FEED GOOD PROGRAM FOR BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS - UGANDA

Mid-term evaluation

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Final report

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Acronyms and abbreviations

AE	Agroecology
AFSA	Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa
CAS	Community Agroecology School
CoW	Coalition of the Willing
CSO	Civil society organisation
DGD	Directorate-General for Development and Humanitarian Aid (Belgium)
ESAFF	Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum
FGD	Focus group discussion
FI	Farmer innovator
IdP	Iles de Paix
IFP	Integrated farm plan / planning
JESE	Joint Effort for Sustainable Environment
KRC	Kabarole Research & Resource Centre
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
MSF+	Mpanga Super Farmers Plus program
NCC	Nutrition Coordination Committee
NGO	Non-government organization
PELUM	Participatory Ecological Land Use Management
RAAP	Regional Agroecology Actors Platform
RCA	Association of Rwenzori Community
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation
S/C	Subcounty
SFS	Sustainable food systems
ToC	Theory of Change
UGX	Ugandan Shillings
VHT	Village Health Team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association

Executive summary

Context, objectives and methodology

Uganda, with its rapidly growing population, faces significant challenges in agriculture and natural resource availability. In the Rwenzori region, the city of Fort Portal, despite its fertile location, struggles with high malnutrition rates. The Mpanga watershed, spanning Kabarole and Kamwenge districts, is predominantly rural and agricultural, but faces issues like high population density, inadequate farming practices, and limited market opportunities, leading to natural resource degradation and low agricultural productivity.

Funded by the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD) and implemented by Humundi and Iles de Paix (IdP) together with six local partners (PELUM, AFSA, ESAFF, JESE, RCA and KRC), the 5-year "Feed Good" program 2022-2026 (also called SIA2) aims to promote sustainable food systems (SFS) and sustainable environment management in Uganda, with a focus on Rwenzori region and Fort Portal area. The program has 3 priority axes: sustainable productive & commercial dynamics (Results 1 & 2), institutional & political framework conducive to the agroecological transition (Results 3 & 4), and social & civic dynamics favourable to the emergence of SFS (Results 5 & 6).

The mid-term evaluation of this DGD-funded program covered 3 main evaluation areas, with a view to adjusting the current activities and drawing lessons for the next program: i) the pilot actions in a common territory (Rwenzori region); ii) the promotion of social and citizen initiatives favourable to SFS; iii) the support to local food governance dynamics in Rwenzori region. Data was collected at different levels (beneficiary households, farmer groups, implementing and collaborating partners, etc.) and through different methods (focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, direct observation and document review).

Evaluation findings

Strategies for agroecological transition and sustainable food systems in Fort Portal area

The program successfully engaged farmers in agroecological transitions through comprehensive approaches such as Integrated Farm Planning, intensive extension work, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), and collective marketing. The development of kitchen gardens significantly improved household access to diverse vegetables year-round. However, challenges remained, including fluctuations in the production methods for organic inputs and limited availability of certain ingredients.

Marketing associations increased farmers' bargaining power and access to diverse buyers, even if they faced challenges related to transportation, price fluctuations, and competition from middlemen. Value addition saw notable progress, particularly in maize processing in Kabambiro and parchment coffee processing in Karangura.

The VSLA approach rapidly developed a savings and loan culture, with a significant proportion of loans used for productive purposes. The VSLA+ approach encouraged collective investments, but these were often unrelated to crops or livestock.

The integration of small livestock proved highly relevant, addressing farmers' immediate needs and facilitating the adoption of agroecological practices (reducing external inputs, increasing crop yields, improving financial security, enhancing nutrition, and requiring minimal additional labour). Challenges include animal theft and health concerns in zero-grazing systems.

Urban farming in Fort Portal attracted young people to agroecology and yielded rapid results, but initially faced high drop-out rates and some implementation difficulties. School activities in Fort Portal also demonstrated significant potential to influence future consumers and producers, although the replication of agroecological practices at home is difficult to measure. Supporting thematic clubs in primary schools, including creating small vegetable gardens, has increased pupils' knowledge of healthy and nutritious food. Enhanced coordination between implementing partners is however needed.

The regular involvement of local government officers in extension work and joint monitoring is a significant strength of the program. In the project area, there appears to be a growing appreciation among government stakeholders for the potential and benefits of agroecology.

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

KRC's support for Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs) has added value, especially in areas where VSLAs were previously established by IdP and its partners. SACCOs offer VSLA members advantages like increased security and bigger loans. However, sustainability concerns remain due to weak SACCO capacities and limited loan portfolios. KRC's plan for an agroecological fund could address long-term sustainability.

While these financial inclusion activities demonstrate clear benefits, the collaboration's efficiency is somewhat impacted by a lack of consistent joint geographical targeting between JESE/RCA and KRC, potentially diluting the overall impact. A more systematic and integrated approach to beneficiary targeting across all partners is also needed.

The project has seen collaboration in networking and advocacy for SFS, primarily through PELUM Uganda, with participation from IdP, JESE, KRC, and RCA. This collaboration has facilitated bottom-up advocacy and some linkages with national and international events, although interaction with other networks (AFSA & ESAFF) has been limited. Research and evidence provision have contributed to advocacy and knowledge dissemination, but collaborative research tailored to the Rwenzori region remains limited. Cross-learning and capacity building have been achieved through field visits, experience exchanges, and advocacy events, with examples including food and seed fairs and cross-training between partners. There is room for strengthening these collaborative efforts.

Impacts of common actions on food system transformation and women participation

The program contribution to transforming Fort Portal food system was notable in nutrition, food safety, and hygiene awareness. While activities have improved hygienic practices and increased awareness among food vendors and consumers, there is limited evidence of changed practices or influence on consumer demand. The focus on nutritious and safe food has not fully aligned with the core objective of promoting agroecological farming systems. Events such as the Regional Indigenous Seed and Food Fair have raised awareness of agroecological practices in Fort Portal. PELUM's commitment to the agroecological transition in Rwenzori is notable, but other partners like AFSA and ESAFF have given less attention to the region. Overall, the project did not have a sufficiently focused strategy, which led to activities that were sometimes disconnected from each other between the different implementing partners. Regarding awareness-raising activities, the program's operation at two levels – locally in and around Fort Portal (IdP partners) and nationally or internationally (three of Humundi's four partners) – makes synergies more complex to find.

The collaboration between Humundi, IdP, and their partners has made progress in integrating gender mainstreaming into the program, with high women participation in various activities, particularly in financial inclusion. Women report improved collaboration and decision-making at the household level and stronger community participation. However, economic empowerment gaps persist, and joint action on gender issues has been limited. Successes include women's inclusion and leadership in VSLAs and positive cultural shifts in livestock farming roles. Initiatives like KRC's "orugali" and care groups have enhanced women's skills and empowerment, but clearer linkages and more strategic geographical targeting are needed to maximize impact.

Strategies for raising awareness and mobilizing consumers

The program utilized multiple strategies to raise awareness and mobilize consumers for agroecology, targeting diverse stakeholders including farmers, traders, policymakers, journalists, and consumers. Key initiatives included organizing and participating in agroecological events such as the National Agroecology Actors Symposium, Indigenous Food Fair, and Agroecological Youth Summit. These events brought together various stakeholders,

enhancing information sharing and shaping perceptions about sustainable farming and food consumption.

The creation of the Online Agroecology School for Journalists and Communicators, promoted by ESAFF, trained journalists to report accurately on agroecology, resulting in 227 published articles by midterm evaluation. This initiative helped build a network of journalists disseminating agroecology information across Uganda and Africa.

School Agroecology Clubs and Community Agroecology Schools (CASs) were established to educate young people and smallholder farmers about sustainable practices. These clubs and schools served as dynamic knowledge pools, fostering community learning and experiential wisdom exchange.

Mainstream media, including television and radio, along with social media platforms, were leveraged to raise awareness. Campaigns like PELUM's "Know what to eat" and AFSA's "My food is African" aimed to improve consumer awareness and promote responsible consumption. However, challenges persist in measuring the impact of these media efforts and translating knowledge into changed consumer behaviours.

In the Rwenzori region, strategies included radio campaigns, documentaries, cooking demonstrations, and capacity building for Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs), journalists and street food vendors. While these efforts increased awareness, they faced competition from commercial communication and gaps in consumer behaviour change. This kind of process always takes time, and will need to be continued with the next program.

The evaluation highlighted the need for more targeted messaging, improved inter-partner coordination, and consistent follow-up with farmers and youth to ensure the implementation of newly acquired knowledge. Social media, while having a wide reach, requires more engaging content to spark debate and action. Overall, the program's awareness-raising strategies have been effective in disseminating information, but there is a need for a well-crafted and more focused communication strategy to guide messaging, timing, and audience identification to maximize impact and drive lasting changes in consumer behaviours and practices.

Impacts of awareness strategies on agroecology production and responsible consumption

Agroecology events serve as learning platforms and empower participant farmers and youth. Farmers gain knowledge about new technologies, market needs, and product presentation, which helps them improve their practices and reach clients more effectively. Youth participation in these events has sparked entrepreneurial initiatives and fostered a commitment to responsible consumption.

The program has increased exposure to agroecology through radio talk shows, community meetings, and social media campaigns, leading to a growing demand for sustainable products and the creation of agroecology sales outlets in mainstream markets. School Agroecology Clubs and CASs have been instrumental in disseminating agroecological knowledge and practices. Students and community members have adopted these practices, leading to improved farming techniques and increased motivation.

However, challenges remain, including the management of pests and diseases with natural remedies, the small scale of demonstration gardens, and competition from conventional farming promoters. Additionally, the geographical dispersal of initiatives dilutes the program's impact, and there is a need for more focused production to achieve economies of scale.

In Fort Portal, the program's strategy to strengthen responsible consumption, focusing on healthy, agroecological products from local family farming, has shown some initial steps but still needs more efforts to achieve substantial impact on farmers supported under Result 1. Attempts to connect local producers with chefs and markets are promising, but ran into some obstacles, including the high cost of agroecological products. Nonetheless, there is potential for developing the organic vegetables value chain.

Sustainability of awareness and consumer mobilization strategies

The sustainability of the program's awareness-raising strategies varies by type, with some likely to continue beyond program implementation while others may cease without funding.

School Agroecology Clubs are expected to be sustainable due to their integration into school administrations and the new competency-based curriculum. These clubs benefit from the support of teachers and the school administration, which can provide a market for the students' products. However, additional resources such as standard gardens and agricultural libraries are needed to motivate learners and ensure long-term sustainability.

CASs are community-based and managed, suggesting they can survive beyond the project lifespan. Their sustainability depends on well-planned demonstration farms, capacity building, standard curriculum adoption, technical knowledge of leaders, governance structures, market access, and quality assurance. These schools foster social networking and peer-to-peer learning, essential for social-economic transformation.

The online school of journalism has created a pool of professional journalists who continue to produce content on agroecology, even using personal resources. Sustainability requires building relationships with media houses and editors to ensure continued support and incentives for journalists. However, expensive strategies like television and radio campaigns, talk shows, and advertisements are unlikely to continue without project funding.

Barriers to sustainability include weak awareness of sustainable farming and good feeding practices in Uganda, limited knowledge and appreciation of agroecology among consumers, policymakers, and farmers, and competition from conventional agriculture promoters. High costs of agroecological products and lack of consistent markets also pose challenges. Continued awareness activities are necessary to attract a critical mass of consumers, policymakers, and farmers to agroecology.

In the Fort Portal area, the sustainability of supported strategies varies, with school gardens and care groups showing strong potential, while initiatives relying on external support, like NCCs and the Coalition of the Willing (CoW), face funding challenges. Regarding school activities specifically, there are positive signs in terms of the program's institutional ownership; the potential to upscale and increase cost efficiency should be the subject of further analysis.

Partners' support to territorial food governance dynamics

The project supported several coordination and consultation forums, primarily at the Fort Portal city level, but their relevance to broader project objectives varied. NCCs play a crucial role in coordinating nutrition stakeholders and planning nutrition actions, but their direct engagement with agroecological transition, SFS, and sustainable environment management remains limited. The CoW aims to influence consumer practices and policy decisions on food-related issues in Fort Portal city. The program also supports the Regional Agroecology Actors Platform (RAAP), which was launched in October 2024. It is still too early to know whether this platform will really work.

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 RAAP and local government structures such as NCCs, but challenges related to resource limitations and policy enforcement persisted. The program also emphasized the need for robust research on food systems. A study on vegetable production and consumption in Fort Portal was published and informed new programming. Food laboratory analyses on milk contamination and tainted meat contributed to educate the public and led to government investigations.

Conclusions and recommendations

The SIA2 program adopted a holistic approach to sustainable food systems, aiming to create a favourable environment for small-scale producers. While some strategies were more effective than others, the program showed promising results and flexibility. The evaluation highlighted areas for improvement, including enhancing collaboration and synergy among Humundi, IdP, and their local 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.

This first collaboration between Humundi and Ugandan partners has clearly led to progress in raising awareness of agroecology and responsible consumption. The concept of “food systems” however needs to be more focused to avoid diluting impact. Communication about agroecological products must compete more effectively with the conventional food industry, and hit the specific needs of the target audience, particularly on social media.

The territorial approach in Fort Portal and the Rwenzori region should emphasize localized value chains. Future efforts should engage farmers and farmer groups more actively in decision-making processes. Mapping territorial markets can help producer organizations monitor markets and advocate for supportive public policies, ultimately improving smallholder farmer livelihoods and diversified food systems.

The midterm evaluation leads to the following 13 recommendations:

1. Further improve synergies in program management and coordination, including by consolidating the Rwenzori RAAP
2. In the future program, make sustainable production and marketing the central pillar of the project, around which all other activities are structured
3. Enhance the effectiveness and adoption of agroecological inputs, such as bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers, through a comprehensive approach that includes collaborative research, standardization and capacity building
4. Support smallholder farmers who adopted agroecology in market access, and strengthen market linkages with buyers (including street food vendors, restaurants, etc.)
5. Build on the potential of urban farming in Fort Portal context in order to extend it to more beneficiaries, particularly young people
6. Strengthen financial support for agroecological practices by aligning efforts and enhancing awareness among key stakeholders
7. In Fort Portal area, put greater emphasis on the development of localised, high-potential value chains
8. In current program in Fort Portal area, streamline and narrow down the consumer awareness raising focus
9. In future programs in Fort Portal area, enhance awareness and adoption of SFS and responsible consumption through a targeted and collaborative approach (target specific messages for specific stakeholders, look for more synergies with other projects/NGOs, evaluate/refine the current intensive support model for individual schools)
10. Strengthen agroecology education activities (School Agroecology Clubs and CASs) and align their geographical targeting with other project partners
11. Design an agroecology communication strategy that effectively reaches the different types of target audience, from grassroots producers to (young) consumers
12. Support the rollout of the National Agroecology Strategy
13. Strengthen the participation of farmers and farmer organisations in shaping sustainable food systems.

1. Introduction

1.1. Country and local context

A land-locked country in East Africa, Uganda has a fast-growing population of 45.9 million people. The country is undergoing rapid urban expansion. This put enormous pressure on agriculture and the availability of natural resources. Agriculture contributes approximately 25% to the country's GDP, while around two thirds of the population are still directly engaged in agricultural production. Despite its agricultural potential and significant exports, Uganda's food insecurity levels remain high. Due to its over-reliance on rainfed agriculture, the country is highly vulnerable to climate change. In recent years, the country experienced an increasing frequency of droughts and floods, which heightened the vulnerability of its smallholder farmers.

Fort Portal is a city located in Kabarole district in the Rwenzori region (western part of Uganda). It has a growing population of more than 60,000 people[1] and has significant tourist potential. Despite its geographical position in a highly fertile area, the city has some of the worst malnutrition figures in the country. Located across the districts of Kabarole and Kamwenge, the Mpanga watershed is a predominantly rural area, with agriculture as a main livelihood. Core development issues in this region include high population density (especially on the slopes of the Rwenzori mountains), poor agricultural practices and a lack of market opportunities and alternative livelihoods. This leads to a rapid degradation of natural resources, loss of agricultural productivity and limited income from farming.

1.2. Overview of Feed Good program

Humundi is a Belgian development organization which fights against hunger, poverty and inequality by building sustainable food systems (SFS) through the agroecological transition of farmer communities, with an approach that favour partnership (with farmers' organisations, rural financial institutions, etc.). Humundi started working in Uganda in 2022, with a Country representative based in Kampala.

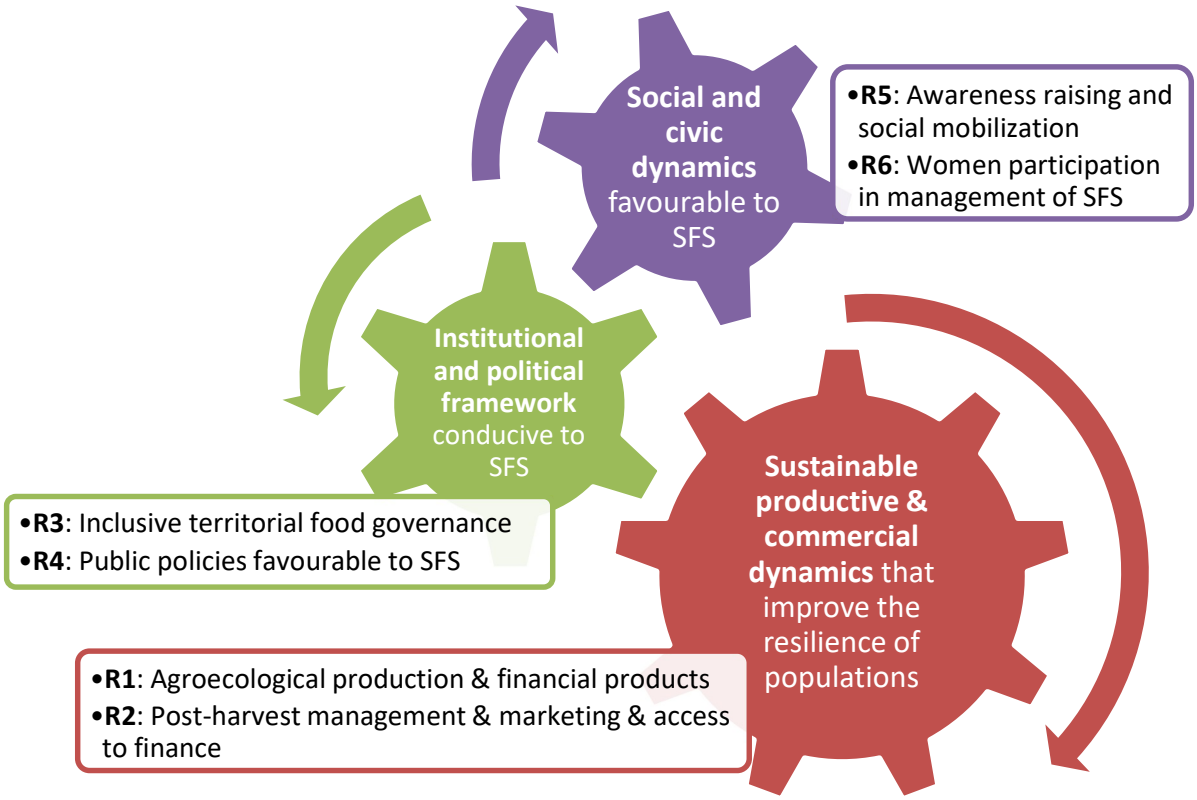
Iles de Paix (IdP) is an international development organization that supports sustainable family farming in the South and raises awareness about the need to foster an alternative global paradigm through the development of SFS. IdP started its activities in Uganda in 2017, with a first project funded by the Belgian Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), the Mpanga Super Farmers program, which targeted 600 family farmers in the Mpanga watershed. IdP country team is based in Fort Portal.

Since 2017, Humundi and Iles de Paix have been united in a consortium (called SIA) and together benefit from funding from DGD for the implementation of projects to build more sustainable food systems, and more broadly sustainable environmental management, through the promotion of agroecological transition and the social economy. Currently, the consortium is implementing a five-year project (2022-2026), called the "Feed Good" program, in Belgium and in 10 countries in South America and Africa, including Uganda. This project has a North and a South component.

In Uganda, where the program is more commonly known as "SIA2", it has 3 priority axes and 6 expected results (R), as summarized in Figure 1 – see also the Theory of Change (ToC) diagram in Annex 1. Beneficiaries and other program stakeholders include farmers, farmer groups, Saving and Credit Cooperative Organisations (SACCOs), Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), Youth Savings and Loan Associations (YSLAs), civil society organisations, street vendors, restaurants, schools, the youth, media, the local and national authorities, the consumers in the areas of intervention.

[1] Wikipedia contributors, "Fort Portal", *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Fort_Portal&oldid=1288400632 (accessed May 7, 2025)

Figure 1. Overview of SIA program's priorities and expected results



The program works with 6 local partners, which are responsible for implementation:

- AFSA: Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (Humundi's partner)
- PELUM Uganda: Participatory Ecological Land Use Management Uganda (Humundi's partner)
- ESAFF Uganda: Eastern and Southern Africa Small-scale Farmers' Forum Uganda (Humundi's partner)
- KRC Uganda: Kabarole Research and Resource Centre Uganda (both Humundi's and IdP's partner)
- JESE: Joint Efforts to Save the Environment (IdP's partner)
- RCA: Association of Rwenzori Community (IdP's partner).

The program initially had a 7th local partner, Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET, Humundi's partner) but the contract with this organisation was terminated during the project.

In the Rwenzori region, IdP and its partners specifically target two subcounties in Kabarole district (Kicwamba and Karangura), one subcounty in Kamwenge district (Kabambiro) and the city of Fort Portal. Kicwamba is a new area of intervention, but it is close to Karangura subcounty, where IdP has been active since 2017, and shares some similar characteristics. IdP and JESE have also been active in Kabambiro since 2017, and organized a gradual exit from this subcounty by the end of 2024.

Together with JESE and KRC, IdP also implemented the 3-year Mpanga Super Farmers Plus (MSF+) program (January 2022 – March 2025), funded by the Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs. The objective of this project was to build a sustainable food system and healthy environment in and around Fort Portal, with activities that are complementary to the ones implemented under the DGD-funded program. The project targeted the Kicwamba and Kabambiro subcounties as well as Fort Portal city.

1.3. Objectives and scope of the evaluation

For efficiency and optimization of stakeholders' time, the assignment was designed as a joint evaluation for the mid-term evaluation of the DGD-funded Feed Good program (implemented by IdP, Humundi and their respective partners) and the final review of MSF+ program (implemented by IdP, JESE and KRC).

The DGD mid-term evaluation takes place after two years of program implementation with a learning objective: draw lessons to i) improve program implementation for the remaining period until 2026 and ii) prepare the next program.

The analysis addresses the 3 following evaluation areas:

1. Evaluation of **pilot actions** for the implementation of the ToC of the program **in a common territory** (the Rwenzori Region)
2. Evaluation of the **support to social and citizen dynamics** favourable to the emergence of SFS (not limited to a common region, but over the entire program).
3. Evaluation of the extent to which the **territorial food governance dynamics** are considered in program implementation.

This mid-term evaluation covers the entire implementation period from 2022. Its geographical scope is Uganda, with a particular focus on Rwenzori region (and Fort Portal city) as regards the implementation of the ToC in a common territory and territorial food governance dynamics.

The main users of this evaluation will be the two SIA NGOs' management (headquarters and country office), Feed Good program teams and local partners, and the donor (DGD). Some of the evaluation results might also be useful to other program stakeholders such as consumer groups or local authorities.

2. Methodology

2.1. Evaluation team

Considering the diversity of evaluation themes and the fact that SIA teams and partners are either based in Kampala or in Fort Portal, the evaluation was conducted by a team of two evaluators, who shared out the evaluation themes and the program areas/partners during the field mission:

- Johan Pasquet, the team leader, covered all three evaluation areas, focusing more specifically on the Rwenzori region, where he carried out the data collection (jointly for this evaluation and that of the MSF+ project);
- Celestine Katongole, senior associate evaluator, concentrated on collecting and analysing data relating to evaluation area 2 and the actions carried out by Humundi's partners.

2.2. Evaluation criteria and key questions

The terms of reference did not explicitly refer to the standard OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. There has been a deliberate choice on the part of the evaluation steering committee to focus on certain issues specific to the SIA2 program in order to redirect the approach or adjust remaining activities, and learn lessons for the next program.

Each of the three evaluation areas was broken down into a series of evaluation questions, as defined in the terms of reference (cf. Table 1). During the inception phase, the steering committee and the evaluators agreed not to add any additional questions.

Table 1. Evaluation areas and questions

Evaluation areas	Evaluation questions
1. Pilot actions towards SFS in a common territory (Rwenzori region)	- In what way is the support provided by Humundi and IdP to various actors located in the Fort Portal region relevant to the realization of the ToC underlying the program? - How does the collaboration between Humundi, IdP and their partners contribute to the transformation of Fort Portal's food system? - What is the added value of the collaboration between Humundi, IdP and their partners in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability? - How does the collaboration between Humundi, IdP and their partners contribute to improving the gender mainstreaming approach and results of the program in the area concerned? - Could collaboration and cooperation between Humundi, IdP and local partners be improved to achieve common goals, and how? - With a view to identifying and formulating a future joint program, what recommendations can be made to improve SIA's effectiveness and efficiency in this area? To what extent would it prove relevant to consolidate this territorial approach (both in terms of identification and implementation)?
2. Support to social and citizen dynamics favourable to SFS	- Are the partners' strategies for raising awareness and mobilising consumers in favour of responsible consumption (radio campaigns, documentaries, cooking demonstrations, posters, etc.) relevant and effective? To what extent do the partners manage to reach the consumers? What are the different strategies that are developed and what are the results obtained? - To what extent does the strategy of the program contribute to strengthening responsible consumption (consumption of healthy products - certified agro-ecological - from local family farming)? - Does this have an impact on agroecological production, and in particular on the farming families supported under the program's Result 1? - What is the potential sustainability of the strategies/dynamics supported beyond program implementation? Are these strategies supported by organisations whose objectives and strategies include informing and defending consumers, and who will continue to do so after the program? - What improvements could be made within the framework of the current program? - With a view to identifying and formulating a future joint program, what recommendations can be made to improve SIA's effectiveness and efficiency in this area?
3. Territorial food governance dynamics	- Do the partners include the activities that are the focus of this evaluation in territorial governance dynamics and more specifically in territorial food governance dynamics (consultation spaces, multi-stakeholder dialogue, etc.)? In other words, are the stakeholders supported via the program (producers, consumers, vendors, producers' organizations, etc.) involved in discussions and decisions related to food systems in the region of intervention? - If so, what is the involvement of the target actors in the local spaces or dynamics related to the SFS? What level of participation, what diagnostic tools are used and what perspective would they like to take on the SFS issue (environment, local production, public awareness, development of local markets, etc.)? What territorial level are we talking about? - If not, how do SIA partners and SIA NGOs ensure that their actions related to the evaluation themes are part of a broader process of reflection on the transformation of food systems, involving all stakeholders?

2.3. Data collection methods and limitations

As much as possible, this evaluation was conducted in a participatory manner for learning purposes. During the mission in Uganda, two start-up meetings were organized, one in Kampala with Humundi and its partners, one in Fort Portal with IdP and its partners. These meetings were an opportunity for project teams to present their main activities and achievements to date, and for the evaluators to present the evaluation objectives and methods, identify key informants, and discuss the field visit planning. During data collection, the evaluators sought the largest possible participation of all project stakeholders, for example by taking account of the different types of beneficiaries and by minimising discrimination based on gender or other socio-economic or cultural factors. This was achieved through participatory facilitation of focus groups but also through a combination of different survey methods (individual or group discussion; formal interview or through field visits). The debriefing sessions – one in Fort Portal and one online with Humundi's partners – were opportunities to share the evaluators' initial analyses with project teams and SIA management, thereby providing additional information and enhancing ownership of the evaluation results.

During the field mission in the project areas, data was mainly collected through focus group discussions (FGDs) and semi-structured interviews with different categories of project beneficiaries and partners. For crosschecking purpose, this was completed by a direct observation of production, processing, marketing or food selling sites (e.g. kitchen gardens, animal housing, demonstration plots, street food stalls, markets, expo stalls, etc.).

In the Rwenzori region, the choice of sites to be visited and the activities to be specifically assessed was discussed during the start-up meeting in Fort Portal. The evaluator let implementing teams arrange field visits and meetings with beneficiaries. The main guidance provided by the evaluator in relation to the selection of the sample of sites to be visited and beneficiaries to be met was to ensure that (i) a large array of project activities can be covered within the limited time spent in each target area, and (ii) different degrees of performance can be assessed (e.g. from poor performing farmers or groups to best performing ones). In the rest of the country, logistical and time considerations prevailed in the choice of project sites to visit.

The list of persons and entities met/interviewed is provided in Annex 2. In total, the evaluators interviewed 24 project staff and more than 40 project partners or beneficiaries through individual or small group interviews. In addition, 10 FGDs were conducted with project partners/beneficiaries, gathering 121 participants (66 women and 55 men) from different types of groups (marketing associations, VSLAs, care groups, etc.).

The triangulation of information was done by cross-checking the information collected at different levels (event participants, beneficiary households, farmer groups, implementing and collaborating partners, SIA staff, other development partners, etc.) and through different methods (FGDs, semi-structured interviews, direct observation and document review).

The method of data analysis consisted of taking the different questions of each evaluation area, and for each, comparing information from different sources (field surveys and observations, interviews with the project team and other key persons, documentation).

The evaluation went very well overall. The program team made every effort to enable the evaluators to maximise the time spent in the project areas. The whole staff approached the evaluation in an open and constructive manner. The main difficulty of the evaluation was to distinguish the activities relating to the program evaluated from those implemented as part of the MSF+ program. The field mission was also relatively short compared to the large number of sites, partners and activities involved in the program.

Measuring impact at midterm is helpful in indicating whether it is necessary to redirect and make corrections to the project approach. While it is difficult to measure impact after about 2 years of program implementation, it is possible to make an informed estimation of the

program's expected impacts[2]. Thus, at this stage, the current evaluation provides insights into the outcomes of project activities, and comments on the likelihood of achieving the desired impacts.

2.4. Work schedule

The evaluation mission started during the last week of November 2024 and involved 3 phases: an inception phase, a field mission in Uganda and a reporting phase.

The inception phase started with a desk review of the first documents made available to the evaluators, followed by the development of data collection methods.

The start-up meeting with Humundi and its partners was held on 14 January 2025 in Kampala, and followed by a first series of interviews with project staff, partners and beneficiaries. The rest of the data collection for evaluation area 2 took place in a staggered way between 15 January and 17 February (mainly due to the closure of schools during the holidays), and included interviews in Kampala as well as visits to the districts of Mukono and Mityana.

The mission in Western Uganda took place from 16 to 23 January 2025. It started with an inception briefing with program implementation teams (IdP, JESE, RCA and KRC). The field mission consisted in 4.5 days of field visits (1 day in Kicwamba, 2 days in Karangura, 0,5 day in Kabambiro, 1 day in Fort Portal), including meetings with family farmers, marketing associations, VSLAs, urban youth and other food system stakeholders. The mission in the Rwenzori region was completed by 2 days of interviews with the project team and key partners. It ended with a debriefing session in Fort Portal with the project team. The detailed mission schedule is provided in Annex 3.

Data analysis and reporting took place in February-April 2025, and the final version of the report was shared in May 2025.

[2] Vidueira, Rivera, Mesa & Díaz-Puente, 2015. Mid-term impact estimation on evaluations of rural development programs.

3. Evaluation findings

3.1. Evaluation area 1: Pilot actions towards sustainable food systems in a common territory (Rwenzori region)

3.1.1. Relevance & internal coherence of program activities conducted in Fort Portal area

Support to sustainable productive and commercial dynamics

The project demonstrated significant success in engaging farmers and farmer groups in agroecological transitions through a comprehensive package of approaches and activities, including Integrated Farm Planning (IFP), intensive extension work, Farmer Innovators (FIs), Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), and collective marketing. This success was built upon the partners' extensive experience gained from the previous phase of the SIA program (2017-2021).

In terms of agroecological production, a comparative study conducted by IdP and KRC in Karangura provided compelling evidence of the project impact, showing that beneficiary farmers achieved higher ownership of animals, increased tree cover on their farms, improved water saving practices (trenching, mulching, planting retention grass, etc.), and greater self-sufficiency in sourcing firewood and animal feed compared to their non-beneficiary counterparts.

The development of kitchen gardens (small vegetable and fruit gardens around the house) is one of the cornerstones of the project to introduce agroecological practices and encourage producers to adopt this type of farming. Although the above-mentioned comparative study did not demonstrate any significant effects of the adoption of these practices on household food and nutritional security, the qualitative interviews conducted during this evaluation indicate that there are clear effects on the availability of a variety of vegetables throughout the year. Recognizing the importance of nutrition, RCA, in collaboration with the KRC team, placed emphasis on the production of nutritious vegetables, such as iron-rich beans, orange-fleshed sweet potatoes, and pumpkins.

A key aspect of the program, which JESE and RCA have focused on following the lessons learnt from the first phase (2017-2021), is access to locally produced organic inputs, including biopesticides and manure. Among the weaknesses that remain, we note that the production methods for these inputs still fluctuate: their composition changes, the preparation process differs, and their effectiveness in the field probably does too.

Some ten marketing associations were supported, focusing on collective raw material (crop) procurement, bulk sales, processing (specifically "posho" / maize flour in Kabambiro), and capacity building in post-harvest management. These efforts resulted in increased bargaining power for farmers and expanded access to diverse buyers, particularly significant for coffee producers in Karangura. Some of the "matooke" (plantain banana) growers we met in Kicwamba claim that selling prices can be up to 60% higher if they sell through the association rather than to brokers at farm gate.

Agroecological selling points were established in Fort Portal, with two already operational and one in progress, primarily focusing on the sale of vegetables and other fresh products. Value addition saw notable progress compared to the previous SIA program, with strengthened farmer capacities in maize processing in Kabambiro, parchment coffee processing in Karangura, honey packaging and branding, and the establishment of connections between Irish potato producers and a company that purchases by kilo.

Box 1. Significant progress in the organisation of producers and the marketing of matooke in Kicwamba subcounty

The Kihondo Farmers Marketing Association, established in July 2024, united 150 matooke farmers to enhance market access and pricing. The association, born from the merger of several VSLAs, aims not only to aggregate production but also to foster savings among members. Project support included capacity building in matooke production and market information, as well as member mobilization and the organization of exchange visits on product processing.

Observed results include the association's ability to attract larger buyers, improved market price information, the completion of 12 bulk sales (with volumes ranging from 57 to 87 bunches), the establishment of a banana grading system, and the achievement of higher sales prices. The grading of bananas by size enabled them to fetch higher prices, averaging 14,000 UGX per bunch compared to the previous 12,000 UGX. Matooke farmers have also improved their conservation practices, reducing product losses. The association is involved in advocacy with local authorities (at subcounty level) and participated in project-organized events such as Farmer Field Days and the Indigenous Seed and Food Fair.

The main challenges faced by the association are the difficulty in mobilizing members for meetings, competition from matooke brokers (who threatens to divert members), a lack of storage and banana protection infrastructure prior to sale (leading to damage from rain or sun), and difficulties in transporting produce from fields to the main road (with farmers often carrying produce on their heads, using wheelbarrows or hiring bicycles). Future needs identified by the association include the construction of a shelter/warehouse, the acquisition of larger transportation means, district-level registration, and the establishment of a sustainable funding system. These goals require additional support and resources.

Despite these achievements, several challenges were identified:

- In Karangura, kitchen garden performance was moderately impacted by recurring droughts and water shortages. RCA staff stress the need for rainwater harvesting systems, which were not funded under the current project. A lower-cost / lower-technology alternative would be to prioritise the cultivation of indigenous vegetables, which are often more resistant to dry spells.
- The promotion of indigenous food crops, such as iron-rich beans, faced consumer perception challenges, with some viewing them as "backward". Farmers also struggled with the unavailability or high cost of seeds for this kind of crop.
- Some of the ingredients needed to prepare bio-concoctions are not widely available locally, limiting the preparation and use of these formulations on a larger scale. According to the producers interviewed in Kicwamba, this is the case for Mexican marigold, which is used for its insect-repellent properties.
- Marketing associations encountered challenges related to the transportation of produce from fields to main roads, price fluctuations, and competition from middlemen or brokers who purchase at farm gates. They also lack facilities to store the produce and protect it from the rain.
- Whether at collective or individual farmer level, product development, including packaging and branding, as well as linkages with buyers and markets, pose challenges, particularly in obtaining marketing authorizations and certifications for products like honey and natural pesticides or fertilizers.

Access to finance

The VSLA approach has confirmed its ability to rapidly develop a savings and loan culture within the targeted rural communities. The amounts borrowed are capped by the savings capacity of each member (which is one of the basic rules of a VSLA to limit repayment defaults). Typically, the size of a loan is around 300,000 UGX (almost 80 €), which is a respectable sum compared with average incomes in the country. Despite the incapacity of VSLAs to provide loans to all loan applicants, a significant proportion of the loans taken out by

VSLA members are for productive purposes, such as the purchase of seed or livestock, the construction of animal housing, renting farmland and farm labour wages.

Furthermore, the project encouraged VSLA groups to explore and implement sustainable investment strategies through the VSLA+ approach, the idea being that the members of the group try to invest together in means of production such as goats or farmland. In practice, however, the evaluators observe that these collective investments are often directed towards potential income-generating activities unrelated to crops or livestock. Although the project coordination team considers that this practice is uncommon in the context of this program, the information gathered during this evaluation indicates that there is a tendency to reinvest part of the savings accumulated by VSLAs in the previous cycle into the new cycle, rather than distributing all the savings between members and starting from scratch. This is clearly highlighted by KRC in its bi-annual report to Humundi (August 2024): *"The fact that 47,036,600 UGX out of the 178,458,800 UGX total savings for 2023 was re-invested into the new cycle point to a new shift in the VSLAs methodology. Previously, the VSLAs used to share-out everything and start the new cycle on a clean sheet."*

Box 2. Community savings initiatives that support integrated farm plans in Kirangara village

The project supported the Kirangara Joint Farmers Association, a group initiated in 2022 in Kicwamba subcounty, in developing a VSLA. The group currently has 35 members (20 women, 15 men) meeting weekly to contribute savings. The weekly savings structure has incrementally increased from 2,000 UGX to 5,000 UGX per stamp. The total savings of over 15 million UGX (around 3,900 €) in the last cycle is a testament to the group's collective effort and the project success in promoting financial discipline. Members can access loans ranging from 50,000 to 1,000,000 UGX (13 to 263 €), used for small businesses, school fees, healthcare, and agricultural investments. Most members utilize their savings according to their integrated farm plans.

The loan amounts, capped at three times an individual's savings, are sometimes insufficient to meet member needs. This limitation is exacerbated by the VSLA's inability to provide loans to all requesters, highlighting a need for increased funding or alternative financial mechanisms. Many members struggle to save regularly due to a lack of income-generating activities, and delays in loan repayment, though managed by a guarantee system, remain an issue.

Despite these challenges, the VSLA has plans to enhance its operations. Members aim to develop group-level income generating activities, such as renting chairs and tents, and aspire to transition into a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organisation (SACCO) to access more funding and offer daily savings options. According to the VSLA representatives, the project's continuous monitoring and advice have been instrumental, but it should consider providing additional grants, training, and assistance in increasing membership.

Areas for improvement include the solutions proposed by VSLAs to generate income as a group – typically, the purchase of plastic chairs, tents and/or kitchen utensils to hire for ceremonies or special events: they are relatively standard, not very innovative, and could involve a certain financial risk.

Small livestock integration

The integration of small livestock into farming systems, particularly at the project's early stages, along with a co-investment approach, proved highly relevant to achieving the program's underlying Theory of Change. This strategy effectively addressed farmers' immediate needs and long-term plans, provided quick and tangible benefits, and facilitated the adoption of agroecological practices, primarily through the availability of on-farm manure. The livestock activities were primarily focused on enhancing food security and integrating livestock into agroecological systems, rather than generating a large marketable surplus, with products like poultry eggs being sold at the village or sub-county level.

The project has shown that integrating small animals into farms is a good way of initiating an agroecological transition in a new area. A study conducted by IdP to assess the lessons learned from livestock integration revealed five significant benefits. Firstly, it reduces the need

for external inputs while simultaneously increasing crop yields, largely through the use of manure and urine-based concoctions for pest control. Secondly, the integration fosters crop co-benefits, encouraging the adoption of sustainable farming practices, such as using fodder crops to mitigate soil erosion, enhance soil fertility, and repel pests, while crop residues serve as valuable animal fodder. Thirdly, it improves financial resources and security, as small livestock acts as a buffer against financial hardships and enables investment cycles. Fourthly, it has the potential to enhance nutrition by providing readily available animal proteins at the household level and boosting vegetable production through manure application. Finally, it requires minimal or no additional labour, making it a practical and efficient addition to existing farming practices, particularly for women, who not only manage the livestock activity in many cases, but also have greater control over the products and income derived from it.

However, several challenges emerged during the implementation of the livestock integration component. Notably, there is an increased risk of animal theft, which has already affected project beneficiaries. Concerns are also raised about animal health in zero-grazing systems in the long term, particularly if farmers seek to expand their flocks or herds, given the limited space around their homes, which could lead to overcrowding and disease outbreaks, as highlighted in a capitalization report commissioned by IdP. In Kicwamba and Karangura, high poultry mortality rates were reported, likely due to coccidiosis and avian flu, and beneficiaries still struggle to restock. According to RCA staff, these mortalities are likely exacerbated by poor feeding practices, particularly due to rising maize bran prices and a lack of alternative protein sources.

Urban farming

The urban farming approach demonstrated significant relevance within the context of Fort Portal city. It effectively attracted young people to agroecology, yielded rapid and tangible results, such as the accumulation of livestock and the development of sales outlets for agroecological produce, and served as an inspiring model for neighbouring households. Furthermore, KRC provided essential capacity building on business management to the youth supported by JESE, equipping them with the necessary skills to manage their urban farming ventures effectively.

It should be stressed that these observations are based on a limited sample of young people met during the evaluation, who may turn out to be the most successful. More exhaustive internal monitoring, carried out in 2023, showed less conclusive results and certain difficulties in implementing the activity: a high drop-out rate among the youth supported by the project, support that did not always match their (variable) needs, doubts about the ability of some of these young people to reinvest the earnings generated by the livestock farming activities (e.g. to restock or buy animal feed), etc.

Box 3. The rapid development of livestock farming by two young brothers from Fort Portal

In Fort Portal City, two young brothers, aged 18 and 19 in 2022, had dropped out of school and were living with their parents, who were involved in small-scale farming near the city. The brothers had a small plot of maize and raised two goats, but they did not have permanent jobs. Occasionally, they worked as casual labourers in the construction sector.

In 2022, their lives took a significant turn when they were enrolled in the Urban Youth Farming activities supported by JESE. The project provided them with training and four goats – three local breed females and one improved breed male. Through the project, the brothers participated in a Youth Field Day in Fort Portal and some learning visits organized by JESE. They learned valuable skills, such as preparing feed for pigs by mixing maize bran and water. They also became members of the Youth Urban Farmers Association, a group of 45 youths supported by JESE. This group established a Youth Savings and Loan Association, where members meet twice a month to discuss common issues like securing loans, opening bank accounts, and planning a common plot for commercial vegetable growing.

With the knowledge and resources gained from the project, the brothers expanded their goat-rearing activities. They now have about 40 goats, including 10 adult females. They feed their goats banana

peels during the dry season, which they purchase with the income from selling crops like maize and cocoyam. During the rainy season, they provide cut grasses, which they get freely, though transportation remains a challenge. The brothers sell goat manure to JESE, other organizations, and farmers, and they also sell their goats for breeding and slaughter, earning a good income.

Inspired by their success with goats, the brothers ventured into pig rearing. They bought two sows and built a shelter for them. They now have about 10 adult pigs. They feed the pigs maize bran, sweet potato leaves and kitchen wastes. Additionally, they started bull fattening in 2023. They buy bulls at five months old, fatten them for a year, and then sell them at a profit. The brothers have already completed one round of bull fattening and are in their second round, having sold five bulls so far, representing sales of almost 10 million UGX (about 2,600 €). Their success has inspired others, including their own father who started raising pigs too. The brothers regularly receive visits from other youth and neighbours who come to learn about animal husbandry.

The income from their farming activities has enabled the brothers to buy several small pieces of land outside the town. Their next plan is to sell all these pieces of land to purchase a bigger plot in the countryside. There, they aim to establish an integrated farm with all their animals, grow crops, and build their own house.

School activities

The project activities in primary schools within Fort Portal proved to be relevant, demonstrating significant potential to influence the mindsets and habits of future consumers and, potentially, producers, thus addressing several of the project expected results at the same time. JESE targeted approximately 2,000 pupils, delivering nutrition awareness programs through farming clubs, cooking demonstrations, and debates. According to project staff, the creation of small school vegetable gardens has helped to increase pupils' knowledge of healthy, balanced and nutritious food. School gardens help stimulate learning.

These efforts yielded several notable achievements, including the integration of gardening into the school curriculum and the introduction of some agroecological practices at home by children, who planted seeds and seedlings provided by the project. The level of replication of agroecological practices in the homes of schoolchildren is nevertheless difficult to measure, and would benefit from further documentation by the project.

While there was some cross-learning between implementing partners, JESE and KRC, and exchange visits to targeted schools, there is a clear need for enhanced joined-up thinking, including collaboration with ESAFF (which also supports school agroecology clubs), to determine the most relevant and effective approaches for school gardening goals. A key challenge identified was the limited space available for developing school gardens. Consequently, exploring the feasibility of implementing vertical gardening systems could be a valuable strategy to overcome this obstacle and maximize the project impact within school environments.

Involvement of government stakeholders

While the program's Theory of Change initially positioned government stakeholders as potential obstacles to progress, it is critical to evaluate the validity of this assumption and examine the mitigation strategies employed by project partners. KRC works closely with the Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs), as described in the following sections. JESE highlighted the regular involvement of government officers in extension work, encompassing both agricultural production and marketing, as a significant strength of the program. This participation, coupled with targeted training and frequent joint monitoring visits, demonstrably contributed to shifts in government extension workers' mindsets regarding agroecology. More broadly, there appears to be a growing appreciation among government stakeholders for the potential and benefits of agroecological practices, particularly following their participation in events like the Indigenous Seed and Food Fair in Fort Portal.

However, the level of engagement varies across districts. At the district level, Kabarole exhibited comparatively lower involvement from public authorities. Conversely, Kamwenge

demonstrated more tangible ownership of project activities, with the District Production Officer actively supporting the development of a new funding for a follow-up program. This disparity underscores the need for targeted strategies to enhance government stakeholder engagement at all levels, ensuring consistent and sustained support for the program's objectives.

3.1.2. Added value of the collaboration between Humundi, IdP and their partners in Rwenzori region

Added value mainly linked to financial inclusion

In the Rwenzori region, the collaboration between Humundi, IdP, and their partners has generated a certain level of added value, particularly in the area of financial inclusion, where Humundi and KRC have specific expertise and proven experience. The project, through KRC's expertise, integrated specific activities for beneficiary groups, focusing on financial inclusion and savings initiatives. KRC's support of ten SACCOs across the Rwenzori region, though geographically dispersed in ten districts, included training on agroecological principles, facilitating the understanding and promotion of agroecological finance products. Many efforts have also been made to strengthen the management and governance structures of SACCOs, which has contributed to their growth. KRC's bi-annual reports indicate positive trends in SACCO performance (membership, shares, savings and loans), with the "seed-bag" loan product stimulating savings and agricultural investments. A solar kit loan product was also launched in 2024 with ENGIE Energy Access Ltd, with the aim to diversify SACCO portfolios and improve rural households' renewable energy access.

There is clearly added value for KRC in supporting the development of SACCOs in areas where VSLAs have previously been established by IdP partners and strengthened by social mobilisation and training initiatives. The connection of the Karangura Coffee SACCO with smaller-scale local savings initiatives implemented by IdP/RCA illustrates the potential synergy, with an increase in the number of members (including members of the Karangura Peak coffee cooperative) and VSLAs previously trained by RCA joining the SACCO. According to RCA, the way savings are transacted is changing with the setting up or strengthening of SACCOs: members of some VSLAs now place their savings in the SACCO instead of keeping them in the VSLA cashbox, which has a number of positive impacts: more security, hence more savings, hence bigger loans.

Geographic and beneficiary targeting

While these financial inclusion activities demonstrate clear benefits, the collaboration's efficiency is somewhat impacted by a lack of consistent joint geographical targeting between JESE/RCA and KRC, potentially diluting the overall impact. KRC staff suggests focusing on high-performing SACCOs for expansion to optimize resource utilization.

Regarding beneficiary targeting, there are a few examples of joint efforts and/or continuity in support for target groups, such as the establishment of Ecological Land Use Management (ELUM) centres for JESE-supported producers in Kabambiro, KRC's support of a school in Karangura, and the integration of care groups in communities where RCA operates. However, these instances are isolated, and a more systematic and integrated approach to beneficiary targeting across all partners would likely enhance the program effectiveness.

Other important areas for collaboration

Networking and advocacy on SFS have seen some collaboration during the project, mainly through PELUM Uganda, a network of which IdP and partners like JESE and KRC were already active members before the project began; RCA also became a member. This has allowed for some linkages and created a framework for bottom-up advocacy, where the levels of focus between IdP (local to regional) and Humundi (national to continental) are complementary. While there has been participation in national and international advocacy events through PELUM, interaction with other relevant networks, such as ESAFF, has been minimal. The impact of national or international advocacy on IdP's local activities, and vice

versa, is still developing, with JESE staff participating in two international youth conferences on agroecology. JESE established participatory action research (PAR) sites (e.g. to test the efficacy of bio-pesticides), which feed into PELUM advocacy work on agriculture policies; and KRC refers agroecological champions and entrepreneurs to PELUM for peer-to-peer learning during advocacy events.

Research and evidence provision, primarily under Result 3 and Result 4, have contributed to advocacy and knowledge dissemination, with several studies by AFSA and PELUM's involvement in PAR. However, collaborative research specifically tailored to the Rwenzori region's implementation remains limited.

Cross-learning and capacity building of project beneficiaries have been facilitated through field visits, experience exchanges, and advocacy event participation. Most of the field visits and exchanges of experience between partners have been initiated on the basis of annual meetings between partners, which provide a clearer picture of who is doing what and where, and help to identify areas for synergy. For instance, some Community Agroecology Schools supported by ESAFF already paid a few visits to some of the farmer groups supported by RCA and JESE. Another example of cross-learning is the food and seed fairs in Fort Portal, which provide a good opportunity for participating farmers to showcase, exchange and learn on crop value addition. These food fairs, organized by PELUM and Rwenzori partners, also feed into the annual national food and seed fairs, which some beneficiaries or other stakeholders from Rwenzori usually attend.

Capacity building is also the result of cross-training between partners or towards some of their beneficiaries, although this aspect of collaboration would benefit from being strengthened. PELUM provided valuable training to JESE and RCA staff on participatory guarantee systems (PGS), organic product certification, and territorial marketing, leading to practical application in the field during the project, with the establishment of a PGS group and agroecological selling points. RCA staff conducted on-farm training on bio-concoctions for Community Agroecological Schools, and KRC offered expertise in business plan development for RCA-supported marketing associations. A KRC Radio journalist was trained by ESAFF's Online Agroecology School for journalists and communicators in 2023.

Sustainability issues

Regarding finance inclusion, sustainability remains a key concern, given the limited capacities of many SACCOs and the need for a clearer strategy for the transition of VSLAs or their consolidation into formal SACCOs. Challenges include weak SACCO capacities and means (wages, premises, record keeping, security issues, etc.), limited loan portfolios, and a lack of social investors (who could contribute to their financial growth). Although membership growth has been good (over 90% increase between 2022 and September 2024, according to figures provided by KRC), SACCOs lack the staff and resources to deploy on the ground and convince more producers to join. Remaining needs encompass SACCO registration, fundraising capacity building, digitalization, and increased staffing. KRC's plan to establish an agroecological fund, financed by SACCO contributions, offers a potential avenue for long-term sustainability.

While there are promising aspects of the Humundi, IdP, and partner collaboration, enhancing joint planning and implementation, particularly in beneficiary targeting and advocacy, would strengthen the program's overall impact and sustainability.

3.1.3. Contribution of common actions to the transformation of Fort Portal's food system

The collaboration between Humundi, IdP, and their partners, while contributing to certain aspects of Fort Portal's food system transformation, lacks a cohesive common strategy, hindering the realization of greater synergies. The high volume and diversity of activities, particularly under Result 3 and Result 5, often appear disconnected from each other and from

other project results, resulting in limited collaborative effectiveness. KRC, the only shared partner, operates with separate teams in distinct geographical areas – food systems in Fort Portal city and financial inclusion in Kabarole district (and 9 other districts) – without clear joint programming. The connection between JESE and RCA's work in rural Kabarole communities and the Fort Portal food system remains unclear. As far as awareness-raising activities are concerned, it should also be recognised that the programme operates at two different levels – in and around Fort Portal (IdP partners) with local actions, and at national or even international level (three of the four Humundi partners) – which makes synergies more complex to find.

Nevertheless, the collaboration has yielded gains in nutrition, food safety, and hygiene awareness among various stakeholders in both urban and rural settings in and around Fort Portal. Improved hygienic practices in public markets, street food vending places, and public eating places have been observed. Stakeholders along the food handling chain have enhanced their knowledge of food safety and quality improvement measures. Food vendors and chefs are increasingly aware of nutritious food, potentially creating new market opportunities for farmers around Fort Portal. For example, street food vendors are starting to incorporate more local and nutritious foods, such as cabbage, into their offerings.

However, challenges persist. Acquiring knowledge does not automatically translate into changed practices, and there is limited evidence of the program influencing consumer demand. It is nevertheless true that the impact of awareness-raising initiatives on changes in food consumption is often difficult to measure. While sensitization on nutrition and food safety can stimulate demand for diverse, organic, and agroecological products, the above results on hygiene and food safety do not always directly align with the core objective of the SIA2 program, which aimed to create an enabling environment for agroecological farming systems.

The "transformation" focus in Fort Portal, under Result 3, is primarily centred on nutritious and safe food, targeting food vendors, consumers (e.g. pupils and parents), and youth producers. However, there is not enough emphasis on environment-friendly and fair-price consumption, and there are only limited linkages with Result 1 and Result 2 activities. It is unclear how many street vendors supported by KRC source ingredients from producers benefiting from Results 1&2 activities. For instance, the origin of potatoes used by these vendors remains uncertain, and they likely do not originate from Karangura hills. In 2024, KRC and IdP carried out a study on vegetable production and consumption in Fort Portal, which is a step in the right direction, as it will enable more work to be done on the connections between local producers and food vendors.

Events such as the Regional Indigenous Seed and Food Fair, led by JESE, and Youth Open Days have raised awareness of agroecological practices in Fort Portal. These events covered a wide range of learning topics, including agroecological product development, bio-pesticide standardization, and social media marketing. However, the participation of project beneficiaries in the food and seed fairs, particularly those from Karangura sub-county, was limited due to budgetary constraints.

The actions supported by PELUM in Rwenzori, as well as its targeting of agroecology partners and stakeholders from this region, reflect the organisation's commitment to supporting the agroecological transition in the region: regional food fairs have been held annually in Rwenzori; at national level, food fairs always have stalls for Rwenzori region exhibitors; at the 2024 National Agroecology Actors Symposium organized by PELUM, the keynote presenter was from Rwenzori, also the chair of Regional Agroecology Actors Platform (RAAP); partners like JESE are active members of PELUM's thematic committee on Agroecological Marketing & Business Development.

In contrast, the Rwenzori region and its stakeholders have so far received relatively less attention in the activities carried out by AFSA and ESAFF. For instance, the selections of Community Agroecology Schools and School Agroecology Clubs are demand-driven, and ESAFF tends to prioritise areas of the country where the organisation is already active, without

any particular consideration of the territory targeted by the project (Rwenzori region). ESAFF works in the Kasese district, which is part of the Rwenzori region, but where IdP and its partners are not active in the context of this project and their support for the transformation of food systems, thus limiting possible interactions.

The collaboration has explored participatory guarantee systems (PGS), with PELUM experimenting in several regions and a coffee marketing association in Karangura selected for a pilot action. However, a more strategic and integrated approach is needed to maximize the collaboration's contribution to the transformation of Fort Portal's food system.

3.1.4. Contribution of common actions to the strengthening of women participation in the management of sustainable food systems

The collaboration between Humundi, IdP, and their partners has made strides in integrating gender mainstreaming into the program, but challenges remain in achieving consistent and impactful results. Overall, there has been little joint action on gender issues by the project partners, and it is therefore difficult to assess the contribution of these joint actions to strengthening women participation in the management of SFS. Attempts to foster cross-linkages with WOUGNET aimed to leverage their gender expertise across program partners in the Rwenzori region. In the project monitoring and evaluation system, Result 6 on gender has specific progress markers. For most partners, gender considerations are also integrated transversally across program actions, thus impacting all five expected results. Notably, women participation in various program activities has so far been high to very high. For example, with regard to financial inclusion, 68% of beneficiaries are women according to project monitoring data.

Interviews indicate that women perceive their voices as being better heard due to their involvement in project activities, leading to improved collaboration and shared decision-making with husbands at the household level, and stronger participation in community-level group activities. However, despite project efforts, gaps persist in the economic empowerment of women, particularly in income-generating activities like poultry development. These activities require further strengthening to ensure women economic advancement.

Implementation of the activities planned under Result 6, focused on gender mainstreaming, has been limited, partly due to the selection of WOUGNET as an implementing partner, which had limited experience in community work. Thanks to its cross-cutting approach to gender issues, the project has nevertheless produced some interesting results. In particular, there have been positive outcomes in women inclusion, self-esteem, and leadership skills through VSLA and various Result 1 activities and approaches, such as IFP and farmer innovators:

- at the family level, the IFP approach promotes the participation of different household members – including women and youth – in the planning process, which enables to take into account the wishes, assets and capacities of each household member, and to assign tasks accordingly;
- at the community level, the project gave women a platform to take leadership positions within their VSLAs as chairpersons, treasurers and responsibility holders in different capacities (approximately 70% of VSLA are led by women, according to JESE).
- RCA has observed a number of positive changes in the cultural habits associated with livestock farming, in particular the roles assigned to men and women depending on the type of animal and the work to be done.

KRC's "orugali" initiative, which facilitates discussions among women about food preparation and sourcing through cooking demonstrations, effectively highlights women's knowledge and know-how. Care groups have emerged as another avenue for improving women's skills and empowerment, with some synergies observed in Karangura between RCA's agroecological production activities and KRC's nutrition initiatives. In Karangura and Kicwamba subcounties, some thirty women leaders were trained by KRC using a training of trainers approach, on

subjects such as breastfeeding, Mid-Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurement, nutritious kitchen gardening, etc. However, clearer linkages with existing activities from other partners, including common geographical targeting, are needed to maximize their impact.

Despite these efforts, the collaboration requires a more cohesive and strategic approach to gender mainstreaming. Strengthening economic empowerment initiatives, ensuring clearer linkages between gender-focused activities and other program components, and enhancing geographical targeting are crucial for improving the program gender-related results.

3.2. Evaluation area 2: Support to social and citizen dynamics favourable to sustainable food systems

3.2.1. Relevance & effectiveness of strategies for raising awareness and mobilizing consumers

The program used several strategies and activities to raise awareness on agroecology (AE). It targeted several actors that include farmers, traders, policy makers, journalists and food consumers. Awareness raising was primarily implemented by PELUM, ESAFF, AFSA at national level, and KRC in the Rwenzori region.

Organisation and participation in events which are linked to agroecology

These events include the annual National Agroecology Actors Symposium (NAAS); the annual Indigenous Food Fair; the annual Land Awareness Week; the annual Agroecological Market Systems Expo (AMASE); the Women's Agroecology Expo; and the Agroecological Youth Summit. Some of the partners (e.g. PELUM) also supported members to participate in several exhibitions in Uganda. One popular exhibition is the Harvest Money which is annually organised by the New Vision, a government media house. PELUM secures space in this exhibition and members are encouraged to attend.

The agroecological events bring together stakeholders from the private sector, civil society, governments, media and the public. Hundreds of people visit stalls showcasing agroecology. The stalls have farmers and entrepreneurs with products that include organic produce, seedlings, processed products, fertilisers, pesticides, and livestock among others. On account of the diversity of participants, these events create spiral information flows which enhance information sharing. The example of the Agroecological Youth Summit of 2023 and 2024 in box 4 sheds light on the relevance of events in the context of the Ugandan and African youth.

Box 4: Relevance of the Agroecology Youth Summit towards climate change, youth and sustainable agriculture

AFSA supported the Agroecology Youth Summit in 2023 in Kenya (first of its kind) which highlighted climate change issues, agriculture and the role of the youth in sustainable agriculture in Africa. The summit brought together 70 youth from 24 countries. They agreed to have a bigger convening in 2024 bringing together 1000 youth, focusing on solutions for agroecological transition. The bigger summit was organized in 2024 bringing together participants from 47 countries (300 physical participants and over 1000 online participants). The youth agreed to come up with country plans, and a number of themes addressing sustainable agriculture challenges. AFSA created a youth wing which at midterm evaluation was developing guidelines for a national level platform for the youth in agroecology. *"We are supporting youth-led innovations, safeguarding land rights for the youth, and building their capacity to meaningfully participate in sustainable farming"*, AFSA staff.

Event participants increase sustainable farming and food consumption awareness levels for the members of the public. Initially, this results in purchases or sharing of contacts but later contributes to changes in perceptions about good feeding. Further, the events draw the attention of the media which produces headline stories for public consumption. The weeks and days leading up to the events are usually associated with media interviews, television and radio talk shows, and social media posts. During events, there are opportunities for participants to share and learn from one another, inspiring innovation, market access, enterprise formalisation, access to finance, and networking which spans time and space. The excerpt in box 5 supports this argument.

Box 5: Participant views from project-sponsored events

"We got communication through the secretariat [PELUM]. We chose to participate in the Annual Agroecological Market Systems Expo (AMASE) because this is an expo that focuses on agroecology products. Once at the expo, we market and showcase what we do. We share information with the public and also make money. We have participated two years in a row and are really happy. People

come expecting to see organic, not contaminated products. They want to see long ago food and good seed without chemicals. Some people are looking for food, others seeds and others want to taste. We serve all of them". AMASE participant.

The events allow for wide knowledge sharing, shaping perceptions and softening positions of consumers, vendors, farmers, policy makers and funders. The events are able to create exposure for farmers, changing their perceptions of what should be done and how. This has helped many of them to do things differently, thereby fostering sustainable farming practices. It is through such initiatives that a decision was made to formulate a national agroecology strategy, for the first time in the history of Uganda.

Creation of the Online Agroecology School

The project has supported creation of the Online Agroecology School for Journalists and Communicators. This initiative was promoted by ESAFF. *"Our hope is that these journalists should be able to report with facts. We give them the right perspectives. If you follow them, you see they are trying",* Project staff. The school has helped to build a network of journalists and communicators around Uganda and Africa working with small-scale farmers to contribute to the national and continental transition to agroecology through disseminating the right information. The journalists communicate stories about AE, helping to reach the public and the policy makers. By midterm evaluation, 50 journalists had been trained and these had published 227 articles on AE. A total of 15 of the 50 trained journalists were given financial support to publish stories about AE. The project had so far trained four cohorts, including one for East Africa as a whole.

Box 6: Content creation among beneficiaries of the agroecology online journalism school

Morris, is a journalist who benefitted from the online school project. He says, *"I used to be an environmental reporter. But when I was introduced to agroecology, I didn't understand it in the beginning but now I learnt that it works closely with the environment. Now I can communicate the message which I understand effectively. A local person may not know that what she is doing is endangering the ecosystem. It is my role as taught by ESAFF to educate people. You can't educate people when you don't have knowledge. Through the agroecology media grant, I was facilitated to learn and to investigate and bring to light what people don't know. I did the first investigative agroecology story on Lwera sand mining and rice growing. This story changed the way rice growing was regulated in Lwera. Furthermore, the project provided me with a platform to communicate my messages. Some of my articles are published in the Agroecology Post. So, this allows me to disseminate information about the need to protect the environment and food."*

Mark is a journalist who is based in the West Nile region. He joined journalism in 2009. He was in the first cohort of journalists trained by the project. Before, writing an article on agriculture was hard. The training allowed him to be able to write detailed information about agroecology. According to him, *"I got mentorship support. We had journalists and mentors. They guided us and allowed us to publish. Through this project we were able to build a network of journalists to work with. We had a session to meet physically and got good contacts. Without experts from the Ministry, it is hard to write a balanced story. We have been able to write stories. We consult each other. I covered the first Regional Agroecology Conference in Nairobi in March 2023. My articles are published by the Watchdog, FAM reports, Daily Monitor and social media. I have a huge social media following. My most recent article was on the use of pesticides and their danger to health. The target was the farmers, consumers and the policy makers who have power to do something about this problem"*.

The testimonies of Morris and Mark (box 6) are indicative of both the need (relevance) to empower professional journalists with the right information and skills, and the effectiveness of the online school strategy. Agroecological orientation of professional journalists can help to have a network of journalists who consistently inform all stakeholders about sustainable agriculture. As evidenced above, the project is able to leverage the strong names of their media houses as well as their own reputations to drive critical information to consumers, farmers and policy makers.

Creation and support for School Agroecology Clubs & Community Agroecology Schools

The project is building on the experience of ESAFF to facilitate creation of Community Agroecology Schools (CASs). These schools operate at the lowest base of the farming pyramid as they bring together smallholder farmers to learn, adopt and promote sustainable farming practices. The evaluation established that these farmer schools operate as dynamic pools of knowledge, providing valuable information on soil conservation, crop rotation, composting, and water management. As well as transferring knowledge, they provide a forum for the exchange of experiential wisdom and traditional knowledge between farmers, fostering a strong sense of community and collective learning.

ESAFF has also supported the creation of School Agroecology Clubs in 21 learning institutions. Under the guidance of teachers, the clubs are made up of students who come together to learn and practice sustainable farming. They do not only learn but are also encouraged to share the same knowledge with their peers, parents and relatives. The relevance of forming School Agroecology Clubs was emphasized by one head teacher who commented thus:

"We are dealing with the young generation. Agriculture is the backbone of Uganda and the country is the food basket for the east African region. We need to encourage the young ones to embrace agriculture. When they try their activities, they will know why things fail or succeed. Most of our parents [to the students] are farmers. We wanted the children to learn agroecology and take home this knowledge. Secondly, the new school curriculum requires us to have clubs. Thus, the introduction of the agroecology club was timely." Head teacher.

AE clubs are relevant not just to raise awareness about sustainable farming but to also shape attitudes and perceptions of the young people about work. Students implement a number of awareness raising activities that include drama, agroecology debates, poem competitions and plays about environmental conservation and sustainable agriculture. The clubs provide a platform for students to get together, learn about sustainable agriculture, implement agroecological practices on campus, and take this knowledge back home. As at midterm, the project had organized two editions of essay competitions, involving over 1600 learners.

Information delivery and awareness campaigns through media

Mainstream media, especially television and radio were used to raise awareness about agroecology and responsible food consumption. This media, together with social media, benefit from the online journalism school initiative. In addition to the stories prepared by the trained journalists, the project staff often held radio and television programs to educate the public about key topics. The issues that featured prominently in the media include campaigns in favour of local food control; promotion of agroecology and sustainable land management practices; climate change and how it affects small-scale farmers; and efforts to protect smallholder farmers' land rights.

There are well crafted reports, interviews, opinion pieces and debates in news reports on televisions, radios and newspapers. Some of the campaigns on these channels have been branded while others appear in the form of talk shows. PELUM and ESAFF appear prominently on national media houses, specifically the New Vision, Daily Monitor, NTV Uganda, NBS TV, the Observer, UBC, CBS and other radio channels and blogs in Uganda. The partners also sponsored some of the farmers and other actors to share information through talk shows. These shows were held on both local and national-level media houses.

The project also uses social media to raise awareness about agroecology. All of the strategic approaches identified above (events, community schools, school clubs, mainstream media and journalism schools) use social media to deliver information. The commonest social media outlets are X, LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook and Instagram. Some of the social media handles belong to the partners (institutions) while others are created as specific campaign hashtags.

The project used traditional media and social media to run campaigns targeting consumers. PELUM has so far implemented the "Know what to eat" campaign which was run to improve

consumer awareness of good feeding, and AFSA organized the “My food is African” campaign. There have also been branded campaigns run through media influencers, and personalities with big following, especially on social media.

Strategies for raising awareness and mobilizing consumers in and around Fort Portal

In the Rwenzori region, project partners have employed a range of strategies to raise awareness on healthy/nutritious food and mobilize consumers in favour of responsible consumption, including radio campaigns, documentaries, cooking demonstrations, and posters. However, the efficacy of these strategies in competing with commercial communication for conventional food remains a significant challenge. KRC’s Food systems team has developed both direct and indirect strategies, encompassing capacity building for the Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs), regular training for 30 journalists on nutrition and food safety, nutritional education initiatives in selected primary schools, as well as awareness-raising and training for street food vendors, care groups, and Village Health Teams (VHTs). Additional strategies include radio talk shows, online TV shows, community barazas[3], as well as policy briefs and press conferences to disseminate results.

Local journalists equipped with knowledge on nutrition and food safety are intended to continually relay information through various media channels. Radio talk shows, particularly those on KRC radio, have been cited as effective by stakeholders, although more regular programming is desired. Sensitization of local and cultural leaders, respected figures in their communities, is also employed to disseminate messages to consumers, leveraging their influential role in shaping attitudes and behaviours. The Indigenous Seed and Food Fair in Fort Portal has contributed to increased consumer awareness of nutritious food and diet diversity.

However, there is a need to clarify and narrow down target groups and develop more specific messaging, such as focusing on organic vegetables or highlighting pesticide contamination of food, leveraging KRC’s food analysis laboratory. The extent to which these strategies have resulted in significant changes in consumer behaviours and practices is not yet measured. Observations from project staff suggest a gap between knowledge and practices, potentially due to the lack of available alternatives, such as organic food (which the program however started to address), or inadequate policies, including weak regulation of the food industry and low enforcement of agrochemical regulations. It must also be recognised that changing consumer practices always takes time, and that actions in this direction will have to be pursued over a sufficiently long period, including the next program.

Interviews with street food vendors indicate that they try to put into practice most of the hygiene measures recommended by the project, but are limited in some cases by constraints that are beyond their control, such as the lack of public bins for peelings and leftovers or the absence of a water point for washing hands. Although they use more vegetables than before, they are not fully aware of where they come from or whether or not they have been treated with agrochemicals.

A lack of knowledge about similar activities implemented by other project partners, such as KRC staff’s unawareness of ESAFF’s Online Agroecology School for Journalists and Communicators, indicates a need for improved inter-partner communication and coordination.

In rural areas where IdP and its partners operate, producers are also primary consumers, underscoring the importance of raising their awareness about nutritious food, hygiene, and food utilization. Similarly, city dwellers involved in small-scale agricultural production require targeted messaging on responsible consumption. A more thorough assessment is needed to determine the effectiveness of these messages in reaching these specific consumer groups.

[3] Community dialogue platforms that engage the local population and their leaders on matters of service delivery.

Overall achievements, challenges and issues

The evaluation team established that all the awareness raising strategies generate and disseminate information on agroecology. While each strategy may have a specific target audience, in reality all the information is able to reach various stakeholders. While the school AE clubs target children, involvement of teachers, parents and the mainstream media implies that adults are also targeted. The information which is prepared by journalists ultimately reaches farmers, consumers, policy makers and even the school children.

However, while these strategies were effective in some respects, the evaluation found that most of the published information in mainstream media, blogs and documentaries is mostly on the supply side without targeted consumer communication to alter their attitudes and habits. Most of the information is about farming and the dangers of using conventional farming methods and the unsustainable farming practices. While this is critical, the information does not use persuasive tones and messages, which the conventional farming promoters use to drive appeal and desire among consumers. This is especially important when it is considered that healthy eating is a rare preference among young people because of factors like easy access to unhealthy foods, affordability, persuasive marketing, and social influences[4].

Food consumption habits are developed during both childhood and adolescence, with the young adults refusing to follow dietary guidelines, and consuming little healthy food[5]. In this regard, it is the School Agroecology Clubs and Community Agroecology Schools that are likely to shape healthy eating habits of young adults. This age group is key because it constitutes about 75% of Uganda's population. The project has run campaigns that target the consumers, specifically the "Know Your Food Campaign" with considerable success. Some manuscripts have been written about indigenous food. However, these have rarely targeted the young consumers.

The evaluation further established that participation in AE events provides opportunities for farmers and youth to learn. It has been documented elsewhere that farmer events facilitate the exchange of products and services while also contributing to members through lectures, training sessions, and technology exhibitions[6]. A number of stakeholders indicated that they had a chance to meet with various stakeholders of the AE sector to share information about recent technologies, agroecology methods and application, legal regulations, common problems and expectations from consumers. As a broader strategy for raising awareness, these events are critical to helping farmers know each other and learn from each other.

Box 7: Effectiveness of trade fairs in shaping knowledge of farmers

"When you get exposure, you see what others are doing. We have now changed our marketing techniques. We saw JERO farm. We saw how he marketed his honey and copied him. We learnt the business language. We also learnt branding, especially the colours and packaging that work, and what words to put there. We used to have a yellow lead but have changed it to brown. We also saw that it is not just the products which give money. People come with machines to brew coffee. Nowadays we also go with our machine and sell the OKRA tea at the expos." Farmer A.

"In the expo, I made friends. This encouraged me. I met so many women and networked with them. I also found people who taught us many things including registration and value addition. Now we are registered as Gades Organic Farm and Training Centre. PELUM finds markets for us because in these expos we meet so many people. The project takes us to radios and we teach the country. Recently I was hosted at CBS FM 88.8." Farmer B.

[4] Shepherd, Harden, Rees, Brunton, Garcia, Oliver & Oakley, 2005. Young people and healthy eating: a systematic review of research on barriers and facilitators.

[5] Sloan, Legrand & Chen, 2008. Factors affecting the choices young people make when selecting healthy food: A conceptual model.

[6] Gutierrez, Júnior, Vieira & Rosa, 2024. Agricultural fairs management: a literature review.

While the events offer several benefits to the farmers, a lot of improvement can be achieved. Improvements are essential in the areas of following up with the farmers and other participants to generate feedback on how they are implementing the newly acquired knowledge and information. This is especially for the youth and women, who often face unique challenges. Women must overcome gender biases and socio-cultural barriers, while young people have to deal with a lack of access to affordable financing, technical knowledge and the concentration issues associated with youth.

Box 8: Kai – a jumpy youth participant in AFSA events

Kai is a young lady in her early 20s. She used to sell liquid soap. One day she saw an advert on the WhatsApp group created by the Agrotourism association. She followed up on the advert and someone invited her to an AFSA organized expo in 2023. While at the expo, one customer wanted moringa and soursop leaves in powder form. She offered to supply. A friend delivered 5kgs. After two weeks the customer got back to her and asked for 10kgs. She also wanted soursop leaves. She supplied. A week before Christmas the same customer asked Kai to supply spices. She looked for them and supplied them. In July 2024, she abandoned the business. While pondering her next step, AFSA advertised the AU summit in Addis Ababa. She applied and AFSA sponsored her to attend. This time she went as a coffee seller. She quickly learned about coffee and how to make coffee sweets. Later she added honey. A participant at the summit offered to train her in barista. By January 2025 she was still wondering whether to make coffee sweets. In her words, Kai says, *"honestly, I haven't stabilized yet but I'm very hopeful. I need to find a mentor and a distribution outlet in Kampala"*.

The example of Kai (box 8) reflects the situation of many young people. The lack of focus, stability and mentorship implies that they need to be followed and receive coherent guidance to ensure they find what to do consistently.

A WhatsApp platform was formed consisting of AE farmers and entrepreneurs after attending one of the events. Members of the platform share a lot of information, including videos, pictures and advice on what to do after participating in trade fairs, as well as market information and opportunities for training. However, it would be important for the project to formally engage each sponsored farmer to understand how they are implementing the knowledge that was acquired from the fairs. This is especially needed because of the inconsistencies in the regularity of the events. These inconsistencies lead to network breakdown and failure to follow up on clients and others who might have solutions to the challenges that the farmers are facing.

While the mainstream media is able to reach a bigger audience in a shorter time, it is difficult to measure the impact of the message shared with the public. Both television and radio stations provide reports on the number of people watching and listening in but they are unable to generate information on changes as a result of the disseminated information. It is only assumed that a given proportion of the listeners take up the information seriously. Targeting a specific group of people is difficult with national-level media houses. It appears that local media outlets have more targeted audiences and can speak directly to populations in a specific geographical area. Thus, targeted use of these stations is likely to be more effective than national-level media outlets.

Online schools represent one of the greatest initiatives to raise awareness. A single influential journalist has the capacity to reach millions of people with a single post. However, after training and getting equipped with the knowledge, the journalists lack consistent funding to undertake investigative and informative stories. *"We need to tell stories but the funds are not there. We need grants to tell stories to change lives. We currently finance ourselves"*. Furthermore, while the project targeted the journalists, it did not target the editors, actors who approve and authorize what must be published or shared with the public. Editors hardly support agroecology because they receive a lot of funds to run promotional projects on conventional agriculture. They also lack full knowledge of agroecology.

Overall, it is evident that social media gives the public new means for receiving, and importantly, providing information. Social media is cheap, has a wider reach, allows

engagement but the program is yet to maximize its benefits. Most of the information on social media is informative, unable to spark engagement and debate. Posts circulate in small circles, with likes averaging 5-15, and 90% of posts generally have no engagement. Most of the information is from the implementers with little that is user-generated, targeted to the final consumer. Small numbers in viewership and engagement are a sign that there are gaps in the packaging, and resonance of the messages with the target audience – suggesting need for more emphasis on relevancy of content. Effective communication requires clear identification and thorough understanding of the target audience's needs and appropriate management of the information provision so that it optimally addresses particular needs and interests[7].

Moreover, the majority of the farmers are rural peasants, with language and internet cost challenges. Market vendors and middlemen have less education and time to read internet articles and watch lengthy videos on YouTube. Farmers and vendors complain about lack of appreciation of agroecological products by the consumers and middlemen, reflected in unwillingness to pay. This is a sign of limited knowledge and awareness. It is well established that social media messages must be short and attractive, delivered with simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, and emotionality. This is how attention and debate are generated.

While a number of media channels are used to raise awareness about agroecology, effectiveness of a given channel depends on the target audience. One of the program managers explains this view quite well:

"For the urban population, social media are the most effective; for local farmers, radio talk shows [success is attested by the high number of phone calls received during the shows]. At the national level, the Food Fair (14th edition) was very effective. The regional one (Indigenous Seed & Food Fair in Fort Portal) was organised in the street, so anybody could access it. TV shows are less effective: very high cost, they are one off and TV coverage is too low in the country (less than 20% of the population)." PELUM staff.

Although the excerpt above suggests that each media channel is able to reach a specific audience, overall, social media influencing and mainstream digital media campaigns are far more effective. Targeted mainstream media campaigns reach far and wide, and with them comes stakeholder confidence. What the project needs to do is to have a well-crafted and more focused communication strategy to guide the messaging, timing, audience identification and manner in which the communication is done. Execution of such a strategy should be well funded, especially given the importance of knowledge in adoption of agroecology and sustainable food consumption practices.

3.2.2. Impact of awareness strategy on agroecology production and responsible consumption

Empowering farmers and youth through events

Farmer participation in program events is a source of learning and provides a platform for them to improve their products. Participation has particularly shaped perceptions and attitudes of farmers towards sustainable agriculture. By creating a community of like-minded people, these events have helped to strengthen convictions about AE as a viable and sustainable agricultural practice. They serve as motivation instruments for the farmers, especially when the beginners meet the experienced AE farmers. Events allow the farmers to meet, share experiences and learn from one another about new technologies and practices that work, helping in addressing challenges that they face in their farms. The farmers also learn about market needs, helping

[7] Rutsaert, Regan, Pieniak, McConnon, Moss, Wall & Verbeke, 2013. The use of social media in food risk and benefit communication.

them to make choices of what to grow, how to add value and the prices to charge. They learn how to present their products and how to reach clients after the events.

Box 9: Impact of agroecology events on farmers

"The symposium is interesting. When you hear about AMASE you think about what to sell. You have to brand and mind about how you look and how people will look at you. Some people come wanting to sell our things online. That's how we began our social media. They even come to our gardens to take pictures and videos. It opened our eyes and we started to do the same. But we also see how others do things. We used to go and were backward but we learnt to improve and better our business. We also attend to see new things. We used to put coffee in tins but found others using porches. We asked fellow exhibitors and they gave us contacts of their suppliers. Nowadays we create intimate relationships with our customers. They come to the expo looking for us. So, this builds trust… When we return home, we adopt new practices. We learn from peers", Farmer C.

Youth participation in AE events has helped to shape their thinking, effectively attracting them to sustainable farming, responsible food consumption and entrepreneurship. Some of the youth who participated in AFSA youth summits have already started on the path of responsible food production and consumption. The attitudes and perceptions of the youth who participated in the summits are supportive of AE. While these are young people, it is expected that in the future these people will practice responsible consumption in their families. The awareness has helped to awaken their entrepreneurial spirits, and this has resulted into creation of sustainable enterprises. The excerpt in box 7 below is helpful in describing the impacts of AE events on the young people.

Box 10: Impact of agroecology events on youth

"My name is S. I am a Graduate mentee with African Women Leaders in Agroecology by PELUM. I live in northern Uganda. I participated in the Youth Expo in 2023. The focus of the expo was agroecology. I conceived a business idea and launched my products during the expo. I made my first sale at the expo. I deal in several millet products (food, porridge and plain millet), simsim butter, peanut butter, and shea nut butter – cold press (for skin) and hot (food). This decision has changed my life. I am now financially independent. I am able to live beyond hand to mouth. I learnt through friends how to make adverts. Someone got interested and gave me a link to speak at a symposium in South Sudan. I took my products to Juba, speaking to 200 people in a symposium. I made a lot of money ($650). Every three months I send my consignments to Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania and South Sudan. I employ youth and women."

Growth in exposure and entrepreneurial opportunities

The project has implemented a number of activities which have increased exposure to the necessary to engender entrepreneurship. These activities include radio talk shows on local stations, community meetings, specific sessions and side-events to showcase local food and AE products during national and regional events, newspaper articles, and social media campaigns. The effect of these activities has been increased availability of knowledge and information to enable people to take up emerging opportunities. One example has been the increase in the number of people looking for sustainable products, leading to some traders creating specific agroecology sales outlets in mainstream food markets in Uganda (e.g. the weekend market in Nsambya).

Additionally, knowledge and exposure from trade fairs and participation in the weekend markets has provided numerous opportunities for enterprising people to add value and produce products for the market. The example below provides further evidence.

Box 11: Growth in exposure and entrepreneurship

Alex is from Kigezi region, southwestern Uganda. *"He first participated in an indigenous fair in 2021. He was selling Irish potatoes and tomatoes. Next time he had improved his packaging, and actually earned better money. In 2023 he had the indigenous brew (enturire). He brought 6 jerrycans but in*

one day, 4 had been bought. The District of Rukiga has identified him as a model farmer. Other NGOs have identified him and are helping him. Our publicity has really helped him", Project Officer.

Adoption and application of agroecology knowledge

School Agroecology Clubs have gardens which have been successfully utilised as knowledge sharing platforms. The school children are able to till the land, make nursery beds, transplant the seedlings and plant their gardens. They use these gardens to learn how and share knowledge on how to look after crops in terms of pest and disease management, weeding, soil management and harvesting. This knowledge helps the learners to compete favourably in school debates and poem writing on AE. The debates and poems are attended by whole school children, providing a perfect platform to raise awareness about AE. This awareness cascades into the local communities and families where the children come from. This has helped in the adoption of agroecological practices in homes where the learners come from. Additionally, the produce from school gardens is consumed by the school, both by the administration and the school children. This market access motivates the learners to continue producing and selling. This helps to sharpen their knowledge and skills of agroecology.

Box 12: Impacts of the School Agroecology Club on students in Mityana district

"The agroecology club in our school was introduced in March 2024 by ESAFF Uganda. The club has 65 members. Although the children made losses last year, this year they reported with seedlings to plant. They have a nursery bed and have already cleared the land where to plant. We have observed a lot of changes. Before, it was difficult to see children digging on their own. But this time, they asked us to show them where they can dig and plant their crops. They even came from holidays with seeds. Earlier, farming was casual but now they put a lot of effort and personal initiative. The children even mobilised their own money to look after their cabbages. These days, they run short of land for their activities. They have so many farming ideas. They are clearly very motivated. Some parents have reported the positive change in the attitude and behaviours of their children." School head teacher and club patron.

The school club initiative has had far reaching consequences on the youngsters. In their own voices, the learners shared important lessons. For instance, one shared thus, *"you need to expect a loss or profit but when a loss is made, do not lose hope. I personally learnt to be hardworking. I learnt new things such as growing cabbages and rearing rabbits. I planted cabbage at home and it is still growing. I planted over 1800 seedlings. I learnt how to make liquid manure and pesticide. I taught these to my friend who is helping my guardians to look after the garden."* Another learner said, *"I also rear rabbits at home. I bought them and built a house for them. My siblings are looking after them while I am at school"*. Other members of the clubs are rearing pigs, chickens, turkeys and eggplants. They started these projects at home only after becoming members of the school AE clubs.

The growth and expansion of the membership of Community Agroecology Schools is reflective of the increasing adoption of agroecological practices at community level. The community schools play a key role in disseminating information about proven agroecological practices. The schools run demonstration gardens which they use to teach members about the best practices for soil management, planting, pest management, and reproduction of indigenous seed. The schools have teachers who share knowledge about agroecology. Consequently, some of the households in the visited communities start adopting sustainable farming and consumption practices.

It should be said that while these schools are effective at delivering the right information, many of them still suffer from challenges which may need further investment in research. Some of the key challenges are associated with management of pests and diseases which are non-responsive to the natural remedies that have been locally developed through the schools. The end result has been loss of whole gardens, sometimes forcing farmers to try conventional approaches to deal with the resistant pests. This problem was also faced by the School Agroecology Clubs.

Secondly, the majority of the gardens are small scale, usually less than 2 acres. The small acreage is yet to convince the sceptics about the feasibility of agroecology as a commercially viable approach, especially in the area of pest and disease management. These schools suffer from counter information from conventional farming promoters, delivered through consistently sponsored radio and TV programmes, and government extension workers, whose training is based on conventional approaches. The workers regularly visit farmers, offering conventional advice and providing free synthetic inputs in some instances.

Additionally, farmers are not yet aware that they need to focus their production on specific products to allow for bulking and collective bargaining. Currently, the majority of them are growing different crops, making them unable to realize economies of scale that come with bulk marketing. This limits the ability of agroecology to create strong economic impact at household level. Overall, therefore, it is difficult to tell the impact of the CAS initiatives as the majority of them are nascent. The wider impact of their activities will be seen over the long term.

Finally, it should be noted that the geographical dispersal of the School Agroecology Club and Community Agroecology School initiatives across the country results in a relatively low level of efficiency and a dilution of the SIA2 program impact.

Changes in consumption not yet measurable

Whereas the program has undertaken a lot of activities on raising awareness among farmers and consumers on sustainable farming and responsible consumption, a lot of work is still needed to change behaviours and perceptions of consumers. Unfortunately, overall, the program has no consistent mechanism of measuring changes in consumer perceptions and behaviours towards responsible feeding. There is also no mechanism of measuring whether the posts, documentaries and articles are impactful. This is an important area to reflect upon by the program management team.

Impacts on responsible consumption in Fort Portal area and the livelihoods of farming families supported under Result 1

In Fort Portal area, the program's strategy to strengthen responsible consumption, focusing on healthy, certified agroecological products from local family farming, has shown some initial steps but faces significant challenges in achieving substantial impact on agroecological production and farming families supported under Result 1, especially the ones in rural areas around Fort Portal. KRC and JESE have attempted to connect chefs from the Chef alliance with local producers for direct supply of organic products, such as vegetables and chicken. However, more concerted efforts are necessary to translate these connections into tangible gains, such as youth-supplied restaurants or local farmers supplying Fort Portal markets.

According to the Coalition of the Willing, one of the citizen initiatives supported by KRC, some achievements include the introduction of local food menus in select restaurants, the establishment of two organic food stalls in Fort Portal's local markets, and improved practices among school feeding caterers, such as reduced fried food offerings. Despite these advancements, it is currently unlikely that these initiatives have significantly impacted the farming households supported under Result 1.

The program's school-based activities, which mainly aim at raising awareness of healthy eating and the environment, can positively influence household consumption choices through schoolchildren. However, their impact has not been adequately measured, and there is limited evidence to support their effectiveness. While the dissemination of nutritious crop seeds and seedlings through schools is valuable, it is important to recognize that agroecology encompasses more than simply planting.

Significant challenges hinder the program progress. Persistent misconceptions among consumers, such as the belief that chemically sprayed vegetables have a longer shelf life and that local foods like yam are associated with poverty, impede the adoption of responsible consumption practices. An interview with one of the chefs in Fort Portal revealed that he was very willing to incorporate organic and locally produced food into his menus, but that customer

demand for local dishes and products had so far been limited. Marketing agroecological products remains a key obstacle, as most consumers cannot afford or often exhibit reluctance to pay a premium for organic or agroecological items.

There is, however, local potential for the development of this organic value chain: a recent survey on vegetable production and consumption in and around Fort Portal revealed that about a quarter of consumers were willing to pay more for organically produced vegetables. According to one of the youths trained by JESE in agroecological production and supported in her business of selling vegetables directly from a local stall on the city outskirts, customers can quickly change their buying habits if they see a difference in the products they buy and the agroecological production approach is explained to them. In her case, she manages to sell vegetables such as cabbage, spinach, potatoes and amaranth for 25 to 40% more than conventional vegetables. And she has considerably increased her number of customers.

3.2.3. Sustainability of the strategies supported beyond program implementation

Sustainability of the different awareness raising strategies is likely to vary by the type of strategy used. Some of the strategies are likely to be sustained by the actors while others are likely to cease as soon as funding stops.

Sustainability of agroecology education activities

The School Agroecology Clubs are likely to be sustained over the long term because they benefit from the school administration. The clubs have a wide catchment area as new learners join the school every year and those who finish, walk away with knowledge and skills. The new competency-based curriculum is likely to further support this model, thus ensuring sustainability. The new education curriculum for secondary schools requires creation of clubs where learners can run projects. And since agriculture is one the subjects taught in schools, and given that it is a low-cost activity in terms of infrastructure, these AE clubs are likely to be sustained. The operation of the clubs happens with the support of the school teachers who are already paid by the school. This additional responsibility naturally falls into the mandate of teachers who teach agriculture, and if the school administration improves emphasis on sustenance of the clubs, these teachers will support them. Moreover, the school administration can provide a market for the products which the children produce.

Box 13: Sustainability requirements for School Agroecology Clubs

"The learners need a lot of motivation. The things which motivate them require money. For instance, we need to give the children gifts. The gift which Mukwanga [national poetry winner] received has attracted a lot of children. We need money to create a standard garden and structures for the livestock which the children will learn from. We also need an agricultural library, with books and computers which can increase the learners' access to information at the different stages of farming and livestock rearing. Once these things are in place, we can take over and manage everything. We are certain that this initiative can survive in our school. We can sustain it beyond the donor funding. This is because the initiative has an impact – it changes the discipline of the children. But we may also need training for all the teachers – currently we only rely on agriculture and geography teachers."
Patron, School Agroecology Club

CASs are community-based and are managed by communities. Their emergency, management and growth follow an organic path, suggesting ability to survive beyond project lifespan. There are a few essential elements that are likely to influence the success of these schools. The first is that the schools must have well planned demonstration farms. Their effects surpass increased productivity and profitability to encompass enhanced capacity for adaptation, improved environmental sustainability, improved quality of life, and empowerment of farmers. When people come together to learn from a common site, benefits such as social networking and peer-to-peer learning emerge, and this is the foundation for the emergence of social capital that is key towards social-economic transformation.

Secondly, sustainability of the CASs will depend on how well the capacity of the schools is built. Demonstration sites are one part of capacity building but it is important to pay attention to adoption of a standard curriculum, technical knowledge of the leaders and teachers, strengthening of governance structures, creating market access for the members' produce, and quality assurance. Once these elements are put in place, the schools are likely to live beyond the project.

Sustainability of online school and media channels

The strategy to create the online school of journalism was aimed at creating a pool of professional journalists to produce content on AE. The journalists are already professional communicators that once trained and recruited into agroecology are likely to continue the work. Indeed, many of them continue to create content, using personal resources. One of the journalists remarked thus: *"I was in church and explained what conventional farming is. I was answering a question on why people die young. Everyone was interested. The pastor picked it up and preached about it for close to 20 minutes. This was a breakthrough for me"*. The journalists have their own networks through which they disseminate information.

As long as they are able to create the stories, they can always be paid. Payment for the stories serves as an incentive to continue creating stories about agroecology. As one of the journalists interviewed put it: *"We have to keep to good journalism – write the story well, take good pictures. The best is to stick to good journalism. The Monitor [publications] will pay for the story. Our stories are paid for".* However, for sustainability, a deliberate relationship has to be built with the media houses, specifically with editors at various levels. Since one editor can influence dozens of journalists, it would be a good idea to onboard editors from the leading media houses.

Strategies such as television and radio campaigns, talk shows and advertisements are quite expensive. These activities are resource-intensive. A national level media house will charge about UGX 10 million per month to run a specific advert. Newspapers are even more expensive yet they have no obvious mechanisms of measuring reach. Besides the media houses, events are also quite expensive as venues have to be paid for and the participants need subsidized services. It is thus unlikely that these activities can be continued without project funding.

Main barriers to sustainability at country level

In discussing sustainability of the awareness raising strategies, it is key to understand that awareness for sustainable farming and good feeding is still weak in Uganda. This weakness implies that it may not be plausible to stop the awareness campaigns across all media channels, especially since each channel serves a specific audience. There are concerns among AE actors that consumer attitudes and awareness remain a major obstacle to sustaining production. The excerpt in box 14 indicates that there is a big gap in the awareness levels of AE, at various levels: policy makers, farmers and consumers.

Box 14: Causes of limited knowledge and awareness about agroecology

"The knowledge currently available is from the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) which is in favour of conventional agriculture. People with agroecology information are few, and are in civil society organisations. They are trying to raise awareness but the voices are yet to create a meaningful impact. We have agriculturists in research but may not have the exposure on agroecology. Agroecology has for a long time lacked policy support until about 2019 when the national organic policy was formulated. Lack of policy support affects curriculum in schools, including agricultural schools. We had sustainable practices for generations but didn't do research on what works and doesn't work, did not develop technologies and thus could not train our people in school... Most consumers think that what is glittering is healthy but this is a lie. Little is on television about agroecology. It is the conventional people who have the money and are everywhere in the media."
Staff from MAAIF

The excerpt shows that there is limited appreciation of sustainable products. The consumers still prefer conventional products, and lack of knowledge makes it difficult to distinguish

between conventional and sustainable products. Moreover, poor feeding habits increase with increase in household incomes.

The proponents of sustainable farming have to contend with counterproductive information on conventional agriculture. The promoters of conventional agriculture shape the narrate on what to eat and how to produce through relentless persuasive advertising. They also benefit from the knowledge dissemination among government extension workers, other farmers who have no knowledge of agroecology, conventional agro-input suppliers, and agricultural training institutions. These actors leverage on the lack of demonstration farms for agroecology, inability to deal with certain pests and diseases and lack of consistent market presence.

Moreover, sustainable products cost way higher than conventional products – in a country with high poverty levels, such pricing is likely to discourage consumption of sustainable products. There are also trust issues regarding whether what farmers call sustainable is actually sustainable products. The lack of designated consistent markets where informed consumers can find products compounds this problem. Only a few weekend markets exist. Small stalls exist in some markets but these are also located at the back of the markets – many of these stalls often lack adequate quantities of products to sell. Currently everyone supplies at the same time and agroecological products disappear from the market at the same time.

Currently, the mindset among most farmers is that it is conventional farming that makes money. The program is yet to produce large scale farmers to convince other big farmers that agroecology can be commercially viable. It is therefore important to continue with the awareness activities until such a time that a critical mass of consumers, policy and farmers is attracted to the agroecology practice.

Sustainability of awareness strategies in Fort Portal area

The potential sustainability of the program's supported strategies and dynamics varies across different initiatives. For instance, school gardens face challenges due to extended holiday periods, which disrupt continuity and make restarting activities difficult. But it should be stressed that the Ministry of Education is increasingly instructing that schools should host thematic clubs on gardening/agriculture, which is a positive sign in terms of the program's institutional ownership and sustainability. In the same way, care groups and VHTs benefit from being a model promoted by the Ministry of Health and are well-embedded within communities, enhancing their long-term viability.

Strategies aimed at fostering adherence and adoption of better food safety and nutrition practices among economic operators and consumers rely on Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs). These permanent institutions, partly composed of local government agents, possess limited financial resources and depend on external support, such as from KRC, for routine operations. While NCCs gather diverse local government departments and expertise, their primary focus is on coordinating nutrition stakeholders and supervising awareness actions, rather than actively defending and informing consumers.

KRC has also collaborated with the Coalition of the Willing (CoW), a consumer advocacy group initiated in 2013. This group, comprising representatives from various food sector stakeholders, including food ambassadors[8], street food vendors, market vendors, restaurants, farmers, meat and dairy value chain actors, media, and teachers/schools, actively supports the program's consumer awareness strategies. Some of its members have benefited from KRC's capacity-building activities. However, the CoW lacks permanent funding sources, and its activity level is highly dependent on external support. Furthermore, its limited visibility among IdP and other project partners beyond KRC raises concerns about the potential for them to take over and sustain project activities.

[8] Leaders identified to influence behaviour change of their communities towards healthy diets.

Therefore, while certain strategies, such as thematic clubs in schools, care groups and VHTs, exhibit strong sustainability potential, others, like initiatives reliant on NCCs and the CoW, face challenges related to funding and institutional support. As far as support for schools is concerned, the potential to upscale and increase cost efficiency should be the subject of further analysis in order to better define the activities of the next program, as it is certain that the project partners will not be able to cover a large number of schools with the current intensive approach and tools. Lessons could be learned from IdP programmes in other countries, including Belgium.

3.3. Evaluation area 3: Support to territorial food governance dynamics in Rwenzori region

3.3.1. Existence of consultation forums and dynamics supported by the project, and their relevance to the project objectives

The project supports several consultation forums and dynamics, primarily at the Fort Portal city level, aimed at enhancing stakeholder interaction and promoting sustainable food systems. Result 3 of the program emphasizes increasing awareness and improving interaction among diverse stakeholders, including family farmers, food vendors, restaurants, civil society organizations, local government committees, and consumers.

Nutrition Coordination Committees (NCCs) are a key component of this strategy, according to KRC. Kabarole district boasts the only operational NCC in Uganda with a nutrition action plan, along with 15 sub-county level NCCs and one city-level NCC. These committees play a crucial role in coordinating nutrition stakeholders and planning nutrition actions. Membership encompasses representatives from all local government departments, the business sector, religious and cultural leaders, academia, and the media. NCCs influence budget development processes at various levels (district, city and sub-county) and focus on nutrition and public awareness, addressing issues like food handling, hygiene, and cultural barriers to breastfeeding. They also promote locally produced food through initiatives like the “orugali” program (which was initially developed by KRC to profile and broadcast local traditional foods and recipes). However, their direct engagement with agroecological transition, sustainable food systems, and sustainable environment management remains limited. While they bridge gaps between local government departments and communities, they operate with limited budgets and resources.

The Coalition of the Willing (CoW), a multi-stakeholder platform focused on Fort Portal city, aims to influence consumer practices and policy decisions on food-related issues. Members meet quarterly and develop annual plans. Members of the CoW have also been involved in the Fort Portal Food System Lab, an initiative supported by the EU-funded HealthyFoodAfrica project (currently closing), which adopts a multi-stakeholder approach to address bottlenecks in the supply of healthy and safe foods. KRC’s work with the informal food sector, especially street food vendors, involves supporting associations, liaising with local councils, developing improved stall prototypes, providing training on food handling and hygiene, and conducting joint monitoring and inspections with urban authorities.

The Regional Agroecology Actors Platform (RAAP), comprising 11 members[9] from NGOs, CSOs, universities, and farmer unions, aims to increase awareness of agroecology and advocate for its integration into public policies. The program initiated this platform, which was officially launched in October 2024. This was done with the support of PELUM, with the ambition to set up decentralised working groups. The RAAP supported the 2024 Indigenous Seed and Food Fair. One of its planned activities is to generate evidence through demonstration farms (using funding other than that of the SIA2 program). Meetings between members of the platform have so far been irregular. It is still too early to know whether this platform will really work, which will depend above all on the determination of its members to make it a relevant platform for the transformation of food systems in the region.

While these consultation forums and dynamics contribute to stakeholder engagement and awareness, their relevance to the program’s broader objectives, particularly regarding agroecological transition and sustainable environment management, varies. NCCs are very relevant to awareness raising and policy advocacy on nutrition, hygiene and food safety. Because of its history, composition and roots in Fort Portal, the CoW is well placed to influence consumers and the various entrepreneurs in the city’s food sector, especially street food

[9] Decentralized agricultural services are not members of RAAP but usually take part in meetings.

vendors. The RAAP would be particularly relevant for coordinating actions and efforts in the field of agroecological production, including the question of input supply.

3.3.2. Level of involvement of target groups in discussions and decisions related to food systems

The level of involvement of target groups in discussions and decisions related to food systems varies across different stakeholders. Farmers and farmer groups have likely experienced a strengthening of their position at the sub-county level, and have established more equitable linkages with certain food system stakeholders, such as traders, at higher levels. However, a significant gap remains in the absence of a dedicated forum at the district or Rwenzori level for them to directly influence decision-making and promote their agroecological practices and products. Marketing associations serve as an initial step for grassroots producers to voice their concerns and interests.

Consumers are represented through their involvement in the Coalition of the Willing. However, the representativeness of this body and its ability to accurately reflect the diverse interests of different consumer categories - urban/rural, young/old, women/men, rich/poor - are difficult to assess.

Food vendors are well-represented through the Street Food Vendors Association, which has been specifically targeted and supported by KRC. The Chef Alliance, comprising some 90 chefs from about 30 restaurants, also provides a platform for food vendors to engage in food system discussions.

Civil society organizations and platforms play a role through their representation in NCCs, potentially influencing local food policies through the NCCs' action plans. The Coalition of the Willing also includes representatives from ten different types of civil society actors, broadening the scope of stakeholder engagement.

While these various platforms and associations facilitate some level of target group involvement, a more structured and inclusive approach is needed to ensure that all stakeholders, particularly farmers and consumers, have meaningful opportunities to participate in discussions and decisions related to food systems. The creation of dedicated forums at higher territorial levels, coupled with efforts to enhance the representativeness of existing platforms, would contribute to a more equitable and participatory food system.

3.3.3. Measures taken by the project partners to integrate their actions into a broader reflection on the transformation of food systems

The project partners have undertaken various measures to integrate their actions into a broader reflection on the transformation of food systems, with varying degrees of success. To achieve Result 3, and make local food systems more sustainable, the project partners were expected to facilitate multi-stakeholder processes, including coordination and local policy reforms, develop strategic partnerships and carry out studies to better understand these food systems.

Coordination efforts on agroecology have been pursued through the Regional Agroecology Actors Platform. However, the platform consolidation faces challenges related to resource and funding limitations for arranging meetings. JESE, in collaboration with PELUM, has supported the RAAP by developing the platform's charter and establishing linkages with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF). PELUM provides advisory support on platform organization.

Support for local government structures and existing NCCs has been a key strategy. KRC has aimed to strengthen good governance at the NCC level by providing financial support for meetings and assisting in the preparation of quarterly nutrition status reports. Partners have participated in strategic planning on nutrition issues, leading to achievements such as

improved hygiene and food safety in local markets and retail outlets. The development of a food safety ordinance in Fort Portal City and Kabarole District provides a legal framework for food safety. Some of the committees are already managing to meet the budget standard set, which is to devote at least 2% of the local council's budget to nutrition and food safety. However, challenges persist, including a lack of means to enforce local policies and regulations through regular monitoring. NCCs also rely heavily on KRC and external expertise on nutrition and face fundraising challenges.

Regarding the scientific or evidence base for action planning on sustainable food systems, the program document emphasizes the need for robust research on the food system and its dynamics, coupled with the dissemination of accessible knowledge to local stakeholders. KRC has contributed by publishing two studies in November 2024: an assessment of vegetable production and consumption in Fort Portal, which has informed new programming by IdP and partners, and a study on the contribution of agroecological farming practices to food security and nutrition outcomes in Karangura.

The Kabarole District NCC has also mentioned two series of food laboratory analyses supported by KRC, focusing on milk contamination and tainted meat sold in retail outlets. The results were used to educate the general public (with an important role for journalists also supported under the program) and assign responsibility to stakeholders in the value chains concerned. As a result, the central government sent a delegation to Fort Portal to investigate reported breaches of standards in dairy products and hold consultations with producers and distributors of these products.

While these measures demonstrate a commitment to integrating actions into broader food system transformation efforts, a more strategic and coordinated approach is needed to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. Strengthening the RAAP, ensuring the financial and operational independence of NCCs, and consistently generating and disseminating relevant research are crucial steps in this process.

4. Conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Overall assessment

By adopting a holistic approach, that of sustainable food systems, the program aimed to create a favourable environment for small-scale producers, notably the ones supported in the Rwenzori region. It should be emphasised that this is a new approach for IdP in this country, but that KRC had already been experimenting with it for several years in the Fort Portal area.

Some strategies and activities have worked better than others, and Humundi, IdP and their partners have shown a good degree of flexibility in conducting activities to try to focus their efforts on those that work best. This first program based on the sustainable food systems approach is showing promising results, which will benefit from being consolidated in the coming months and during future programs.

In Fort Portal area, the objective of linking the demand created by the numerous awareness-raising campaigns and actions, on the one hand, and the farming families supported by the project in the rural areas around the city, on the other, was only partially achieved and requires continued efforts.

The evaluation highlights areas for improvement, particularly with regard to the integration of the various project components, the need for a more targeted approach and the challenges associated with raising awareness of sustainable food systems. It also highlights the importance of consolidating a territorial approach, involving farmers more centrally in the food governance dynamic and ensuring that activities under different results are interconnected and strengthen each other (e.g. focus on food system dynamics where a direct link to farmer benefits can be created).

Program management and coordination

The evaluation highlighted opportunities for enhancing collaboration and synergy among Humundi, IdP, and their local partners, particularly in areas beyond their shared involvement with KRC. While Humundi's focus on autonomy and IdP's close follow-up reflect diverse partnership cultures, these differences present a chance to align action plans and foster more robust knowledge sharing. By addressing these areas, the program can better achieve its common goals and maximize its impact in the Rwenzori region. In particular, the Rwenzori RAAP can provide an essential link between the construction and dissemination of local experiences on the one hand, and the promotion of evidence-based regional and national advocacy on the other. A functional RAAP could thus strengthen the synergies between the actions supported by IDP and Humundi.

Integration of project components

Some of the project components, including farm inputs, market linkages, urban farming, and access to finance, present opportunities for enhanced collaboration and synergy among partners and with other stakeholders. Production challenges, such as bio-pesticide effectiveness, require collaborative solutions. Market linkages between farmers and Fort Portal buyers need strengthening. The high potential of urban farming can be further realized through research and evidence generation. Access to finance initiatives by KRC can be optimized by focusing on targeted support within IdP's operational areas and developing agroecology-specific financing tools.

Program effectiveness and efficiency

The evaluation identified an opportunity for greater focus and strategic prioritization within the program. While exploring diverse strategies has been beneficial, the complexity of food systems demands a more targeted approach. The program's core strengths in supporting sustainable productive and commercial dynamics (Result 1 and Result 2), coupled with its finance component, should be more effectively integrated with other project results. Moreover,

building upon existing capacity-building efforts by strategically developing high-potential value chains will amplify the program's overall impact.

Consolidation of a common territorial approach

The territorial approach, particularly in Fort Portal and the broader Rwenzori region, presents a valuable framework for addressing food system challenges and increase synergies. However, its effectiveness could be significantly enhanced through a more integrated implementation strategy. This could be achieved by placing greater emphasis on the development of localised value chains, which is what IdP and its partners initiated in 2025 around Fort Portal through a new project called Kulkya Kurungi.

Awareness on sustainable food systems and responsible consumption

This first collaboration between Humundi and Ugandan partners has clearly led to progress in raising awareness of agroecology and responsible consumption, both nationally and at more local levels. Agroecology events are helpful in fostering learning, innovation, networking, value addition and market access. The trained journalists have changed their perceptions of agroecology and have been able to report about the subject with tangible results. AE education activities (school clubs and CASs) empower schoolchildren, small-scale farmers and community members with knowledge and tools to adopt sustainable farming practices. They also serve as change agents, aiding in shifting perceptions and practices in food consumption.

The evaluation of this component of the project highlights three points for attention: i) the "food system" concept risks becoming too broad, diluting focus and impact on specific stakeholders; ii) agroecological food product communication struggles against the conventional food industry's dominant presence in shared media channels; iii) limited engagement on social media implies that the communication is not yet hitting the specific needs of the target audience. While the program has made initial attempts to strengthen responsible consumption, a more targeted and strategic approach is needed to achieve a meaningful impact on agroecological production and the livelihoods of farming families.

In the Rwenzori region, many strategies have been tested, various messages were passed, sometimes with limited coordination with partners in Kampala, even though similar activities were being carried out. Although each strategy has its own relevance to different target groups, it is difficult to know whether they brought significant changes of behaviours and practices at consumer level. For more coherence with other program activities, there is a need to clarify, narrow down the target groups and make more specific messages

Territorial food governance dynamics in the Rwenzori region

The program has fostered various food governance dynamics, each with its own relevance to the transformation of food systems and with interesting potential for the future. However, it has insufficiently engaged farmers and farmer groups, the core of the agroecological transition, so that they can be united and play a representative role in the food system dynamics and the related decision making.

Several studies carried out by KRC as part of the project or prior to it have enabled to gain a better understanding of the food systems in the Fort Portal region, particularly with regard to the vegetable value chains. A more comprehensive understanding of territorial market dynamics, crucial for smallholder farmer livelihoods and diversified food systems, could nevertheless be useful. Mapping territorial markets can assist producer organizations in better monitoring the markets where they work and advocating for public policies supporting these markets as primary outlets for small-scale farmers. It also serves to support members of producer organizations in productivity improvement, production planning and marketing strategies[10].

[10] FAO, 2023. Mapping of territorial markets - Methodology and guidelines for participatory data collection. Third edition. Rome. https://doi.org/10.4060/cb9484en

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this evaluation, the key recommendations are outlined below. Their level of priority is indicated, from very high to medium. The entity responsible for each recommendation ("lead partner") is clearly identified. The "associated pathways" aim to explain the general recommendations and indicate the more concrete actions or approaches to be implemented.

	Main recommendations	Associated pathways	Lead partner	Priority
1	Further improve synergies in **program management and coordination**	Move beyond annual meetings and establish more regular, structured communication channels between all partners, including PELUM, AFSA, and ESAFF, to foster a shared understanding of project activities and goals Address the knowledge gap of Kampala-based partners regarding Rwenzori region activities by facilitating regular field visits and information sharing Establish clearer guidelines for the joint management of the project, particularly with regard to the planning of activities and the preparation of brief reports enabling each partner to be more aware of the activities (planned, in progress, completed) of the other partners Continue to support agroecology coordination efforts in the Rwenzori region by consolidating the RAAP	Humundi & IdP	High
2	In the future program, develop an approach that is both **more targeted and better integrated** around the central axes of sustainable production & marketing	Prioritize and select the most relevant actions for the specific context of the Rwenzori region, rather than attempting to address all aspects of food systems simultaneously Structure all project results and activities around the core components of sustainable production, commercial dynamics, and finance, ensuring better integration and synergy Establish clearer roles and responsibilities among implementing partners in the finance component, leveraging their respective expertise for greater efficiency and impact	Humundi & IdP	High

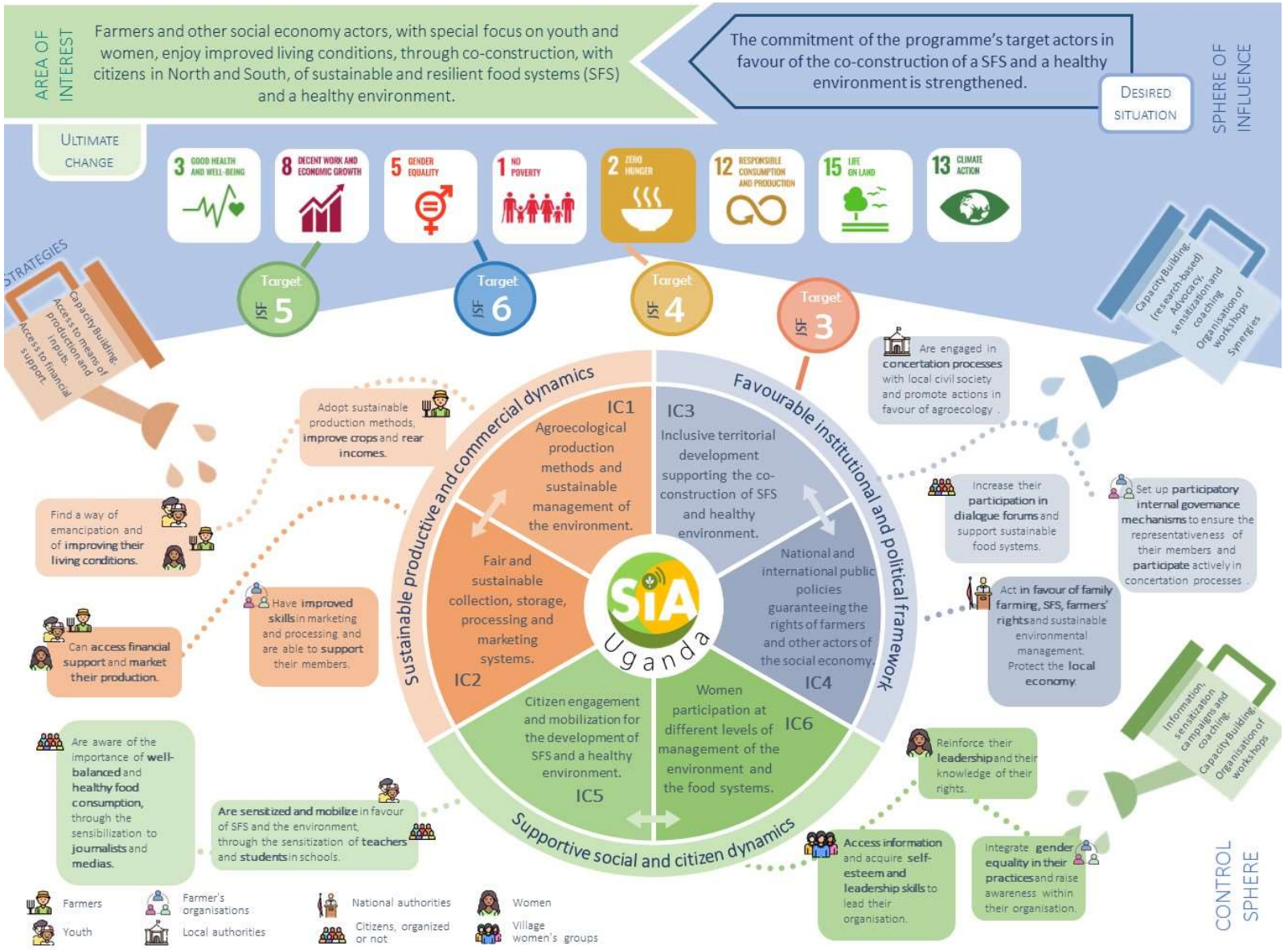
	Main recommendations	Associated pathways	Lead partner	Priority
3	Enhance the effectiveness and adoption of **agroecological inputs**, such as bio-pesticides and bio-fertilizers, through a comprehensive approach that includes collaborative research, standardization and capacity building	Address the challenges of bio-pesticide effectiveness and cost through collaborative research and development Conduct further research on bio-pesticide and bio-fertilizer preparation, standardization and application at the farm level Organize more exposure visits and advanced training for project staff on agroecological innovations like bio-pesticides and bokashi composting	IdP & KRC	High
4	Support smallholder farmers who adopted agroecology in **market access**, and strengthen market linkages with buyers (including street food vendors, restaurants, etc.)	Support farmers to specialize in specific enterprises / value chains, form cooperatives, and ensure quality standard Help farmers identify appropriate markets for their agroecological products (including export markets if relevant) Explore the use of participatory guarantee systems (PGS) to build consumer trust in agroecological products In Fort Portal area, continue to support marketing associations in product certification, transportation and storage facilities	PELUM, AFSA & ESAFF JESE & RCA	High
5	Build on the potential of **urban farming** in Fort Portal context in order to extend it to more beneficiaries, particularly young people	Strengthen research and evidence generation through collaborations with institutions like Mountains of the Moon University (with which IdP has already collaborated during the previous project), which plans to launch a PhD program in agroecology in 2025	IdP & JESE	Medium
6	Strengthen **financial support for agroecological practices** by aligning efforts and enhancing awareness among key stakeholders	Focus on supporting SACCOs in areas where IdP and its partners are active, maximizing the impact of financial inclusion initiatives Develop and promote financing tools specifically designed to support agroecological transitions, such as KRC's proposed loan fund for the production and trade of bio-concoctions Educate commercial banks and financial institutions in Fort Portal on agroecological principles and financing options	KRC	Medium

	Main recommendations	Associated pathways	Lead partner	Priority
7	In Fort Portal area, put greater emphasis on the development of **localised, high-potential value chains**	Prioritize support for crops with high nutritional value and strong local market demand, such as sweet potatoes and pumpkins, to maximize impact on both producer and consumer nutrition Concentrate on developing value chains that are tailored to the specific strengths and market opportunities within the territory Identify and develop solutions with producers for preserving and processing vegetables and other fresh produce	IdP, JESE & RCA	Very high
8	In current program in Fort Portal area, **streamline and narrow down** the consumer awareness raising focus	For KRC Food systems team: have more intensive work, more focused, with a smaller number of stakeholders, target groups and beneficiaries Map similar activities between the implementing partners, and look for complementarities, for example on capacity building of journalists and school activities Specifically, regarding awareness raising activities in schools: streamline the approaches of the different partners, use school vegetable gardens as a learning/demonstration tool, not as the purpose	KRC & JESE	Medium
9	In future programs in Fort Portal area, enhance **awareness and adoption** of sustainable food systems and responsible consumption through a targeted and collaborative approach	Narrow down the focus and be as precise as possible i.e. target specific messages for specific stakeholders Look for more synergies and exchange of practices with other projects/NGOs, e.g. on activities in schools (with Common Ground Project regarding kitchen gardening; SNV who look at promoting local milk consumption, etc.) Evaluate and refine the current intensive support model for individual schools by leveraging IdP's expertise in Belgium, and identify cost-effective strategies to scale up the school activities	KRC & JESE	High

	Main recommendations	Associated pathways	Lead partner	Priority
10	Strengthen and refocus the geographical scope of **agroecology education activities**	Align School Agroecology Club activities and geographical targeting with all project partners for greater impact Provide learning materials to School Agroecology Clubs, and support the creation of libraries and the development of improved gardens combined with small-scale livestock farming Fortify Community Agroecology Schools with accessible demonstration sites, standard curriculum, instructor training, improved governance, and market access Introduce entrepreneurship, financial literacy and marketing in the training modules for CASs, ELUM centres and School Agroecology Clubs Promote networking and peer-to-peer learning across school clubs and CASs by organizing more study tours and exchange visits, including with program beneficiaries in the Rwenzori region	ESAFF	Medium
11	Design an agroecology **communication strategy** that effectively reaches the different types of target audience, from grassroots producers to (young) consumers	Use a multi-pronged approach to awareness creation with print, broadcast, and social media together for maximum impact Focus on engaging, interactive messaging to shape public perception Leverage local media (radio/TV stations) and experts, including teachers and community leaders from agroecology programs (school clubs and CASs), for grassroots education Develop a social media and online communication strategy, including monitoring & evaluation mechanism for impact measurement Consistently train mainstream media editors to increase agroecology coverage Target government officials, including policymakers and extension workers to spread agroecology knowledge	PELUM, AFSA & ESAFF	Very high

	Main recommendations	Associated pathways	Lead partner	Priority
12	Support the rollout of the **National Agroecology Strategy**	Support the development of agroecology research in universities and agricultural research institutes Influence the evolution of curricula for agricultural extension workers	PELUM	Medium
13	Strengthen the **participation of farmers and farmer organisations** in shaping sustainable food systems	Prioritize the adoption of a territorial market approach, leveraging FAO methodologies, to empower farmers and farmer groups with market intelligence and advocacy tools	IdP	Medium

Annex 1: Feed Good program's Theory of Change diagram



Annex 2: List of persons/entities met

- **Program team**

Name	Organisation	Position
Lieven Peeters	Iles de Paix	Country Director
Eric Akera	Iles de Paix	Program Manager
Philippe Van Gerwen	Iles de Paix	M&E Officer
Amanya William	JESE	Program Manager
Felix Kiiza	JESE	Field Officer
Consolate Kobugabe	JESE	Field Officer
Sam Mwanguhya	JESE	Field Officer
Mohammed Ahamed Shariff	KRC	Executive Director
Violet Kanyiginya	KRC	Head of Food Security & Agribusiness Unit
Jared Mugisa	KRC	Microfinance and Agribusiness Manager
Charles Mugisa	KRC	Microfinance Officer
Eric Oteba	KRC	Food Systems & Nutrition Program Manager
Caroline Uwera	KRC	Field Officer
Sib Elinkto Elisha	RCA	Program Manager
Lamark Muhindo	RCA	Field Officer
Stella Lutalo	Humundi	Country Representative
Josephine Akia	PELUM	Country Coordinator
Moses Onen	PELUM	Program Manager - Advocacy
Doreen Kyampaire	AFSA	Executive assistant of the Country Coordinator
Abbot Ntwali	AFSA	Program Officer
Nancy Mugimba	ESAFF	National Coordinator
Adrine Atwine	ESAFF	M&E Officer
Rashida Kabanda	ESAFF	Communication Officer
David Olirngi	ESAFF	Program Assistant

- **Project partners and beneficiaries – interviews**

Name	Organisation	Position
Clovis Kabaseke	RAAP	Chairperson / Mountains of the Moon University
Josephine Nakanwagi	ISSD / Common Ground Project	Regional Coordinator
not recorded	Kabarole District NCC	Chairperson / Health Dept
not recorded	Kabarole District NCC	Member / Health Dept

Name	Organisation	Position
not recorded	Kabarole District NCC	Member / Education Dept
not recorded	Kabarole District NCC	Member / Communication Dept
not recorded	Fort Portal City NCC	Chairperson / Trade Dept
not recorded	Fort Portal City NCC	Member / Economic planning Dept
not recorded	Fort Portal City NCC	Member / Community-based service Dept
not recorded	Coalition of the Willing	Member / Food ambassador
not recorded	Coalition of the Willing	Member / Street Food Vendors
not recorded	Coalition of the Willing	Member / Chef Alliance
not recorded	Coalition of the Willing	Member / Teacher Association
not recorded	Fort Motel (restaurant)	Chef
not recorded	-	Street food vendor / Fort Portal
not recorded	-	Beneficiary youth / Fort Portal
not recorded	-	Beneficiary youth / Fort Portal
not recorded	-	Beneficiary youth / Fort Portal
not recorded	-	Beneficiary farmer / Kicwamba S/C
not recorded	-	Beneficiary farmer / Kicwamba S/C
not recorded	-	Beneficiary farmer / Kicwamba S/C
not recorded	-	Farmer innovator / Kicwamba S/C
not recorded	-	Farmer innovator / Kabambiro S/C
not recorded	-	VSLA member / Karangura S/C
not recorded	-	Beneficiary farmer / Karangura S/C
not recorded	-	Beneficiary farmer / Karangura S/C
Mibiiri Davies	Karangura Peak cooperative	Secretary Manager
Ssebulime Allan	Central Archdiocesan Province - Caritas Association (CAPCA)	Manager/Executive Director/Member of PELUM Uganda Country Board
John Kiwagano	Slow Food	-
Erina Irene Twiriire	-	Beneficiary - AWOLA Mentee
not recorded	-	Participant in Indigenous food & seed fair
Buseenze D. Lutaaya	DAMASCO Wakiso	Coordinator
Mama Esther / Ssebaggala Milly	Gades Organic Farm and Training Centre	Founder
Nantume Sarah	RUCID Mityana	Head of Programs
Muhoozi Maurice	Uganda Tourism Board/Observer	PRO/Journalist

Name	Organisation	Position
Marko Taibot	Daily Monitor and Cooperator Magazine	Journalist
Kabwana Paul	Farmer	ESAFF Mukono Chairperson
Tadeo Mulongo	St Joseph Naama Modern S.S.S	Head Teacher
Ssekiti Umar	St Joseph Naama Modern S.S.S	Agroecology Club Patron
Stella Aber	-	Beneficiary - Entrepreneur/Graduate Mentee
Kaikara Babra	-	Beneficiary - Entrepreneur/Graduate Mentee
Alex Lwakuba	MAAIF	Commissioner, Crop Production

- **Project partners and beneficiaries – focus group discussions**

Name of group / entity	District	Subcounty	Type of Group	Participants		
				Total	Male	Female
Kihondo Farmers Marketing Association	Kabarole	Kicwamba	Marketing association (banana)	5	3	2
Kirangara Upper	Kabarole	Kicwamba	VSLA	4	1	3
Karangura Coffee Farmers SACCO	Kabarole	Karangura	SACCO	4	1	3
n/a	Kabarole	Karangura	Leaders from 9 care groups	9	1	8
Kabambiro Farmers Marketing Association	Kamwenge	Kabambiro	Marketing association (maize)	8	6	2
Kamabale Tukurakurane	Kabarole	Karangura	Marketing association (coffee)	5	3	2
Nyakitokoli United Farmers Group	Kabarole	Karangura	Marketing association (coffee)	5	3	2
Ntanzi Community Agroecology School	Mukono	Ntanzi	Community AE School	35	15	20
Magongolo Community Agroecology School	Mityana		Community AE School	18	4	14
St Joseph Naama Modern S.S.S	Mityana	Naama	School AE Club	28	18	10
				121	**55**	**66**

Annex 3: Field mission schedule

Day	Date	Location	Activity	Comments
M	13/01/2025	Kampala	Arrival at Entebbe airport + travel to Kampala + Briefing with Humundi Country Rep.	
T	14/01/2025	Kampala	Start-up meeting with Humundi & partners (PELUM, AFSA & ESAFF) Interviews with project participants/beneficiaries Interview with PELUM staff	Project participants/beneficiaries: 1 Slow Food staff, 1 farmer from Rukiga District, 1 farmer from Mityana District, 1 farmer from Wakiso District, 1 CEO/Board member of PELUM from Kampala
W	15/01/2025	Kampala - Mityana - Fort Portal	Travel to Fort Portal with stopover in Mityana 1 FGD with CAS in Mityana	
T	16/01/2025	Fort Portal	Start-up meeting with IdP & partners (JESE, RCA & KRC) Interview with JESE staff Interviews with KRC Food systems staff & Financial inclusion staff	
		Kampala	Interview with ESAFF staff	1 M&E Officer; 1 Communication Officer; 1 National Coodinator; and 1 Programmes Assistant
		Kampala	Interviews with trained journalists	1 working with Daily Monitor & 1 working with the Observer and Uganda Tourism Board
		Mukono	1 FGD with CAS	
F	17/01/2025	Fort Portal	Interview with RCA staff Interviews with Kabarole District NCC, Fort Portal City NCC and Coalition of the Willing	
		Kampala	Interview with ESAFF staff	1 Programme Officer; 1 Executive Assistant to the Country Coordinator
		Kampala	Interviews with AFSA beneficiaries	5 entrepreneurs and participants in AE events
		Entebbe	Interview with MAAIF staff	
S	18/01/2025	Kicwamba S/C	2 FGDs + 4 interviews with beneficiaries	FGDs with 1 marketing association (banana) & 1 VSLA Interviews with 4 beneficiary farmers
S	19/01/2025	Karangura S/C	2 FGDs + 2 interviews with beneficiaries	*DGD-funded activities*

Day	Date	Location	Activity	Comments
M	20/01/2025	Karangura S/C	2 FGDs + interview with beneficiary + interview with Karangura Peak cooperative	FGDs with 1 SACCO & care groups' leaders Interview with 1 VSLA member
		Fort Portal	Interviews with 1 street food vendor + 1 chef	
T	21/01/2025	Fort Portal	2 interviews with beneficiaries Interviews with RAAP and ISSD / Common Ground Project	Interviews with 3 youths
W	22/01/2025	Kabambiro S/C	Interview with JESE staff 1 FGD + interview with beneficiary	FGD with 1 marketing association (maize) Interview with 1 farmer innovator
		Fort Portal	Interview with IdP Country Director Preliminary data analysis / preparation of debriefing session	
T	23/01/2025	Fort Portal	Debriefing session with IdP & partners	
		Fort Portal - Kampala	Travel	
F	24/01/2025	Kampala	Debriefing with Humundi Country Rep. Departure	
T	24/01/2025	*Online*	Debriefing session with Humundi & partners	
S	16/02/2025	Kampala	Visit to PELUM Village at Harvest Money Expo 2025	Interacted with 13 farmers, entrepreneurs and over 10 visitors to the stalls
M	17/02/2025	Mityana	Interview with Secondary School leadership + FGD with School AE Club Interviews with food vendors	1 Head teacher; 1 AE Club Patron 4 food vendors at Zigoti Food market

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