

Key Message Note: Mid-Term Evaluation of the “Feed Good” Program in Uganda

Uganda’s Rwenzori region, particularly Fort Portal, faces challenges such as high malnutrition rates, natural resource degradation, and low agricultural productivity. The “Feed Good” program (2022-2026), funded by DGD and implemented by Humundi, Iles de Paix (IdP), and six local partners, aims to promote sustainable food systems (SFS). The program focuses on sustainable productive and commercial dynamics, institutional and political frameworks, and social and civic dynamics.

Key findings

Relevance of the approach & progress towards SFS in Rwenzori region

- The program successfully engaged farmers in agroecological transitions through a package of activities including Integrated Farm Planning, VSLA, and collective marketing.
- Kitchen gardens improved household access to diverse vegetables.
- The integration of small livestock proved highly relevant, addressing farmers’ immediate needs and facilitating the adoption of agroecological practices.
- Marketing associations increased farmers’ bargaining power, and value addition saw progress in maize and coffee processing.
- Urban farming in Fort Portal attracted young people to agroecology.
- Supporting thematic clubs in primary schools has increased pupils’ knowledge of healthy and nutritious food.
- Challenges remain in organic input production and ingredient availability.

Added value of the collaboration between Humundi, IdP & their partners in Rwenzori region

- KRC’s support for SACCOs added value, but sustainability concerns remain due to weak capacities and limited loan portfolios.
- Collaboration in networking and advocacy for SFS was facilitated through PELUM Uganda, but interaction between IdP’s partners and AFSA/ESAFF was more limited.
- Cross-learning and capacity building were achieved through field visits, experience exchanges, and advocacy events.

Contribution of common actions to food system transformation & women participation

- The program contributed to nutrition, food safety, and hygiene awareness, but evidence of changed practices is limited.
- The focus on nutritious and safe food has not fully aligned with the core objective of promoting agroecological farming systems.
- Women’s participation in various activities was high, with improved collaboration and decision-making at the household level, but economic empowerment gaps persist, and joint action on gender issues has been limited.

Relevance, effectiveness & impact of awareness and consumer mobilization strategies

- Agroecology events serve as learning platforms and empower participant farmers and youth.
- The online school helped build a network of journalists disseminating agroecology information.
- School Agroecology Clubs and Community Agroecology Schools (CASs) served as dynamic knowledge pools, fostering community learning, but their geographical dispersal dilutes the program’s impact.
- Mainstream and social media were leveraged to raise awareness, but challenges persist in measuring impact and translating knowledge into changed consumer behaviours.
- In Fort Portal, the program’s strategy to strengthen responsible consumption has shown some initial steps but still needs more efforts to achieve substantial impact on locally supported farmers.
- Awareness-raising strategies have been effective in disseminating information, but there is a need for a more focused communication strategy to maximize impact and drive lasting changes.

Sustainability of awareness and consumer mobilization strategies

- School Clubs and CAS are expected to be sustainable due to their integration into school administrations and community management.
- A pool of trained journalists continues to produce content on agroecology; however, sustainability requires building relationships with media houses and editors.
- Barriers to sustainability include weak awareness of sustainable farming, limited knowledge of agroecology among consumers, policymakers, and farmers, and competition from conventional agriculture promoters.

Partners' support to territorial food governance dynamics in the Rwenzori region

- The program supported several coordination and consultation forums, primarily at the Fort Portal city level, but their relevance to broader project objectives varied.
- The level of involvement of target groups in food system discussions was uneven, with farmers and consumers requiring more structured and inclusive participation opportunities.
- Measures to integrate actions into broader food system transformation efforts included support for the Regional Agroecology Actors Platform (RAAP) and Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs), but challenges related to resource limitations and policy enforcement persist.

Conclusion

The “Feed Good” program has adopted a holistic approach to SFS, with promising results. Areas for improvement include enhancing collaboration and synergy among partners, better integration of project components, a more targeted approach, and enhanced awareness-raising efforts. The program should consolidate the territorial approach, focusing more strategically on high-potential value chains and involving farmers more centrally in food governance.

Recommendations

1. Improve synergies in program management and coordination, including through the RAAP.
2. Make sustainable production and marketing the central pillar of the future program.
3. Enhance the effectiveness and adoption of agroecological inputs.
4. Support smallholder farmers in market access and strengthen market linkages.
5. Build on the potential of urban farming in Fort Portal.
6. Strengthen financial support for agroecological practices.
7. Emphasize the development of localized, high-potential value chains in Fort Portal.
8. Streamline and narrow down the consumer awareness-raising focus in Fort Portal.
9. Enhance awareness and adoption of SFS and responsible consumption through a targeted and collaborative approach.
10. Strengthen agroecology education activities and align their geographical targeting.
11. Design an agroecology communication strategy that effectively reaches different target audiences.
12. Support the rollout of the National Agroecology Strategy.
13. Strengthen the participation of farmers and farmer organizations in shaping SFS.