



**Finnish  
Refugee  
Council**

# **MID-TERM EVALUATION REPORT**

## **IMPROVED ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROJECT**

**2022-2025**



**SEPTEMBER -OCTOBER 2024**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	3
LIST OF TABLES.....	4
LIST OF FIGURES.....	4
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1 INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.2 CLIMATE CHANGE IN UGANDA.....	5
1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT .....	6
1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION.....	6
1.4.1 Main objective. ....	6
1.4.2 Specific Objectives .....	6
1.5 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION .....	7
2.0 METHODOLOGY.....	8
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	8
<b>2.1.1 Sample selection</b> .....	8
<b>2.1.2 Sample size</b> .....	8
<b>2.1.3 Data collection methods</b> .....	8
<b>2.1.4 Data Analysis</b> .....	9
<b>2.1.5 Ethical Considerations</b> .....	10
<b>2.1.5 Limitations / Challenges Faced During the Evaluation</b> .....	10
3.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	11
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS.....	11
<b>3.2.2 Educational background</b> .....	12
3.4 ASSESSED PERFORMANCE OF CSA PROJECT AND SUPER INDICATORS. 15	
3.5 PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE, AND RESILIENCE OF BENEFICIARIES.....	23
<b>3.5.1 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES BEFORE JOINING THE CI GROUPS</b> .....	23
<b>3.5.2 CHANGES EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS AFTER JOINING THE CI GROUPS</b> <sup>25</sup>	
3.7 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING IMPLEMENTATION .....	33
4.0 LESSONS LEARN'T, RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY.....	35
4.0.1 LESSONS LEARN'T .....	35
4.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS.....	38
5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	39
5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS .....	40

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

A' Level	Advanced Level of Education.
CIGs	Common Interest Groups.
CSA	Climate Smart Agriculture.
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions.
FRC	Finnish Refugee Council.
IPCC	Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change
IPTT	Indicator Performance Tracking Table
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews.
O' Level	Ordinary Level of Education
RWC	Refugee Welfare Committee
TOTs	Trainer of Trainers.
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association.

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Summary of participants by settlement and resident status (Survey data).....	11
Table 2: Summary of participants by gender and age category (Survey and FGDs data).....	12
Table 3: Table showing a comparison of practices adopted by project participants at start and end of the Cohort .....	30
Table 4: Table summarizing relevance of the trainings received by the project participants per location.....	36

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Photo showing one of the data collectors facilitating an FGD in Adjumani.....	9
Figure 2: A pie chart showing the highest level of education attained by participants.....	12
Figure 3: Summary of form of support provided by FRC that have been received by CI groups.....	14
Figure 4: CSA POE Data Analysis-Cohort I 2022-2023.....	16
Figure 5: A graph showing a breakdown on how participants utilized income for basic needs.....	26
Figure 6: Photo showing data collectors engaging CI group participants during an FGD.....	28
Figure 7: Graph showing climate adaptation/mitigation measures/practices adopted by participants (both on and off farm).....	30
Figure 8: Photo showing a participating presenting the changes that they have experienced being part of the project.....	34
Figure 9: A pie chart showing participants' opinions on relevance of the trainings offered by the project.....	36
Figure 10: Graph showing participant responses on how important the trainings and support provided by FRC was per location.....	37

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION.

Climate change is a cross-border challenge that has affected humanity all over the world. According to projections made by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), there has been a continuous rise in gas emissions that has resulted in a rise in sea level, loss in biodiversity, and increased intensity of extreme weather such as heat waves, drought, floods, and storms. These effects have affected everyone refugees inclusive thus creating the need for support that will help remedy these effects.

The Finnish Refugee council (FRC), in its bid to support refugees in now 12 settlements in Uganda is also implementing interventions that respond to Climate Change through one of its projects titled '*Improving Economic Opportunities through Climate Smart Agriculture*'. This project focuses on training refugees and refugee hosting communities in Climate Smart Agricultural technologies through the CIGs and supporting refugees access finances and saving services through VSLAs. The project is being implemented in Kyangwali and Adjumani refugee settlements and it is to be implemented in two phases where; phase one will be implemented between 2022-2023 and Phase two between 2024-2025.

## 1.2 CLIMATE CHANGE IN UGANDA

Uganda's Vision 2040 aims at transforming Uganda from a predominantly peasant and low-income country to a competitive Upper middle-income country. Unfortunately, Uganda's economy largely depends on agriculture which is highly affected by climate change thus making it vulnerable to the effects of climate change since most of its farmers; refugees inclusive heavily rely/ depend on rain fed agriculture. This problem has even been made more complicated by the aspect of population growth which has put pressure on forests and wetlands, dependence on traditional sources of energy- fuels such as firewood and charcoal etc. This as a result has left many exposed to the effects of climate change such as long dry spells-leading to famine, drop in water levels- creating water shortage, depletion in forest cover etc. In response to these climate change challenges, Uganda through various sectors has put in place initiatives to combat the effects of climate change by mainstreaming and institutionalizing climate change responses and has also signed international Climate Change agreements. Other partners too like FRC have joined government's efforts towards the management of climate change and has taken on the implementation of interventions that are aimed at conserving the environment and making them more resilient to the effects of Climate Change. The goal of the project is to ensure that people in refugee settlements and host communities live in dignity and peace to build a secure future as contributing members of the

community where they live' while the outcome of the project is 'Enhanced capacity and knowledge of refugees and host communities to improve their economic opportunities while fighting climate change'. The aim of the Mid Term Evaluation is to measure the immediate outcome / changes that have happened to the project participants so far.

### **1.3 BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT**

The Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) is implementing a project that responds to Climate Change titled '*Improving Economic Opportunities through Climate Smart Agriculture*'. This project focuses on training refugees and refugee hosting communities using the group approach- that is leaders from each group are trained as TOTs in Climate Smart Agricultural technologies and practices both on and off farm through the CIGs and supporting refugees access finances and saving services through VSLAs. The project is being implemented in Kyangwali and Adjumani refugee settlements and it is implemented in two phases where; phase one was implemented between 2022-2023 and Phase two between 2024-2025. For phase I, 27 groups were reached in Kyangwali and 33 groups in Adjumani, and for phase II, 30 groups were selected in both locations.

### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

#### **1.4.1 Main objective.**

The primary objective of the evaluation was to assess the achievements made by the project towards fulfilling its goal and objectives during its two years of implementation (2022-2023 and partly 2024). The evaluation conducted a comprehensive and critical analysis of results and outcomes, providing evidence-based documentation of the project's intended or unintended impact at both individual and household levels. It also identified lessons learned, drew conclusions, and offered recommendations to inform the future design and implementation of activities. Additionally, the evaluation examined the extent to which the project addressed the development challenges and problems outlined in its theory of change, while also reviewing progress toward sustainability.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives.**

- i. To evaluate data for the CSA project and super indicators (as per the log frame) by examining how well the project met its objectives.
- ii. To assess how the project has contributed to the resilience of target beneficiaries, their households, and the communities.
- iii. To document lessons learned and best practices to inform future implementation and strategic planning.

- iv. To evaluate the sustainability of the project's interventions, focusing on the likelihood of their continuation post-project. This includes examining local ownership and the economic, institutional, environmental, and socio-political conditions that either support or hinder sustainability, as well as opportunities for scaling up or replicating successful components.

## **1.5 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

The evaluation was conducted in two project locations: Adjumani District (covering Ayilo I, Ayilo II, Olua, and Pagirinya Settlements along with the surrounding host communities) and Kyangwali Refugee Settlement and Kyangwali Sub- County in Kikuube District. It focused on the 2022–2023 cohort and included both host and refugee Common Interest Groups. The evaluation took place in August 2024.

## **2.0 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The internal evaluation was conducted in two locations: Kyangwali and Adjumani (covering Olua, Pagirinya, Ayilo I, and Ayilo II refugee settlements). It targeted Common Interest Group (CIG) members who are also Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) members under the same project. The evaluation combined both outcome and process evaluations, focusing on the impact of trainings on Climate Smart Agricultural (CSA) technologies and practices, both on- and off-farm, and the role of the VSLA interventions. The evaluation assessed the impact of these activities at individual and household levels while also examining the relevance of the training content, its contribution to expanding economic opportunities for members, and the sustainability of project interventions.

#### **2.1.1 Sample selection**

The evaluation employed a combination of simple random sampling and purposive sampling to identify and select respondents. Only participants from the 2022–2023 CIG groups (Cohort I) were included in the evaluation. This is because they had completed their two-year cycle-intervention and had had enough time for them to implement whatever had been taught to them so as to realise change in their individual lives and households unlike cohort II (2024–2025) CIG groups whose implementation of activities is still ongoing.

#### **2.1.2 Sample size**

A total of 498 participants were sampled for the mid-term internal evaluation, comprising 383 females and 115 males, who were randomly selected using different sampling procedures which include; simple random sampling, snow ball sampling- (where one identified participant supports data collection teams identify other members that were part of the CIG group) and purposive sampling- which targeted specifically participants that were part of the CIG groups that were randomly sampled.

#### **2.1.3 Data collection methods**

Two main methods of data collection of data were used to collect information and these included;

- i. Survey- using questionnaires which were designed into Kobo collect forms and data collection done using tablets by trained data collectors who had been selected after successfully applying for the positions that had been advertised and going through interviews. Different aspects were considered during recruitment such as; level of

education (consideration given to graduates), experience in data collection, and fluency in specific languages among others. The questionnaires were pre-tested (in the afternoon) on the same day training on the tool was done in both locations. Pre-testing enabled the recruited data collectors familiarise themselves with the tool and were also able to test out its functionality. A total of 366 respondents from both locations out of the 498 total participants responded to the surveys.

**Figure 1: Photo showing one of the data collectors facilitating an FGD in Adjumani**



- ii. The other data collection method that was used was the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). A total of 132/498 participants took part in the FGDs. 12 FGDs were conducted (5 in Kyangwali and 7 in Adjumani) on randomly selected participants who did not respond to the surveys from both locations-Adjumani and Kyangwali. These were facilitated by project staff with support from Translators and notes taken by project staff as well. The discussions that were held were also recorded using recorders and the audios were transcribed by project staff with guidance from handwritten notes that were captured.

#### **2.1.4 Data Analysis**

Quantitative survey data was analyzed using Excel, specifically with pivot tables, and the results were incorporated into the presentation of findings. Qualitative data, derived from

transcribed notes, was analyzed manually with the aid of Excel. The process involved coding the data, categorizing it, identifying patterns, and forming themes, which were subsequently included in the presentation of results.

### **2.1.5 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical standards were maintained throughout the evaluation process to ensure the dignity, rights, and privacy of participants. Key measures included:

- ✓ **Informed consent:** Participants were briefed about the purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation. Their voluntary participation was sought and both written and verbal consent was obtained before data collection.
- ✓ **Confidentiality:** Participant responses were anonymized, and all personal information was handled securely to ensure privacy.
- ✓ **Cultural sensitivity:** Data collectors were trained to respect cultural norms and values during interactions with participants. Translators ensured effective communication in the participants' preferred languages.
- ✓ **Do No Harm Principle:** The evaluation avoided any form of distress or inconvenience to participants, ensuring that all activities adhered to ethical research practices.

### **2.1.5 Limitations / Challenges Faced During the Evaluation**

- ✓ The evaluation was conducted at a time when the rains had started so the teams in some instances struggled to get some group members considering that they were engaged in farm work or agriculture. Fortunately, most of the group members managed to spare time to participate in the evaluation.
- ✓ Some of the CIG group members that had been sampled had inaccessible roads making it difficult for the evaluation teams to access. At some point, teams had to abandon the cars and walk long distances to access group members. This in the end consumed a lot of time hence causing delays in the completion of tasks.
- ✓ Unfortunately, some of the sampled participants had left the locations due to different reasons like searching for other opportunities (greener pastures). Also, some had relocated back to their countries of origin. This therefore left the team with no option but to replace them with those that had not been sampled.

## 3.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines the key findings from the midterm evaluation of the "*Improved Economic Opportunities through Climate Smart Agriculture*" project. The evaluation aimed to assess the extent to which the project objectives have been achieved during the implementation period (2022–2023/2024), focusing on its impact at the Individual and household level, effectiveness, relevance, challenges, and sustainability. The findings presented draw from two data sources which are; Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and surveys which were conducted with project participants across Kyangwali and Adjumani refugee settlements. This multi-method approach ensures a comprehensive understanding of project performance from diverse perspectives. Each subsection reflects evidence-based insights that align with the evaluation's objectives and provide a foundation for actionable recommendations and informed conclusions.

### 3.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

#### 3.2.1 *Distribution per location, residence status and age.*

The evaluation engaged a total of 498 participants, comprising 366 surveyed individuals and 132 participants involved in Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Among the survey respondents, 224 were refugees, while 142 belonged to host communities. The participants were distributed across various settlements where the biggest number of survey respondents were from Kyangwali settlement and the least number from Ayilo I as shown in the table below.

**Table 1: Summary of participants by settlement and resident status (Survey data)**

Resident status	Host	Refugee	Grand total
Ayilo I	1	22	23
Ayilo II	21	35	56
Kyangwali settlement	1	107	108
Kyangwali subcounty	56	0	56
Olua	24	21	45
Pagirinya	39	39	78
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>142</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>366</b>

In terms of gender distribution, 383 of the participants were female, and 115 were male. Regarding age, majority 454 were adults (between 25 and 59 years old), followed by 24 youth

(aged between 18 and 24 years) and only 20 elderly participants who were above 60 years as shown in the Table 2 Below.

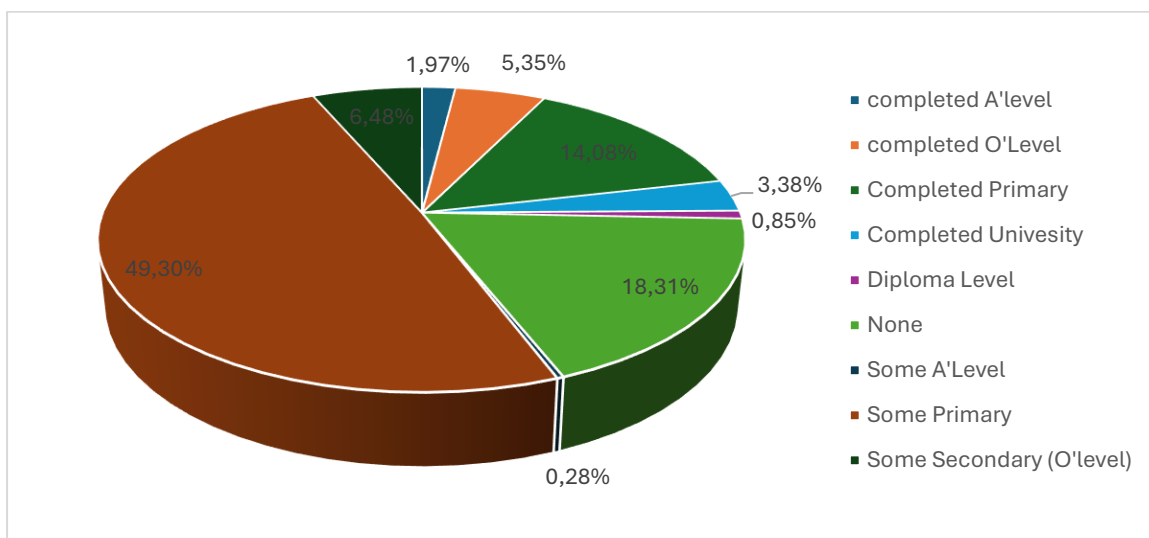
**Table 2: Summary of participants by gender and age category (Survey and FGDs data)**

Age	Female	Male	Grand total
18-24 years	17	7	24
25-59 years	354	100	454
60+ years	12	8	20
<b>Grand total</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>498</b>

### 3.2.2 Educational background.

Results from the survey analysis showed that the majority 49.3% (175 out of 355) of the sampled participants had completed some primary education followed by those that did not have any education 18.31% (65 out of 355). The least proportion of participants 0.28% (1 out of 355) were those that completed some A' level studies. The rest of the results are displayed in the pie chart below.

**Figure 2: A pie chart showing the highest level of education attained by participants**



### **3.3 SUMMARY ON INTERVENTIONS MADE BY THE PROJECT- 2022-2023**

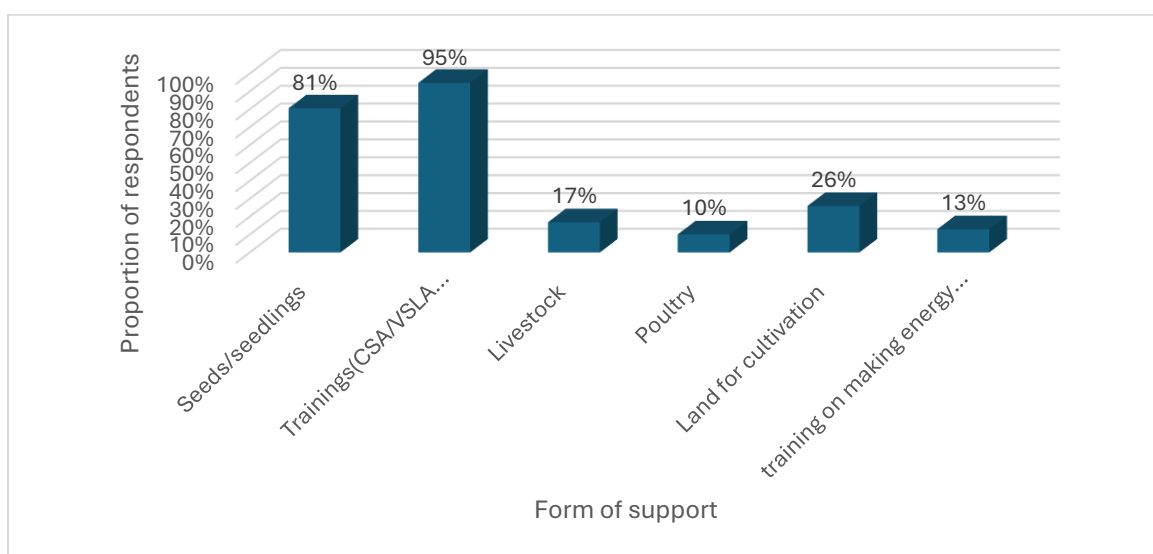
The project primarily focused on two components to deliver its planned interventions: the implementation of the VSLA methodology and Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) interventions, both on and off-farm, within the formed CI Groups. These modes of delivery included providing workshop training to leaders on CSA principles and the VSLA methodology, including group dynamics; conducting one-on-one group-level sessions and practical demonstrations on climate-smart agricultural practices and off-farm environmental protection; assisting groups with inputs and support; and guiding VSLA Agents in providing technical advice to groups.

Regarding the VSLA component, majority 94.8% (347 out of 366) reported receiving training in Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) practices and group dynamics. FRC provided essential tools such as savings boxes, record books, rulers, stamp pads, and calculators. These trainings enabled participants to develop a savings culture, enhancing their ability to manage finances and plan for future investments. Additionally, with guidance from FRC, participants consistently saved and borrowed money, resulting in greater financial security and economic empowerment. The sustained existence and activity of the VSLA groups two years after receiving support from FRC reflect the participants' strong appreciation for the program's impact.

Under the Climate Smart Agriculture component, the project provided various farm inputs, advisory services at both household and group levels, and training in CSA practices and technologies, both on and off-farm, through one-on-one sessions and practical demonstrations. A total of 81% (295 out of 366) of participants who responded to the Mid-Term survey reported receiving agricultural inputs such as quality seeds, poultry (reported by 10% ( 37/366), and animals, specifically pigs reported by 17% (62/366). These interventions improved participants' self-reliance and resilience. Some respondents indicated that poultry farming strengthened their ability to address small financial needs and emergencies. The ability to sell eggs or poultry provided a readily available source of income, enabling participants to meet immediate expenses and manage household emergencies effectively. In both locations (Kyangwali and Adjumani), 60 improved breeds of piglets were distributed to 10 Common Interest Groups. Regarding the piggery support provided, respondents highlighted that this initiative also offered a dependable source of income and food, helping households meet daily needs and address unforeseen expenses. The animals were seen as dual-purpose assets, serving both as a source of income and as a form of savings that could be liquidated during emergencies. This support also enabled participants to diversify their income sources, contributing to overall household financial security.

Additionally, the project helped participants access land for cultivation through solicitations from the Office of the Prime Minister in Kyangwali settlement. Through this land, groups were able to engage in collective farming and practically apply the agricultural techniques they had learned during training. Other forms of support included off-farm training on the production of energy-saving stoves and briquettes, as well as tree planting. A summary of all the support provided by the project is shown in the graph below.

**Figure 3: Summary of form of support provided by FRC that have been received by CI groups**



### 3.4 ASSESSED PERFORMANCE OF CSA PROJECT AND SUPER INDICATORS

The assessed performance of the different project and Super indicators showed that majority of the indicators were performing well in terms of targets met. Results from specifically the outcome indicators showed that 7 out of 9 outcome indicators were progressing well as indicated in the table below (highlighted green in the IPTT). Out of these seven outcome indicators, three of them had already achieved past the set target thus progress made was over 100% and these indicators included; '*% of beneficiaries who report having an increase in income*'- which achieved 169%, '*% of participants able to meet sudden expenses due to emergencies (crop failure, theft, fire, sickness)*'- which achieved 207% and '*CI group members who adopt climate-smart technologies and practices in their livelihood enterprise*'- which achieved 174%. This high performance could be due to the great efforts put into the implementation of the project by the project team and also the willingness of the participants to put what they have learned into practice.

Only 2 outcome indicators did not fully achieve set targets and these were; '*Overall number of participants*'- which had registered 93% progress in achievement and not 100% progress and also, the indicator on '*No of individuals who benefited by trainings and support via CIGs, VSLAs and related peer facilitators*' which had 94% progress made. Failure to achieve 100% for both of these indicators was due to the fact that the project inherited some groups that were already existing which had less than 30 members each and not like what was assumed during setting of the targets that they would have 30 members each hence creating a mismatch between the actual achieved results and the set targets.

With regards to the performance of '*Program participants showing signs of empowerment in their increased resilience*', measurement of this indicator was done using a Qualitative tool called the Pathway of Empowerment (POE) where; 4 themes/ areas were looked at which include; 1. the aspect of life skills, 2. social and cultural aspects, communication, 3. the psychological aspect, e.g. self-confidence and self-esteem and 4. the economic aspect / improved access to livelihood opportunities. Measurement of results for all the five levels was done all through cohort I period starting from baseline- whose data was collected immediately the groups commenced, then POE level one- which was collected during the first month from time of group formation, POE Level 2- collected during the second month, POE Level 3- collected during 4<sup>th</sup> month, POE Level 4- Collected during the 6<sup>th</sup> month and finally POE Level 5 -collected during the 8<sup>th</sup> month. Analysis of results for all the 5 levels showed progress in performance with an exception of a slight drop at level 2 in two thematic areas which are; social and cultural aspects where performance in theme B dropped from 64% at level 1 to 55% at level 2 then also under the economic aspect dropped from 53% at level 1 to 40% at

level 4. Below are some examples of some of the best performing POE signs at achieved at level 5 or at the end of the cohort.

**Best Performing Signs:**

**Meeting Sudden Expenses/Emergencies (96%):** This indicates that the majority of CIG members have a good level of preparedness or financial resilience, allowing them to handle unexpected situations like floods, droughts, and wildfires.

**Timely Planting of Crops (97%):** High success in timely planting suggests strong knowledge and adherence to farming practices that optimize productivity.

**Having Vegetable Gardens (96%):** This reflects a strong engagement in home gardening, possibly contributing to better nutrition and self-sufficiency for CIG members.

**Worst Performing Signs:**

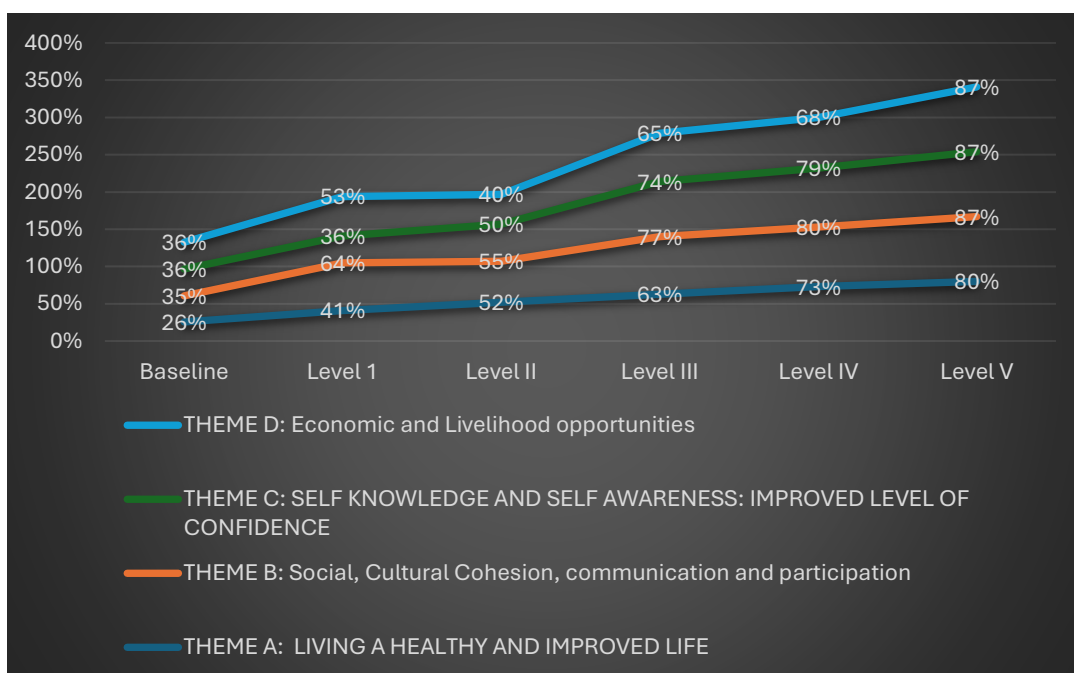
**Teaching Other Farmers Various CSA Technologies (69%):** While this is still a relatively decent score, it suggests that not all CIG members are effectively passing on knowledge to others, which may limit the spread of agricultural technologies.

**Supporting Neighbors in Building Sanitation Facilities (66%):** This indicates that a significant portion of the group may not be actively participating in community sanitation improvement, potentially reflecting a gap in community engagement or resources.

This could serve as valuable feedback for focusing on areas on knowledge dissemination

The graph below illustrates a summary of the POE results attained although Cohort I.

**Figure 4: CSA POE DATA ANALYSIS-COHORT I 2022-2023**



INDICATOR PERFORMANCE TRACKING TABLE (IPTT)													
	Indicators	Target - 2022	Achieved - 2022	Target- 2023	Achieved- 2023	Target 2024	Achieved 2024	Program Target	Baseline	Overall performance	% Progress made	Level of Progress	Comment
	<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>												
1	Overall number of participants	1,800		0	1,716	1,800	1,670	3,640	0	3,386	93.022	Not Achieved fully	Failure to achieve 100% was due to the fact that the project inherited already existing groups where some of them had less than the assumed 30 members
2	Program participants showing signs of empowerment in their increased resilience capacity related: 1. aspect of life skills 2. social and cultural aspects, communication. 3. psychological aspect, e.g. self-confidence and self-esteem; 4. economic aspect / improved access to livelihood opportunities				85%		N/A		0			In progress	Results presented in the narrative and illustrations above
3	% of participants to programme activities able to get access/improve income opportunities minimum 6 months after training OR % of beneficiaries who	55%		55%	93%			55%	0	93%	169	In progress	Data source is from the Mid term evaluation conducted in 2024 from cohort I participants. Achieved <b>38%</b> above target. Cohort II data will

	report having an increase in income.													be got at the end of 2025. Scored above target.
4	% of participants able to meet sudden expenses due to emergencies (crop failure, theft, fire, sickness)	40%		40%	83%	40%	80%	40%	0	83%	207	In progress	Data source is from the Mid term evaluation conducted in 2024 from cohort I participants. Achieved 43% above target. Corhorth II data will be got at the end of 2025. Scored above target.	
5	% of CBOs /community groups supported throughout the programme still active and operational OR % of CI groups operational 6 months after end of active project support.	70%	N/A	70%	100%	70%	N/A	70%	0	100%	100	In progress	All the groups that were formed both in corhorth I & II are active	
6	% of loans disbursed by VSLA group for investment purposes.	50%		50%	64%	50%	53%	50%	0	average %=59%	59	In Progress	The indicator has achieved above 50% target so far for both cohorts	
7	% of participants who put in practice climate adaptation / mitigation measures (can be both climate smart technologies in agriculture and off-farm climate friendly practices; use of solar, energy save stoves, waste sorting)	50%		50%	87%	50%	100%	50%	0	average %=94%	94	In Progress	Indicator achieved above 50% target for both cohorts with better performance being reflected in cohort II so far.	

8	% of CI group members who adopt climate-smart technologies and practices in their livelihood enterprise.	50%		50%	87%		N/A	50%	0	87%	174	In Progress	so far cohort I performed above target by 37% on this indicator
9	Number of individuals who benefited by trainings and support via Common Interest Groups (CIGs), Village and Savings Associations (VSLAs) and related peer facilitators.	1800		0	1716	1800	1670	3600	0	3,386	94.056	Not achieved fully	Failure to achieve 100% was due to the fact that the project inherited already existing groups where some of them had less than the assumed 30 members
<b>Output 1.1. Awareness on right to education and functional education raised to primary and key programme stakeholders.</b>		<b>Target - 2022</b>	<b>Achieved - 2022</b>	<b>Target- 2023</b>	<b>Achieved- 2023</b>	<b>Target 2024</b>	<b>Achieved 2024</b>	<b>Program Target</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Overall performance</b>	<b>% Progress made</b>	<b>Level of Progress</b>	<b>Comment</b>
10	% of CI group members who adopt climate-smart technologies and practices in their livelihood enterprise (broken down per technology& practice)	50%		50%	87%	50%	N/A		0	87%	174	In Progress	Corhort I achieved 87% giving us 37% above 50% set target. PoE level IV or V for cohort II yet to be conducted.

11	Number of climate and environmental protection sessions arranged.	40		160	8	80	8	360	0	16	4.4	In progress	Performance of the indicator could have been affected by the definition of the indicator which caused some misunderstanding and misled the targeting as well. What was counted was number of trainings
12	Number of tree seedlings distributed and planted.	0		12,000	2390	12,000	0	36,000	0	2390	6.6389	Not in progress	Performance is way below set target. Did not receive seedlings from expected partners
13	Number of CI groups supported.	60	60	0	60	60	60	120	0	120	100	Achieved	
14	Number of CI groups facilitated to register at subcounty or district level	4		14	35	9	28	36	0	63	175	In progress	Performed beyond target. Indicator could have been under targeted
15	Number of CI group leaders trained and mentored on group governance disaggregated by gender, age, disability, refugee vs. national.	60		120	125	90	198	360	0	323	89.722	In progress	
16	Number of VSLAs accessible to refugees and host communities established and mentored (Uganda). Number of VSLA groups formed.	60	60	0		60	60	120	0	120	100	Achieved	

17	Number of VSLA members,	1800		1696	1800	1650	3600	0	3346	92.94 4	Not achieved fully	Failure to achieve 100% was due to the fact that the project inherited already existing groups where some of them had less than the assumed 30 members
----	-------------------------	------	--	------	------	------	------	---	------	------------	--------------------	--

Key	
In progress	
In progress though did not meet target	
Not in progress/ very little progress	

Under the Output section (indicators), results showed that 5 out of the 8 output indicators were progressing well -also indicated green in the Indicator Performance Tracking Table (IPTT) below. Four of these indicators had already achieved 100% of the set target and these include; *'Number of CI groups Supported'*, *'Number of VSLAs accessible to refugees and host communities established and mentored'*– where currently 120 CI groups (60 in Cohort I-2022-2023 and 60 in Cohort II-2024-2025) have been formed and have/are being supported- (specifically Cohort II) by FRC and all of these groups are VSLA groups as well. Therefore, one thing to note is that the full achievement of the second indicator on VSLAs was partly enabled by the project design where all the formed CI groups also became VSLA groups. Also, the indicators on the *'Number of CI groups facilitated to register at the subcounty'* and *'% of CI group members who adopt climate-smart technologies and practices in their livelihood enterprise (broken down per technology& practice)'* have so far performed beyond the set targets giving over 100% where the achieved progress made so far is 175% and 174% respectively.

There was slow progress made on two of the output indicators that is, *'Number of climate and environmental protection sessions arranged'* which only had - 4% progress and *'Number of VSLA members'*- with 93% progress made and not 100% progress achieved as highlighted by orange color. Slow progress on the indicators was due to the fact that there was a misunderstanding with the definition of the first indicator with regards to training sessions hence misleading the targeting as well. What was captured was the number of trainings provided and not training sessions which was making more meaning to the project team. The number of VSLA members was also not achieved because of the same reasons given above which is inheritance of groups that had less than 30 members and not like what had been assumed earlier on.

Unfortunately, one indicator that is; *'Number of tree seedlings distributed and planted'* will not be able to achieve the set targets (highlighted Red in the IPTT) and this was because the project did not receive tree seedlings from expected partners as had been assumed during targeting hence affecting its achievement of results. Only 2,390 out of 36,000 tree seedlings had been distributed in the last 3 years showing only 7% progress.

## 3.5 PROJECT'S CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SELF RELIANCE, AND RESILIENCE OF BENEFICIARIES

### 3.5.1 PARTICIPANTS' EXPERIENCES BEFORE JOINING THE CI GROUPS

#### ➤ **Financial challenges:**

Majority of the participants highlighted severe financial struggles before joining the Common Interest Groups (CIGs) as a major challenge. This challenge hindered their ability to meet basic needs like buying food, paying school fees, medical bills, securing proper shelter, and purchasing essential household items like utensils, mattresses, and blankets. Many reported sleeping on bare floors and relying on food ration support for survival. Also, their children were not going to school and often ate only one meal per day. Catherine Judith from the Amatura CSA group recounted her experience where she mentioned that,

*"Before I joined the Amaura group, my children were not going to school, and there was nothing I could do about it. I came with my apparatus for cooking alcohol and two pairs of bedsheets, which I sold to push my children through one term of school. I had no options left for terms two and three, and feeding was also a problem. Even getting firewood for cooking and grass for roofing my house was very hard."*

Another respondent Alec Deck from Haluya group during the discussion also added that,

*"When we came from South Sudan, we settled in different places, and many of us arrived without basic necessities like clothing or utensils. We often had to rely on others; for instance, if someone had cooked, we would share their food while waiting for ours to be ready. You considered yourself lucky if you managed to get three beans with plenty of soup. We also had to borrow saucepans from our neighbours to cook."*

Similarly, Sadiya Jackline from the Amatura group also shared that,

*"Before we joined the group, we relied on food rations and we could only feed our children once a day. Sometimes we couldn't even make porridge; it was just one meal a day. If you saw the shoes my child wore, you would be shocked. Many children here did not even have clothes when we had just arrived."*

#### ➤ **Limited knowledge on different topics such as;**

##### **Modern farming practices, climate change etc**

Participants reported having limited knowledge of sustainable farming practices such as proper spacing of crops, pest control, vegetable gardening among others and knowledge on

how to manage effects of climate change. One of the respondents called Abuk Elizabeth from the Jonglei group mentioned that,

*"I didn't have knowledge of farming or spraying my crops. Pests and diseases frequently disrupted my farming."*

Therefore, having limited knowledge in all these made it difficult for them to cope with these challenge related to pest management and effects of climate change like prolonged drought, floods etc thus resulting into high farm losses. One of the respondents called Bua Florance from the Health Talk group explained that,

*"Before FRC came, life was hard. It wasn't easy to farm or find food to feed my children. Understanding and dealing with the changing seasons during planting was very difficult."*

Furthermore, many lacked access to essential agricultural resources like seeds, land, and farming tools etc making it challenging for them to engage and maximize benefits in agriculture. Also, the high land rental costs were a significant barrier as most participants could not afford to rent land from mainly the host community. Additionally, the absence of livestock or poultry in their homesteads further limited their ability to generate income or ensure food security.

### **Financial Management**

Majority of participants mentioned that they lacked a saving culture before joining the CIG groups which left them and their households financially vulnerable. One respondent called Mary Simon from the Amatidrira CI group reported that,

*"Before, I thought money was strictly for spending. My children did not go to school, and I often isolated myself, lacking the confidence to participate in or contribute to group activities."*

Furthermore, another respondent from Pagirinya called Asienzo Betty from Blessing CI group revealed that,

*"Before joining FRC, I didn't know about savings. I used to keep my money in the house, and thieves would sometimes steal it."*

As a result, unexpected or emergency expenses like medical bills were particularly burdensome for many. To make it worse many relied on casual labor like digging on other people's farms as a source of income yet this earned them a small income thus making it difficult for them to save anything for the future.

### ***Limited knowledge about energy saving technologies and environmental conservation:***

Most respondents reported that before joining the group, they relied heavily on traditional energy intensive technologies and sources which primarily involved the use of mainly firewood and charcoal for cooking. This was mainly got by cutting down of trees, destruction of forests etc which actions negatively had an impact on the environment and climate. Due to this, a number of restrictions have been placed around cutting down of trees for firewood or charcoal burning in different locations which has made it now very expensive for many to access these sources of energy ultimately increasing household expenses. Mupeji Vastina from the Tusaidiane CSA in Kyangwali explained that,

*"Before joining the group, I used to spend a lot of money buying charcoal and firewood for cooking food."*

Also, Can Janet from Health talk group further added that,

*"Before joining FRC, I spent a lot of time and money searching for firewood to cook food."*

### **3.5.2 CHANGES EXPERIENCED BY PARTICIPANTS AFTER JOINING THE CI GROUPS**

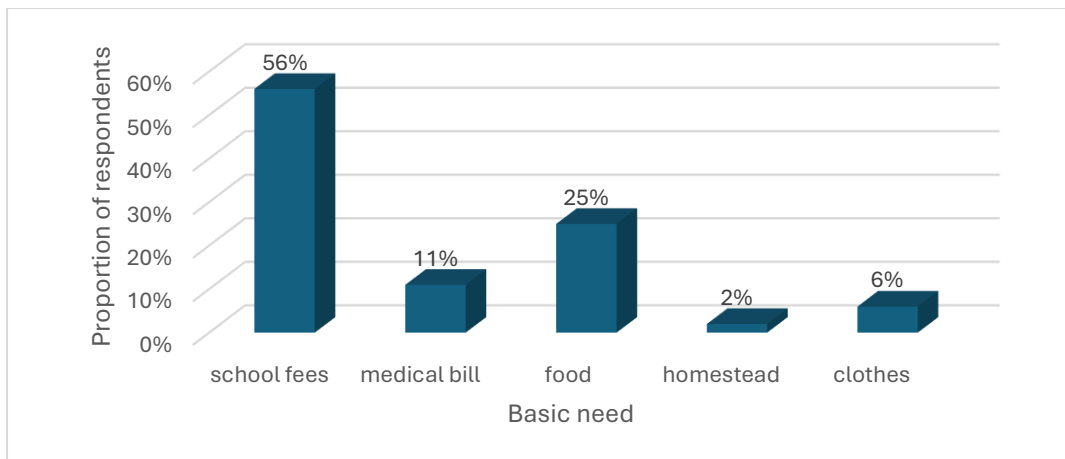
The analysis obtained indicated that a number of changes were experienced by the respondents as a result of the interventions that the project has done. Below are some of the most mentioned changes that were experienced by majority of the respondents.

#### **❖ *Increase in Income levels***

Respondents reported transformative improvements in their lives after joining the Common Interest Groups (CIGs), with the support and training addressing many of the challenges that they previously faced. They shared that savings and borrowing interventions through the VSLA groups had enabled them access financing to start or boost their IGAs and also save the profits that they were making from their businesses in the same VSLA groups that they were in. Survey findings revealed that majority of the respondents, 92% (337/ 366) were now engaged in different income-generating activities compared to 57% (104/182) at baseline during the survey that was conducted showing a 35% increase. 82% (277/ 337) of these respondents attributed their involvement in such IGAs to participation in Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) or Common Interest Groups (CIGs). Results from further analysis into the respondents' sources of income showed that the majority, 86% (314/366) of the respondents were involved in agriculture (includes; farming, livestock rearing, and animal husbandry) as their primary source of income. Business was reported as the other main source of income by 48% (176/366) of the respondents, making it the second most mentioned

while 35% (127/366) relied on aid or food support. Formal Employment accounted for the smallest proportion with only 4.83% (14/ 366) of the respondents citing it as their main source of income. Other sources of income were reported by 11% (41/ 366) of respondents which included activities such as; boda boda (motorcycle business) riding, brewing and selling local alcohol, selling sand and soil, construction work, charcoal burning, hairdressing, and selling yeast which can be looked at as businesses as well. Therefore, their involvement in different IGAs had enabled them to realise an increase in both individual and household income hence enabling them to manage household expenses more effectively and with ease. Many explained that they could now pay school fees, buy books and uniforms for their children, purchase medicine when needed, buy food for their households thus ensuring presence of regular meals for their families, reduced dependence on food/cash ratio and dependence on other friends and relatives for survival among others with ease. When it came to being able to meet basic needs, the survey analysis 70.8% (259/366) of the respondents reported being able to now partially meet their essential basic needs using the income they generated while 24.6% (90/366) revealed that they were fully able to meet basic needs on their own with the current income. These needs included paying school fees for their children, purchasing food, covering medical expenses, buying clothes, and constructing better houses. Only 4.6% (17 out of 366) reported being unable to meet these needs with their current income.

**Figure 5: A graph showing a breakdown on how participants utilized income for basic needs**



Overall, respondents reported feeling more financially independent where; they now were able to live in better conditions resulting from for example being able to renovate their houses or have better housing and sustain their families thus significantly reducing financial stress that they used to face before. Also, many expressed pride in being able to provide two meals a day for their families. This was mainly appreciated by the women who were now having less pressure getting what to eat for their children/families and had also helped reduce family

conflict between husbands and wives. Furthermore, the trainings on better financial management and literacy had allowed participants to budget effectively for their families, save for the future, and invest in further opportunities. Some of the women mentioned that they were now able to make better financial decisions thanks to the same financial management trainings that they had received.

➤ ***Asset Acquisitions- resulting from increased income levels.***

The increase in income levels due to increased access to financing and income generating opportunities had resulted into most of beneficiaries being able to acquire assets (both productive and non-productive assets). The realised financial freedoms and gains made from the IGAs had enabled participants to make significant investments in productive assets for instance, most of the respondents 46% (30/ 65) acquired livestock such as; goats, chickens, and ducks which not only enhanced food security in the households but also provided a steady source of income. The other assets that were acquired included; land which was acquired by 32% (21/ 65) of the respondents, farm tools like hoes, panggers which was acquired by 5% (3/65) of the respondents, Other respondents 39% (25/65) acquired diverse assets such as; motorcycles for transport businesses ("boda bodas"), small rental houses, and merchandise shops, reflecting an increased ability to invest in sustainable ventures. These acquired assets had far-reaching effects on participants' lives where many reported no longer relying on casual Labor for survival and having the financial ability to meet essential needs, such as paying school fees, buying food, and accessing healthcare. The realized financial freedom had also enabled some of them acquire mobile phones thus improving on access to communication services and connectivity.

**Figure 6: Photo showing data collectors engaging CI group participants during an FGD**



❖ ***Increased Income Generating Opportunities for the beneficiaries***

The group's support was reported to have helped members transition away from casual Labor -(where previously many had to earn by working in other people's farms) as their primary source of income. Many respondents mentioned that they were now engaged in small businesses with some investing in; livestock such as goats and poultry and other businesses as mentioned above. The intervention had provided startup capital for some to venture into other businesses hence increasing opportunities for them. All this was boosted by the knowledge gained during the trainings which improved their financial management skills thus enabling them to save more, budget effectively, spend cautiously hence making them financially stable. Some also mentioned that they could now rent land collectively for farming and also on an individual basis which was hard previously that is before they joined the groups hence boosting agricultural production and income generation.

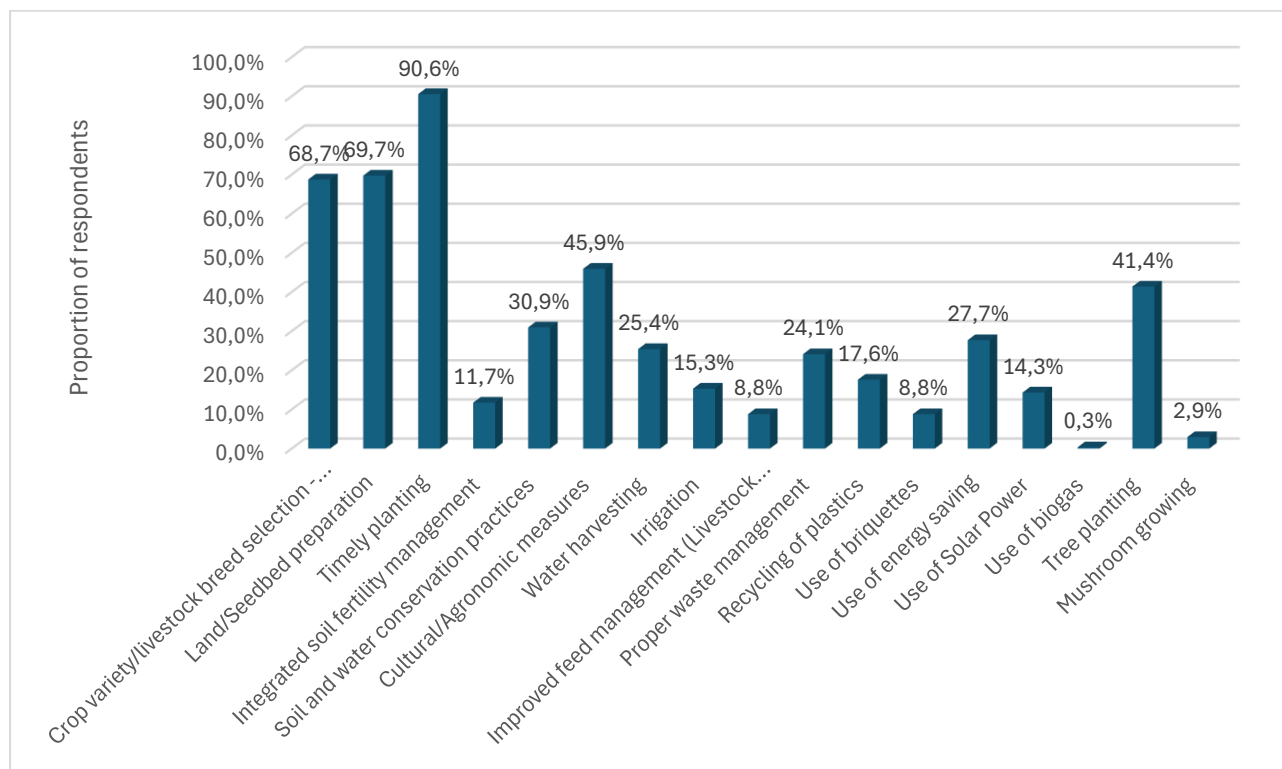
➤ ***Knowledge acquisition and utilization resulting into improved on and off farm practices.***

Results obtained from the survey indicated that respondents overwhelmingly reported significant improvements in their lives, with 88% (322/366) of the survey respondents reporting

having gained new knowledge and skills. The trainings offered to the CIG participants had helped improve their agricultural skills, knowledge and practices- particularly with regards to modern climate smart farming methods and practices; where for example majority of the survey respondents, 91% (278/307) reported practicing timely planting as a mitigation strategy for climate change effects, making it the most adopted practice. This was followed by land/seedbed preparation reported by 70% (214/307) of respondents and crop variety or livestock breed selection-switching species, varieties, and breeds was practiced by 69% (211/307) of the respondents. Respondents also noted that they were now practicing other sustainable techniques as well which they had learned like; improved livestock feeding practices, irrigation, water harvesting, proper crop spacing, Integrated soil fertility management, soil and water conservation, the establishment of kitchen gardens which has been implemented by majority of the participants among others. The kitchen gardens had ensured consistent access to fresh vegetables throughout the year even during dry seasons, reduced household food expenses- (since they were now growing their own vegetables rather than buying) and improved family nutrition for their households. Additionally, respondents also reported that they were also involved in other climate and environmental conservation practices like; tree planting, proper waste management, recycling plastics, using briquettes, energy-saving methods, and use of solar power.

All these new skills and practices had helped increase farm productivity thus creating food security in their households and had also contributed towards environmental conservation. With regards to the least adopted strategies, analysis indicated that mushroom growing was the least practiced by only 2.9% of respondents and the use of biogas which was reported by a mere 0.3% of the participants. The graph below shows knowledge utilization and practices adopted by different project participants.

**Figure 7: Graph showing climate adaptation/mitigation measures/practices adopted by participants (both on and off farm)**



A comparison of some of the variables measured above with POE baseline observation data for Cohort I (2022-2023 Corhot) showed an improvement in all the parameters that were measured both at baseline and Endline as summarized in the table below.

**Table 3: Table showing a comparison of practices adopted by project participants at start and end of the Cohort**

S/N	Practice adopted	Results-POE baseline Observation 2022	Results-Survey Midterm Evaluation	% Increase (Improvement)
1	Rain Water Harvesting	31%, (82/264)	46%	15%
2	Irrigation	12%, (31/264)	15%	3%
3	Practice soil and water conservation	6%, (15/264)	31%	25%
4	Early Planting / Timely Planting	47%, (124/264)	91%	44%

Overall, respondents mentioned that they could now grow surplus food crops for sale which was now generating additional income for the household and also they now had sufficient food supply for their families as well. This in the end reduced financial vulnerability and improved household resilience.

### ***Impact of interventions on Females and group dynamics***

#### **❖ Improved Female participation in Financial Household decision making and Leadership Opportunities**

Findings obtained also indicated that women were now more involved when it came to decision making on financial matters in the household specifically married or cohabiting women. Evaluation results showed that most 55%, (147/268) were jointly making these decisions with their husbands and these were then followed by those who mentioned that they independently made these financial decisions comprising (19%) while 18.7% stated that the men (husbands) were the sole decision-makers in their households. A comparison of these results with POE baseline results showed that only 37% of the married women had a voice in the utilization of money from sale of agricultural produce/ livestock at family level and also only 31% revealed that they participated in major decision making e.g. purchase of big family assets like cows, bulls etc. This improvement in the results from 37% to 55% highlight a significant shift toward gender inclusion in financial management and decision making at the household level. It also shows more involvement in the management of other family economic resources. This has helped improve on the number of income generating opportunities that they are able to venture in.

Furthermore, more women were also getting more interested in taking up leadership opportunities. Findings obtained from the FGDs conducted showed that majority of the women had taken up leadership positions mainly in the VSLAs e.g. were secretaries, treasurers, key keepers, some as chairpersons of the groups etc. Some of the females had even gone on to stand for elective positions in the community as well. However, one thing to note was that in the communities, a few of the women had gone on to take up top/ high level positions like Refugee Welfare Committee (RWC) position. This was because of the existing anti female leadership cultural undertones that still exist in different communities which do not encourage women to take on these high positions which are usually dominated by the males. Some of the men still were not comfortable electing women into these high positions.

#### **❖ Improved group cohesion and Collaboration among members**

The intervention also had a positive impact on group structures and dynamics. Through the trainings provided, the VSLA groups were able to develop all the necessary documents

needed to guide the management of the groups like the constitution. Also, the group structures like the leadership had been strengthened through the trainings that they received on different topics for example on financial management. As a result, the group leaders were now able to conduct their roles e.g. record keeping with confidence -considering that they now had a better understanding of their roles and skills on how to deliver on their responsibilities. Besides this, cohesion within the group had also improved with more team work happening among group members. Members had learn't how to collaborate or work with members from different nationalities, tribes etc irrespective of the conflicting experiences that they had back in their countries. As a result, many now appreciated the idea of working in groups. There was improved trust among the members and less conflicts -thanks to the use of conflict resolution mechanisms which members had gotten.

### **3.6 DRIVERS FOR SUCCESSES ACHIEVED BY THE PROJECT**

One thing to note is that these positive changes/ Impacts were realized due to a number of factors which included;

i) Trainings that were provided where; majority emphasized that these were very important because they specifically focused on issues that touched their day to day life practices. Analysis of survey data revealed that 61% of respondents directly attributed the improvements in their livelihoods to the trainings facilitated by FRC, highlighting the significant role of these capacity-building initiatives in fostering change. Some of the topics that they were trained on included; Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) methodologies, good agricultural practices, climate change mitigation strategies, cost-effective cooking methods among others. These trainings equipped participants with the skills and knowledge necessary to improve their economic activities, food security, and overall household welfare.

ii) Additionally, respondents noted the unity and commitment within the groups as critical driver of success and 21% of participants that responded to the survey identified this as a major factor in their success, highlighting the importance of collective effort and collaboration. This sense of cohesion was reflected in members' active participation in group meetings, consistent savings, and dedication to implementing what they had learned from the trainings. Other key contributors to the changes mentioned by respondents included; access to essential farming inputs such as seeds, land, tools which were mainly provided by FRC. Also, the existing peace and stability in Uganda also provides an enabling environment for groups to thrive.

### **3.7 CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED DURING IMPLEMENTATION**

The Focus Group Discussion (FGD) analysis identified several challenges faced by participants during the project implementation and these include:

- Harsh weather conditions: Most of the respondents cited prolonged droughts and occasional floods as significant challenges, adversely affecting the quality and quantity of their agricultural yields.
- Limited savings capacity: A significant proportion of participants reported that the limited funds that they had for savings restricted their participation in savings activities.
- Limited land for cultivation: Another significant proportion of respondents highlighted insufficient land for farming as a major barrier to expanding production, which in turn affects both their food security and income. They further noted that the high cost of land rental (UGX 150,000 per acre) exacerbates this challenge.

Additional challenges included:

- Delayed input delivery: Participants noted that delays in receiving farming inputs especially seed negatively impacted timely planting, making them more vulnerable to climate changes.
- Pests and diseases: Respondents reported that pest and disease outbreaks frequently damaged crops and livestock, reducing productivity.
- Crop destruction by stray animals: Stray animals destroying crops was another challenge mentioned, leading to decreased yields.
- Limited access to better markets: Many participants expressed concerns over limited access to profitable markets with their produce often sold at low prices to local buyers in the community.
- Trust issues in savings groups: Some participants reported a lack of trustworthiness among group members who borrow money from savings groups but fail to repay on time, or in some cases, fail to repay at all.

**Figure 8: Photo showing a participating presenting the changes that they have experienced being part of the project**



## **4.0 LESSONS LEARN'T, RELEVANCE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **4.0.1 LESSONS LEARN'T**

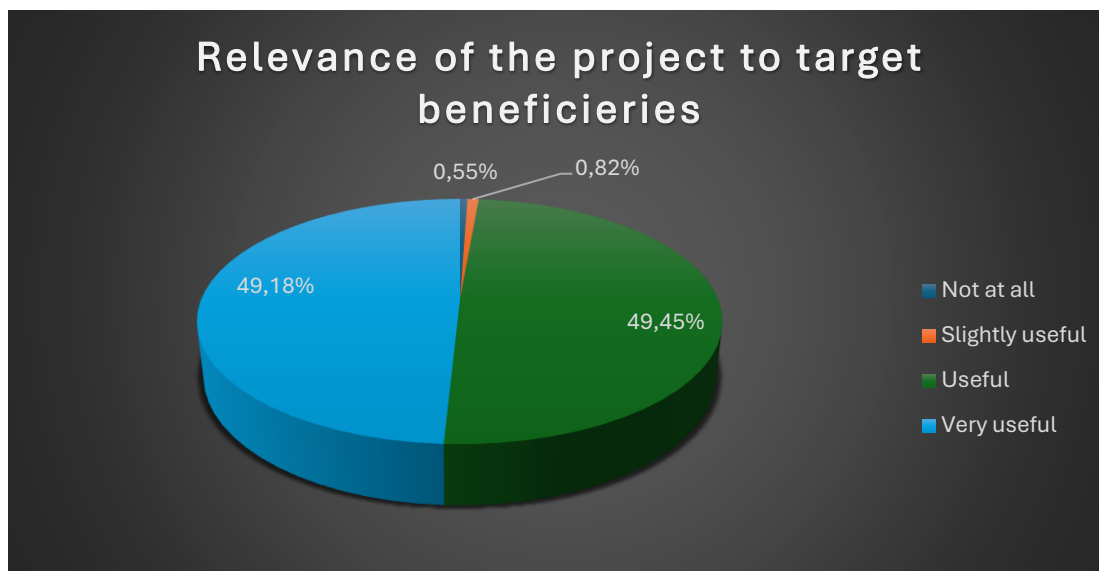
- Timely delivery of inputs is crucial:- The project learned that delays in the distribution of farming inputs, especially seeds, significantly hinder timely planting, increasing farmers' vulnerability to climate-related risks. Ensuring the prompt provision of inputs is essential to support resilience against climate variability.
- Business management training is essential in creating sustainable businesses among project participants:- The evaluation learnt that business management was essential in equipping project participants with knowledge on how to better manage their finances and businesses more effectively thus enabling the growth of sustainable or long existing (lasting) businesses. This will then help promote self-reliance and eventually resilience among participants.
- Improved access to better or more profitable markets enhances farmer profitability:- The other lesson learnt is that having limited access to profitable markets forces beneficiaries to sell their produce at low prices to local buyers or middlemen which does not profit them much. Therefore, facilitation of project participants to access better profiting (or better priced) markets is critical for increased economic returns from agricultural activities.
- Livelihood diversification strengthens participant self - reliance and resilience:- Diversifying livelihoods or businesses through income-generating activities such as poultry, livestock farming etc helps to enhance beneficiaries' savings and buffer against numerous economic shocks experienced in life.
- Land access is vital for the realization of sustainable livelihoods among project participants:- Finally, one of the lessons learned is that land is critical in the attainment of sustainable livelihoods/ businesses and overall project success among participants. Availability of land enables participants to practice the knowledge that they acquire during the trainings thus resulting into increased income. This therefore creates the need for both FRC and the CI groups (leaders) to continuously advocate for increased access to land for refugees by strengthening partnerships with local authorities and adoption of strategies that promote optimized land use.

### **4.2 RELEVANCE OF THE PROJECT**

During the evaluation, project participants who responded to the survey were asked to rate the relevance of the trainings that they had received from the project and results obtained showed that 50% (181/ 366) of the respondents felt that the interventions were 'useful' followed by 49% (180/366) who rated it as being 'very useful'. A small proportion, 0.82% (3/

366), found the project 'slightly useful' while only 0.55% (2 out of 366) reported that the project was 'not useful at all'. A summary of the results is displayed in the pie chart below.

**Figure 9: A pie chart showing participants' opinions on relevance of the trainings offered by the project**



Further analysis with focus on different locations where the project was implemented was also done and results showed that the trainings were appreciated more in the south that is in Kyangwali -where majority of the respondents felt that they were very useful. However, this result could have been influenced by other factors like the climate conditions which are more favorable for the agronomic trainings that were provided in the south –(Kyangwali) compared to the North-(Adjumani) thus making the practical part of the trainings more achievable in the south than the North. Results on this are illustrated in the table below.

**Table 4: Table summarizing relevance of the trainings received by the project participants per location**

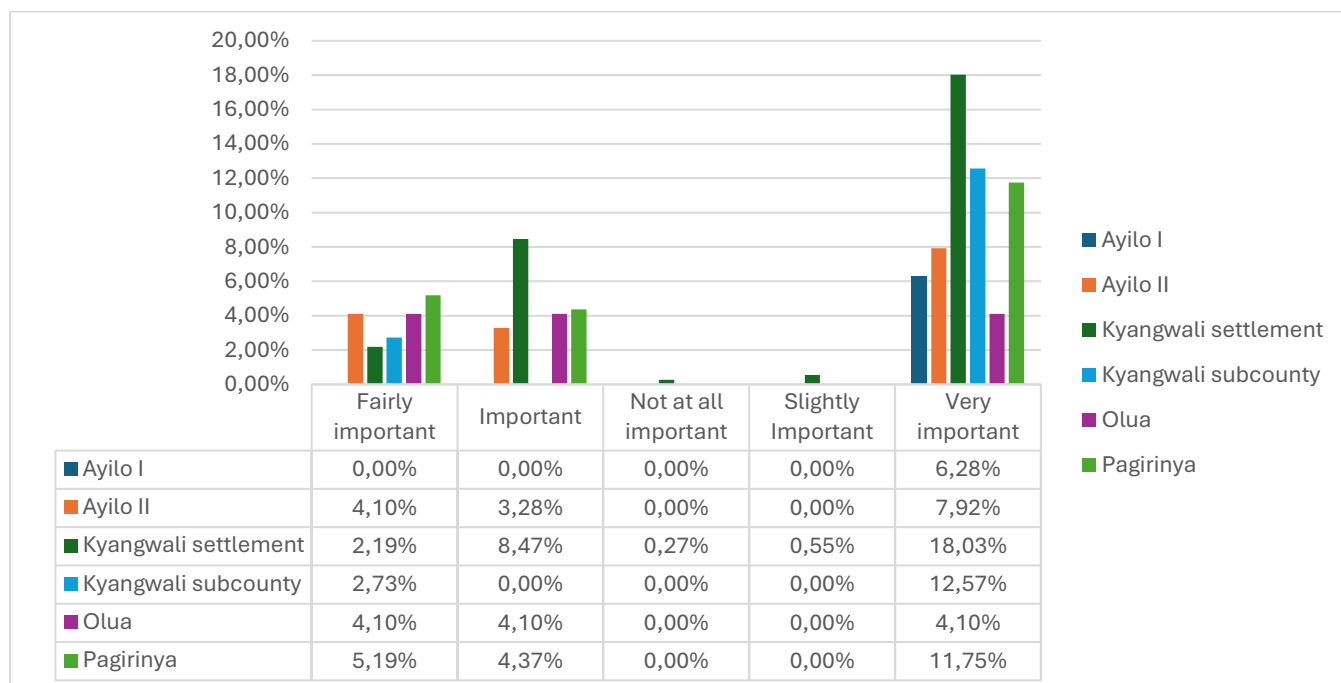
Settlement	Not at all	Slightly useful	Useful	Very useful	Grand Total
Ayilo I			14	9	23
Ayilo II			41	15	56
Kyangwali settlement	2	1	39	66	108
Kyangwali subcounty		1	12	43	56
Olua			34	11	45
Pagirinya		1	41	36	78
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>366</b>

The project demonstrated strong relevance to the needs of the target beneficiaries, with nearly all respondents (98.63%) rating it as either "useful" or "very useful." This feedback highlights

the significant value and impact of the training and support provided by FRC, addressing the beneficiaries' priorities effectively. Only a minimal fraction of respondents found the project less useful, reflecting its overall success in meeting the intended goals.

The evaluation also went on to find out from the participants how important the training and support provided by FRC was and results showed that the biggest number of respondents 61%,(222/366) revealed that it was very important followed by those who mentioned that it was important 20%, (74/366) then those 18%, (67/366) that mentioned that it was fairly important. More findings on this is shown in the graph below

**Figure 10: Graph showing participant responses on how important the trainings and support provided by FRC was per location**



When it came to evaluating whether the project had improved or changed the economic opportunities for participants, results showed that majority 65%, (239/366) of the participants felt that their economic opportunities had improved and had become much better while 32%, (117/366) felt that it was now somewhat better. Only 3%, (10/366) reported that nothing had changed concerning their economic opportunities. Everything remained the same. Overall, majority of the responses obtained indicated that participants had realized a number of changes resulting from the interventions that had been implemented and this was addressing most of their expectations that they had at the start of the project hence making the interventions relevant to them.

### **4.3 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS**

Findings from the FGDs that were conducted showed that the project had taken on a number of factors that were contributing towards the sustainability of the project such as;

i) The existing strong leadership structures in the CI groups which was frequently identified as a critical component fostering stability and effective decision-making in the groups. It is through these structures that members of the groups are able to elect their leaders without any external influence. This has also created strengthened trust among members. As a result, 100% of the cohort I groups are operational two years after receiving support from FRC. Additionally, 86.1% of the CI Groups meet weekly, while 13.9% hold their meetings monthly.

ii) Additionally, regular meetings were also noted as being essential in maintaining group cohesion and ensuring that activities remained on track. All the members of the groups are able to get updates on whatever is happening through these groups hence ensuring their sustainability. These meetings also helped members to bond and nurture relationships among themselves thus making the groups a newfound place of belonging and new family.

## 5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 CONCLUSION

The mid-term evaluation of the *“Improved Economic Opportunities through Climate Smart Agriculture Project”* has highlighted significant progress toward achieving its goals and objectives. The findings demonstrate that the project has positively impacted both refugees and host communities; especially when it comes to economic empowerment both at individual and household level. Most of the challenges that the project had planned to address in the project’s Theory of change have been met. This therefore has enabled the participants realize change in their lives in form of improved self-reliance, level of confidence, resilience building and climate change adaptation etc. Some of the key achievements realized by the projects includes the widespread adoption of climate-smart agricultural practices and improved financial literacy through the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) model. These interventions have enabled beneficiaries to enhance household incomes, improve food security, and invest in assets critical to long-term sustainability.

The project has also fostered a strong sense of community and group cohesion, as evidenced by the continued operation of Common Interest Groups (CIGs) with robust leadership structures. However, challenges such as limited access to land, delays in input delivery, and barriers to market access underscore the need for ongoing support and strategic adjustments. Addressing these challenges, coupled with scaling up successful interventions, will ensure the sustainability of the project's impact and further strengthen the livelihoods of the target beneficiaries.

The existing leadership structures within the CI groups have played a great role in ensuring continuity, effectiveness, stability and built trust among CI group members thus promoting sustainability of the project. This has further been boosted by the TOT approach that the project undertook; where some of the leaders of the CI groups were trained on different technical Climate Smart Agricultural techniques and these went on to pass on the same knowledge to their group members. This knowledge that is passed to them can also be passed on to new members that join the group even after FRC stops implementing activities in the groups.

Also, the evaluation concluded that the project had helped lay a solid foundation for scaling up and replication of the project so as to promote inclusive and sustainable economic opportunities to more participants. Most of the gaps that the project had identified initially in its theory of Change have been addressed in the interventions provided such as; through the

trainings, support given in form of poultry, seeds, animals among others thus making it relevant. The participants have practiced and used the acquired knowledge and skills to improve on their economic opportunities.

## **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- It was recommended during the discussions that FRC consider scaling up its livelihood interventions by enhancing the quantity of support provided-(e.g. seeds provided) and introduce other livelihood initiatives such as; value addition, skilling in form of vocational trainings, mushroom production, aquaculture, across its other projects etc so as to realize more sustainable impact among the participants in terms of income increase. This will help make the interventions made more comprehensive and effective in helping the participants realize their aspirations and change both at individual and household levels hence enabling the attainment of project objectives. Addition of more initiatives like for example value addition will also enable participants to produce better quality products thus attracting better prices hence more income. Furthermore, having these initiatives in place will also encourage the culture of business diversification thus creating numerous income sources and hence financial independence for the participants.
- The evaluation also recommends that FRC adopts strategies/ practices that respond to the challenge of limited land that was experienced by the project participants across different locations. Some of the practices that promote production on small spaces or land should be highly encouraged like; getting involved in high value enterprises such as poultry, growing of high value crops like onions, tomatoes, planting crops in sacks around the households etc. This should be promoted at either individual level or at household level and not group level for one to realize greater impact. Also, the project where possible can include a budget that can be used to hire land from the host community for the CI groups as a remedy to counter the challenge of land access. This will help boost commercial or large-scale farming among the refugees.
- The aspect of timely delivery of project inputs such as seeds to beneficiaries should be considered as a critical aspect in enabling participants to effectively and fully realize impact from the support provided. This will enable participants to for example take advantage of the early rains thus maximize profits or gains and minimize losses. Therefore, the evaluation recommends that procurement processes should be done early enough to avoid delays. Also, contextual conditions should be considered as well during procurement where for example fast yielding seeds should be procured for

locations that have long dry spells or seeds that can grow under harsh/dry conditions are procured for locations that experience long droughts.

- Another recommendation is that project participants be supported to link up with more profitable and bigger markets so that they are not cheated by middlemen. They should also be trained on how to fulfil the demands of such markets so that they can be able to win bigger supply contracts in such markets. They should also make partnerships and manage such partnerships in a better way.
- Also, the evaluation recommends that the component of business management/ financial literacy be included as well in the trainings to help or enable participants build and grow more sustainable businesses or long-lasting businesses.
- Finally, the project should target attaining impact more at individual or household level rather than group level if actual long lasting change is to be felt among the participants and self reliance. Project designs and activities such as budgeting, distribution, of support (inputs) etc should be targeted towards Households and not groups. Targeting of households or individuals is an approach that is being widely adopted/ promoted now by different partners or institutions. This will help the project feel its impact more when the lives of households individuals or households are shifted from poverty to a level of now being self-reliant. At times the support given in groups does not quickly enable the realization of this. For example, giving of 5 sheep to a group of 40 members in monetary terms might not easily help one translate this to maybe capital to start any other IGA or even benefit all group member in form of lamb that the sheep will deliver.

## **Conclusion**

The analyzed results from the Mid- term evaluation from specifically cohort I (2022-2023) CI groups show that the project had so far achieved majority of the expectations that it had planned to attain in its theory of change. Results show that the lives of the CI participants have greatly been impacted by the interventions- especially the trainings that FRC provided. The participants have acquired a lot of knowledge which they are now putting into practice both at group level and also at individual/ household level. This was now translating into a shift or an increase in incomes at both individual and household levels resulting from improved saving patterns among beneficiaries thus providing access to financing for setting up businesses. Besides this, it had also increased their economic opportunities and most had acquired assets which they did not have previously. Also, majority were now able to pay school fees for their children with ease, could now afford to access medication, feed their families as well among others. With regards to the trainings offered, majority appreciated them highly and the knowledge that they had attained was now being passed on to some new members that were interested in joining the groups and to other community members as well; who at times come

to the groups to observe and pick a leaf from what the groups are doing especially when it comes to the use of different climate smart technologies. This has therefore helped to address the aspect of relevance and sustainability of the project.