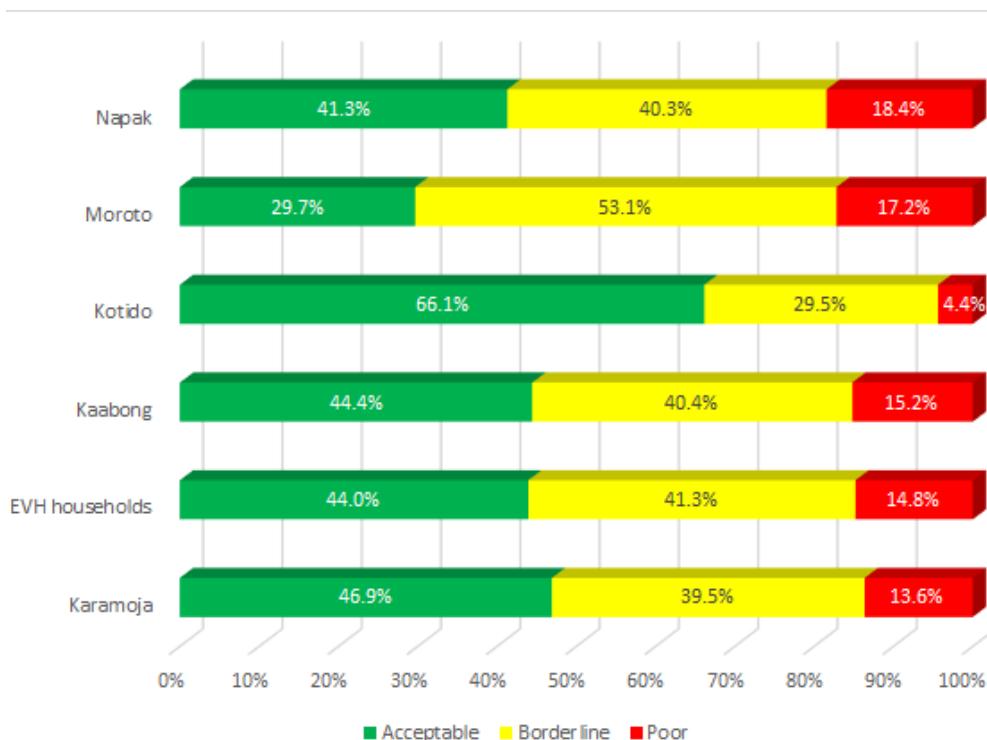


Figure 15: Food consumption scores

As shown in Figure 15 above, Kotido district had the lowest population with poor food consumption score (4%) while the rest had acceptable (66%) and borderline (30%). On the other hand, majority of the respondents in Moroto (53%) had borderline FCS and relatively less proportions with acceptable FCS (30%).

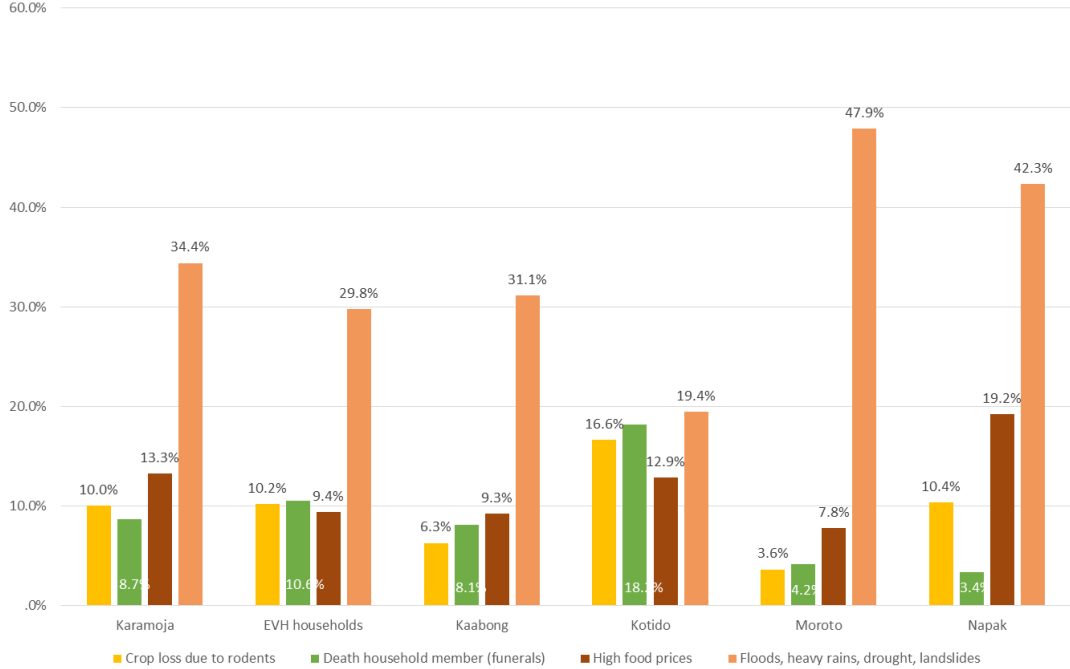
The Percentage of EVH households with borderline and poor food consumption was slightly higher at 41% and 15% respectively. Compared to findings of the FSNA 2014, food consumption scores have generally improved with 6.9% more having acceptable FCS, 2% more with borderline FCS, and 9% less having poor FCS. This is believed to be due to the timing of this survey which was conducted during the harvest season.

The food consumption score is a proxy indicator for food security among households. Whereas relatively high proportions had acceptable FCS, it is noteworthy that overall, except for Kotido district, more than 50% of the population is either food insecure or vulnerable to food insecurity. Urgent measures are therefore needed to support these households to maintain adequate food consumption and avoid negative coping strategies such as through cash transfers to enable them access food through markets.

**Shocks and coping mechanisms**

***Main difficulties/shocks in 30 days preceding survey***

When asked about the main difficulties faced in the last 30 days, all households mentioned at least one shock. Majority of households mentioned weather related shocks i.e. Floods, heavy rains, drought, landslides (34%), high food prices (13%) and crop loss due to rodents (10%) (Figure 16). A good proportion (33%) also cited a diversity of ‘other’ shocks/difficulties, key among them being diseases/illness, and delayed/insufficient ration.



*Figure 16: Main difficulties/shocks in 30 days preceding the survey*

In Kotido, more respondents (18%) mentioned death of a household member/funerals as a difficulty and in Napak, greater proportions mentioned floods, heavy rains, drought, landslides (42%) and high food prices (19%) as main difficulties. There were no differences in shocks mentioned by EVH and non EVH households.

The frequent mention of weather related shocks is due to the fact that the region experienced rain that was above the average in August and September 2014, albeit lower than the national average (Annex 1). Such difficulties are a precursor to poor harvests and food losses that could lead to an early start of the lean season.

### ***Coping strategies***

The overall trend in the Karamoja region suggests that majority of the households had not adopted many of the food consumption coping strategies, indicated by the reduced coping strategy index. The majority of the households (49%) in the region fell in the 'low' category of the reduced coping strategies index, while almost similar proportions were classified in the medium and high categories (27% and 24% respectively).

Moroto and Napak districts had the highest number of respondents adopting more of the food consumption coping strategies at 39% and 35% respectively. On the other hand, Kotido had the highest percentage of respondents with a low Reduced CSI (64%), even among EVH households (65%). The trends were the same for EVHs at district level.

The survey was conducted during the harvest season; low proportion of households adopting food consumption coping strategies is a reflection of increased availability of food from the harvest. However, as shown in the following section, livelihood coping strategies are prevalent, an indication of the need for longer term oriented solutions in food assistance such as conditional cash transfers that would also help build resilience.

### ***Livelihood coping strategies***

Whereas 32% of households reported not having adopted livelihood coping strategies, there were many households adopting stress (6%), crisis (23%) or emergency (39%) related coping strategies. The three most common coping strategies used were borrowing, consumption of seed stock and begging as shown in Figure 17.

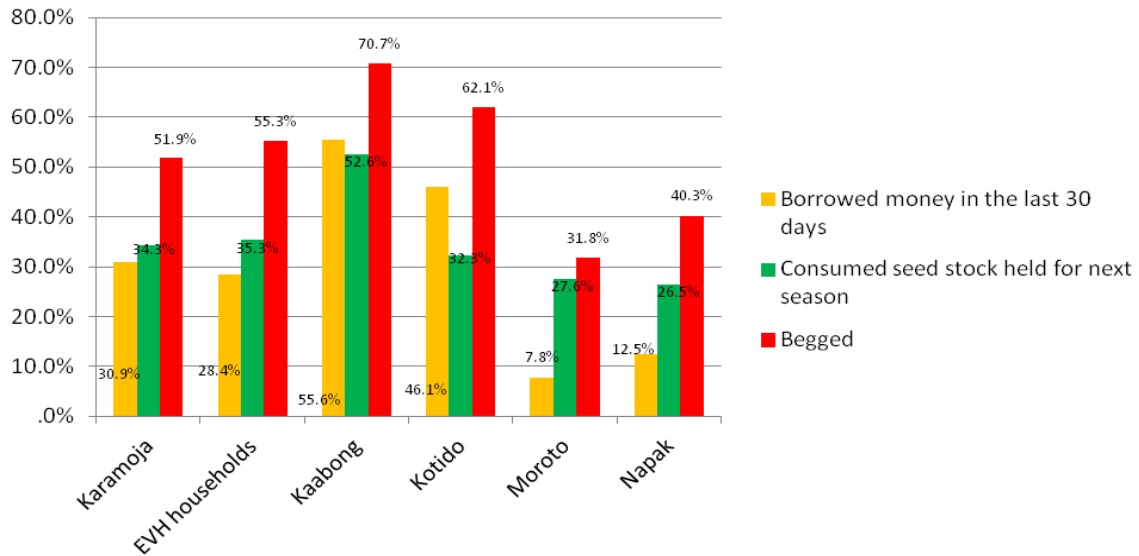


Figure 17: Three most common livelihood coping strategies used

Households typically borrow money in order to maintain adequate levels of food consumption through market purchases. If this goes on for long, households become trapped in debt and opt for even more negative coping strategies. Given that there are few employment opportunities and that the food security situation is expected to worsen due to a meager harvest, urgent action is needed to help these households acquire income in order to help repay their debts and maintain same levels of consumption.



## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Summary of key findings

#### 1. Protection and Gender

Findings suggest the security situation is conducive for implementation of cash/voucher programmes. Furthermore, there is indication that women are not marginalized, and of their involvement in decision making that could facilitate good intra-household distribution.

#### 2. Asset ownership and income

There is indication of low incomes among households and inability to accumulate assets probably due to chronic assets depletion as a coping mechanism.

#### 3. Households' dependence on markets

Trading in local staples suggests that markets exist in the region; providing cash/vouchers to beneficiaries is therefore a feasible option. Furthermore, households typically spend their incomes on food and therefore providing cash/vouchers is unlikely to compromise food consumption in households.

#### 4. Food consumption

The recent harvest has contributed to improved food consumption scores among the population. However, this is expected to be short lived with an early start of the lean season due to poor harvests. Consequently urgent measures are needed to protect the vulnerable from hunger such as through cash transfers to enable them access food through markets.

#### 5. Shocks and coping

All households suffered at least one shock in the 30 days preceding the survey. While application of food consumption coping strategies was low, use of livelihoods coping strategies is still high. Livelihoods rebuilding initiatives are recommended to help communities/households rebuild their productive assets base and strengthen their resilience

### Summary of Key findings at district level

#### 1. Kaabong

Households in Kaabong depend heavily on markets with 100% of households found to have gone to the market at least once in the 7 days preceding the survey.

#### 2. Moroto

Findings suggest significant constraints in access to food in the district as weather related shocks have diminished ability to produce own food, while the fact that there are few

households with income earners means households have no income with which to buy food. Households are therefore highly vulnerable to food insecurity.

#### **4. Napak**

Like Moroto, weather-related shocks in Napak have affected own food production and, simultaneously, low percentage of households with members earning an income affects their ability to purchase food. Consequently availability and access to food are affected, predisposing households to food insecurity.

#### **5. Kotido**

Households in Kotido seem relatively better off in terms of availability and access to food

#### **Key findings for Extremely Vulnerable Households (EVHs)**

With respect to feasibility for cash interventions, there were no major differences between EVH and non-EVHs in the region

#### **Conclusion on relevance of Cash/voucher interventions**

Markets exist in the survey areas, and majority of households depend on them for livelihoods (as sellers) and as a complementary source of food (buyers). However, food access through markets is constrained for a good percentage of the population due to limited incomes/livelihood options and fluctuating food prices.

Despite the fact that market access to food is important for the population's food security, there are limited employment/income earning opportunities for households. Emigration of household members has been adopted by some households as a mechanism to sustain access to food through remittances, and a good percentage of households have employed coping strategies such as borrowing to access food.

#### **Recommendations**

##### **1. Cash/Voucher programming**

Given conducive security, generally low asset ownership, prevalent application of livelihood coping strategies and demonstrated dependence on markets, it is recommended to implement conditional cash transfers and/or vouchers to beneficiaries in the region, such as through cash for work programmes. Such programming could potentially be aligned along the following objectives;

- To facilitate market access to food among the income and asset poor vulnerable to shocks;
- To provide employment to beneficiaries through cash-for-work programmes;

- To facilitate rebuilding of household and community assets to strengthen resilience;
- To stimulate markets in the region.

Analysis shows that beneficiaries in Napak and Moroto districts are worse off with the lowest food consumption scores, high percentage adopting food consumption coping strategies, and low percentage of households with at least one income earner. It is therefore recommended that any cash intervention start in these districts given the existence of markets.

However, it is recommended that a more detailed assessment of markets and market forces be conducted in the near future which could further inform any potential cash transfer pilot.

While there is good security in the region, some level of security enforcement is recommended at the FDPs to counter the few reported safety incidents and also act as a preventive measure in case cash transfers are initiated.

## **2. Operational aspects of WFP assistance**

On average, about 55% of respondents were aware of the selection method used for cash/food beneficiaries. However, respondents in Napak and Moroto had the least knowledge about this process (48 and 49% respectively). It is recommended that WFP and partners scale up communication and sensitization activities in the near future.

A higher than average percentage (70%) of respondents did not know where or how to contact WFP, OPM, or partners. This was higher in Napak (72%), Kotido (74%) and Moroto (80%) but lowest in Kaabong (53%). Accordingly urgent communication is needed to educate beneficiaries on selection process and the feedback / complaint mechanisms in place.

At district level, the percentage of beneficiaries that received the correct amount of food was highest in Kaabong at 93% but lowest in Moroto at 71%. Respective sub-offices need to conduct sensitization of beneficiaries to ensure beneficiaries are aware of their entitlements.

Respondents reported that the food received lasted an average of 15 days with the longest reported in Moroto (19 days) and the shortest in Kaabong (12 days). Among EVHs, the food was reported to last 12 days. This is a short period considering that the food distribution cycle in Karamoja is 1.5 months. The concerned Sub office should find out more about utilization patterns of food received and recommend appropriate responses to this issue.

Approximately 62% of EVHs had at least one income earner. This contravenes the criteria for selection of EVHs and necessitates a comprehensive review exercise to streamline targeting of beneficiaries.

### **3. Asset ownership and income levels**

A combination of low household asset ownership with low level of community assets indicates the vulnerability of populations in these communities. A possible solution could be Cash for work programmes which could serve a two pronged purpose; helping build these community assets that would strengthen resilience, and creation of employment for the youth in the region.

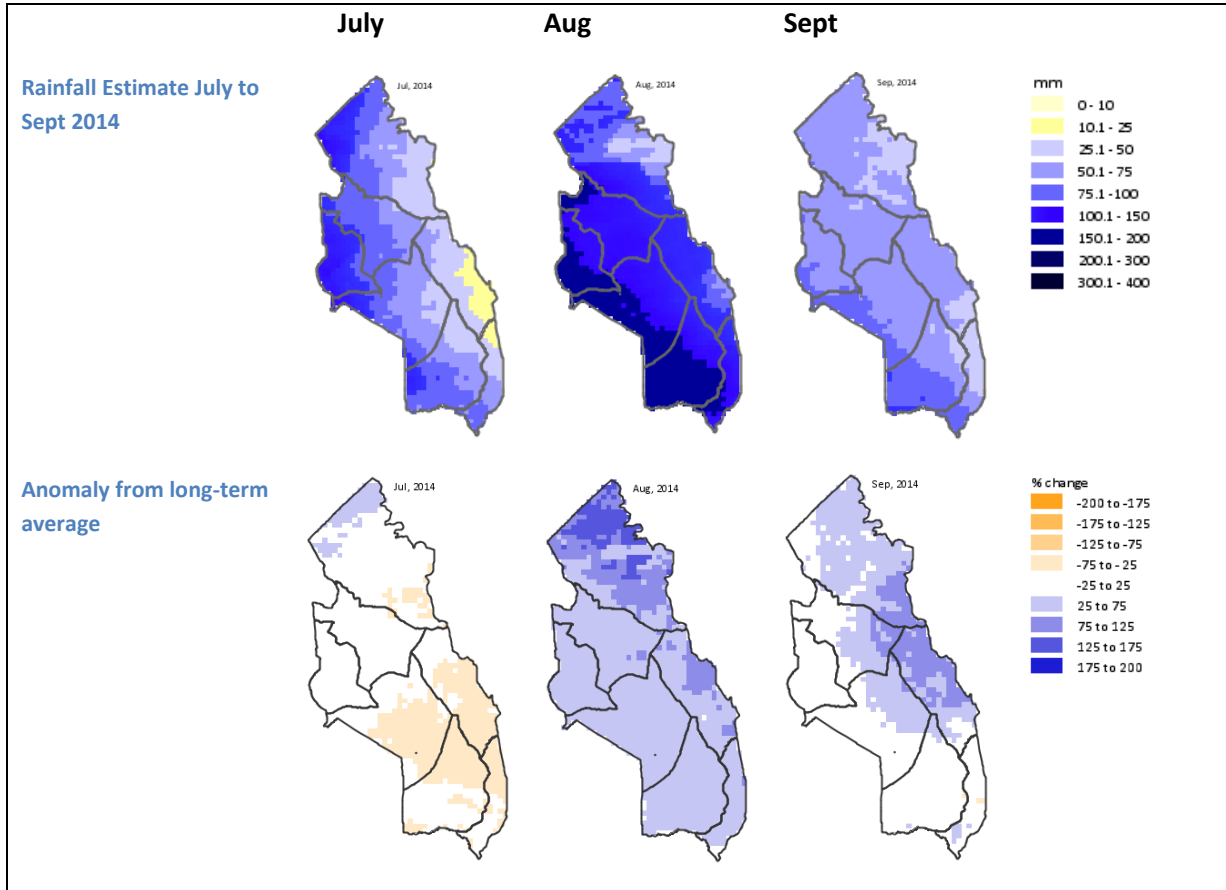
Furthermore, assets such as fishponds, contour terraces, water harvesting and irrigation canals were completely absent in all communities. Kaabong was the district with least functioning community assets. It is therefore recommended that interventions related to increasing community assets first target this district.

When asked which assets they would like to have in their communities, the most commonly mentioned assets were related to community storage. Given that WFP has just successfully completed a pilot household storage project, it is recommended that this project look into introducing a similar intervention in Karamoja – at both household and community levels.

Overall, at least 63% of households had a household member earning an income. At district level, there were more households with an income earner in Kotido (91%) and Kaabong (76%), while they were fewer in Moroto (52%) and Napak (36%). Therefore, any future planned cash transfer should necessarily begin with Napak and Moroto.

# ANNEX

## Annex 1: Karamoja rainfall performance (July-September 2014)



Rainfall performance generated using Tamsat RFE (rainfall estimates) available through satellite remote sensing on 10days period (Dekads) – WFP RB VAM Unit

<sup>i</sup> WFP Uganda (2014). An Analysis of WFP’s Cash & Food Interventions across Select Refugee Settlements (Adjumani/Pakelle, Rhino Camp & Kiryandongo) (Unpublished).